Egyptian JEWRY

VICTOR D. SANUA Ph.D.

A Guide To Egyptian Jewry In The Mid-Twentieth Century

The beginning of the demise of a vibrant Egyptian Jewish community

International Association of Jews from Egypt

VICTOR D. SANUA Ph.D.

Dr. Victor D. Sanua was born in Cairo in a French and Ladino speaking home. His parents were of Turkish origin. He graduated from the American University in Cairo and came to the United States in 1950 where he received his Ph.D. in Psychology and Anthropology and pursued a career as a psychologist, researcher, and university professor.

Dr. Sanua received a Fulbright Lectureship at the Sorbonne (University of Paris). He spent a Sabbatical in Israel at the Tel-Aviv University and Tel-Hashomer Hospital in 1973, when the Yom Kippur War broke out. He has taught at Harvard, Yeshiva University, City College of New York, Adelphi University and St. John's University, where he is now a Research Professor. His subjects of research and interest have included schizophrenia, infantile autism, war bereavement, the sociology of American Jews, and the psychological implications of the Middle East conflicts. He founded the International Association of Jews from Egypt in 1998 as a way to draw together and document the lives of many thousands of former Egyptian refugees who had been scattered all over the world, prior and after 1948 when the first Arab-Israeli war broke out.

Dr. Sanua resides in Brooklyn, NY.

EGYPTIAN JEWRY

GUIDE TO EGYPTIAN JEWRY

IN THE MID-FIFTIES OF THE 20TH CENTURY

The beginning of the demise of a vibrant Egyptian Jewish community

2ND EDITION

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Victor D. Sanua Ph.D.

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JEWS FROM EGYPT

The Guide is being mailed to various universities and organizations around the world, at this time the following universities have cataloged the book:

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American Jewish Historical Society, New York
Baltimore Hebrew University, Maryland
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Rav Maimon Library, Israel
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The Central Archives for The History of Jewish People, Israel
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Vassar University, Poughkeepsie, NY
Yeshiva University, New York

Franklin Printing, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11210
2005 Cover Designed by Racheline Balassiano

Inauguration of the Union Universelle de la Jeunesse (youth) Juive

This picture, taken on May 19, 1930, was found among the papers of Moise Sanua after he died a few years ago. He was Secretary to **Haim Nahoum Eff.*** Chief Rabbi of Egypt. It was taken at the inauguration of the Cairo headquarters of U.U.J.J. (Union Universelle de la Jeunesse Juive), President: Albert Mosseri, Secretary: Moise I. Sanua. First row L/R: Nissim Mosseri, M. Berman, President of the Ashkenazi Jewish Community, H.E. A. Hedaya Pacha, Governor of Cairo. Chief Rabbi Haim Nahoum Eff., Mr. E. Sabbe, General Consul of France in Cairo, H.E. Youssef Cattaoui Pacha, a Jewish Finance Minister and head of the Jewish community of Cairo, I. Bellini, Consul of Italy. See Magen David in the background.

* A Turkish title of respect.

OUR HEARTFELT THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING

DONORS AND MEMBERS WHO MADE IT POSSIBLE TO PUBLISH THIS

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Odette Benjamin, New York, NY
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In honor of my parents Salomon Braustein
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Blanche Cohen Sacks, Randallstown, MD.
In memory and tribute to my father Solomon Joseph
Cohen & My mother Flore
(Nee Aghion Fermon) Cohen
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Itzik Sanua, Raanana, Israel
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Joseph Wahba, Brooklyn, NY
Tina Winston, Washington, D.C.
Paul Wynblatt, Pittsburgh, PA
Joyce Zonana, New Orleans, LA

AUTHOR'S NOTE

In general we have used the terminology "Egyptian Jewry" to identify Jews living in Egypt. However, it will be more appropriate to use the phrase "Jews from Egypt." Except for a small group of Jews who have resided in the country for centuries, the majority of Jews from Egypt, in modern times, considered themselves Europeans since their parents and grandparents have migrated to Egypt mostly from Europe in the course of the 19th. and 20th. Century with the opening of the Suez Canal. They settled in Egypt which offered better economic possibilities. French was adopted as a major language of communication. A sizable number of Jews have also come from Turkey speaking Ladino and French. I could also add here an influx to Egypt of Jews from Syria when Kemal Ataturk imposed military service. Syria was under Turkish rule and Jews were reluctant to be conscripted.

In spite of the fact that most Egyptian Jews were born in the country, Jews of European extraction have tried to maintain the citizenship of their parents and grandparents and therefore never recognized themselves as Egyptians. Very few Jews acquired Egyptian citizenship, and those who lost their original roots were recognized as "*apatrites*" (without nationality), and traveled with *"a laissez passer."* It was difficult for Jews to obtain Egyptian citizenship. However, a few prominent Jews assisted the Egyptian government in their fight to get Egypt's independence from the British who had occupied the country since 1882.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation for the assistance that was given to me by **Mr. Zaki Levy** who diligently worked on the production of the newsletter, helping with the editing, formatting, and its printing. I am also thankful to Marianne Sanua (Ph.D, History) for her editorial guidance. My thanks to **Mr. Dmitry Kirson** and **Steve Dynov** for typing the texts and making arrangements for the publication of this book and Racheline Balassiano for the design of the cover. I met Ms. Racheline Balassiano in Alexandria in 1992 during a ship cruise. She and her sister Esther were the youngest Jewish living persons in Egypt. Racheline managed to come to the U.S.A. and got her B.A. degree in Graphics.

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The following is the text which was included in the promotional brochure for ***JUIFS D'EGYPTE: IMAGES ET SOUVENIRS*** *which was published in 1984 by* ***l'Association pour la sauvegarde du Patrimoine Culturel des Juifs d'Égypte***

It reflects the very deep nostalgia that some Jews have about the wonderful life they had in Egypt before the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Voici plus de 25 ans que la plupart d'entre nous ont quitté Le Caire, Alexandrie ou Port-Saïd - Tantah, Mansourah ou Mehalla-El-Kobra. Dispersés en France, en Israël, aux États-Unis, au Canada, en Australie, en Italie, en Espagne, en Suisse, en Amérique Latine ou en Afrique, nous avons vécu dans de nouveaux pays. Une autre génération a grandi.

Pourtant nous n'avons pas oublié les couleurs, les bruits, la musique et les formes qui ont marqué notre vie en Égypte : gare de Ramleh, pâtisseries Groppi ou Délices, foul de Benyamin, rue Soliman Pacha, jardins de Zamalek ou de Nouzha, la Corniche, Souk el Samak, Haret el Yahoud, Rab Moshe ou Zaradel... Mais il arrive souvent à chacun d'entre nous qu'une image lointaine, une photo jaunie, vienne au secours d'une parole qui défaille, ou d'une mémoire qui s'estompe... Au fil des années peu à peu s'est fait jour en nous le désir de transmettre ces images de notre passé à tous ceux qui n'ont pas connu notre histoire - et d'abord à nos enfants.

Aussi avons nous fixé, en un album de plus de 200 photos, quelques unes des images de l'Égypte de nos parents - de notre Égypte aussi : nous avons essayé, tout en restituant les contrastes de notre Communauté, prise entre l'Orient et l'Occident, de retrouver aussi son unité profonde, afin de représenter, de donner corps à cette entité : « Juifs d'Égypte ».

Nous vous invitons à feuilleter avec nous les pages de cet album qui, nous l'espérons, témoignera dans l'histoire de la Diaspora, de ce que fut la vie de notre Communauté multimillénaire, remontant aux sources du judaïsme, aujourd'hui pratiquement disparue.

ADDITIONS TO THE 2ND EDITION

AT THE END OF THE BOOK, I HAVE ADDED A CHAPTER, WHICH INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING: Section VII, Introduction, Pictorial Biography (92 pictures), Historical notes where pictures were taken and Autobiographical Sketch.

I have also added the preliminarily program of the World Congress of Jews from Egypt (WCJE). Haifa, 3 to 6 July 2006 , Prof. Ada Aharoni, President (WCJE).
Please send your Registration Fee asap. To: WCJE Administrator,
Ms. Sara Rossano, Manager, at: L'Union des Juifs d'Egypte
Address: 56 Pinsker Street, Tel-Aviv 61113 - Israel

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INTRODUCTION

A. PREFACE

The first volume includes newsletters, magazine articles, refereed articles in various Jewish publications, proceedings of conferences documenting Jewish life in Egypt prior to 1948, and their experiences during the Arab-Israeli wars. Those wars led to their expulsion from the country. A large percentage was forced to leave voluntarily because of their inability to make a living. The second volume (which is in preparation) includes articles about Israel, particularly on the bereavement of parents and wives of soldiers who died during the Yom Kippur War in 1973. These last articles were written while I was spending my university sabbatical in Israel doing some clinical work at Tel Hashomer Hospital and teaching at Tel Aviv University. Other pertinent material, which could be of interest to the reader, will be included in the second volume, such as articles pertaining specifically to the Middle East conflict and empirical studies on the psychological testing of Arabs in Israel.

I am not an historian, but an academically trained psychologist. I was born in Cairo, in a Ladino-speaking family, was raised in Belgium, and lived for a while in France and Israel. I attended a Catholic school in Cairo, where many Jewish students attended. I graduated with a B.A. degree in the Social Sciences from the American University in Cairo in 1945. In 1950, I came to America to study psychology and earned a Ph.D. degree in Psychology and Sociology/Anthropology from Michigan State University. After a clinical internship at Bellevue Hospital, New York University, I became a research fellow at Cornell Medical College and at Harvard University. I had two sabbaticals, one teaching at the University of Paris (the Sorbonne), and one in Israel in 1973 when the Yom Kippur war broke out. For about 40 years, I was a professor at Yeshiva University, City College, CUNY, and Adelphi University. Currently I am a research professor at St. John's University in the Department of Psychology.

In the course of these years, I became concerned of the fact that about 80,000-100,000 (We only have estimates) Jews from Egypt either left or were forced to leave the country after the Israeli wars. The documentation available on this important event, which came to be known as the "Second Exodus" from Egypt, was quite inadequate. Two letters I received in 2004 illustrate the problem. I asked a major library in Israel to send me have their references on contemporary Egyptian Jewry. I had mailed to them two newsletters of the **International Association of Jews from Egypt,** and I received the following response:

> These (two IAJE newsletters) are welcome material for our library, and we are definitely interested in receiving the newsletter or any other material concerning Egyptian Jewry. *We have practically no material on contemporary Egyptian Jewry.* (My italics for emphasis)

The other letter received from a lady from Egypt reads as follows:

> One day in May of this year upon visiting the **Center for Jewish History**, New York, with my daughter Brigitte and granddaughter Gabrielle, I asked if they had any

literature on the Jews of Egypt in recent times. The lady in charge gave me your IAJE Newsletter of 2000, vol.2, No.1, which I read with great interest.

In this entire enormous **Center for Jewish History**, the only publication they had on contemporary Jewry was a single copy of the newsletter of the **International Association of Jews from Egypt**! Clearly there is a terrible dearth of information on the subject. Where will future generations go to find out about how Jews from Egypt lived, how they were treated, and how they managed to survive and later prosper in every country that accepted them? The countries in which most of the Jews from Egypt settled were England, France, Italy, the U.S.A., Brazil, Canada, and Australia. At the present time there might be a score of elderly Jews still living in all of Egypt. We know for sure that there are only three Jews and a number of Jewish women married to Muslims living in Alexandria. Within a few years Egypt will not have any living Jews, except those who come to visit the country as tourists.

The question has often been raised as to what will happen to all the synagogues with their Sefarim (Torah Scrolls), religious books, records, archives, and official documentation left at the rabbinates. Schools, hospitals, old-age homes, and buildings of former Jewish ownership have all now become government property. It is only in recent years that some efforts have been made by a number of groups, including the **Israeli Ministry of Justice,** to make an inventory of assets left behind by Egyptian Jews for possible restitution. A questionnaire in several languages is being distributed to Jews from Egypt, so that they could include details of all of the property they left behind, which was mostly expropriated. The question of Jews receiving compensation from Arab countries is quite illusory, but I am making the assumption that this inventory is being taken to counteract the claims made by the Palestinian refugees on the property they left behind after their departure from the newly established country, Israel, in 1948.

Another major fact that has to be taken into consideration is that those Jews from Egypt living abroad who are now in their seventies or eighties will not be alive within the next two decades. Those who left as young children have a very poor or no recollection of these unfortunate experiences after the Arab-Israeli wars, when their families had to leave under duress. Those born outside of Egypt will have even less notion of the life of their more distant forebears in their country of origin. What they would have is some vague notion of the life of their parents in the old country. It should be emphasized that a large number of Egyptian Jews want to forget about their unpleasant experiences.

Furthermore, because of very serious government censorship enforced during those events, Jews left the country with very limited documentation, particularly pictures, since they could be accused of spying if the pictures showed bridges, buildings, and major centers. The writer fortunately took the chance of including among the material that had to be checked by the Government censors, a large number of pictures in Cairo, Alexandria and other towns he visited. Some of these pictures can be seen at the end of this chapter of the book, in the newsletter Section I and also on the IAJE website: http://www.iajegypt.org.

A number of Jews view their life in Egypt before 1948 with great nostalgia. However, many of us, who returned to visit the country after the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt, found the state of affairs quite deplorable because of the overall neglect of the infrastructure and general decay of buildings and roads. Mr. **Albert Oudiz** of Paris, who was

interned at one time, wrote a book entitled, "Je viens d'un pays qui n'existe plus (I come from a country that no longer exists), which we reviewed in the IAJE newsletter.

About 10 years ago after I established myself in my own profession as a professor of psychology, I decided to initiate a number of activities, particularly the establishment of an **International Association of Jews from Egypt** that resulted in 1999 in an international conference that was held at the Middle East Institute of Columbia University. Scholars from the U.S.A., Israel, and France were invited, and each presented some aspect of Jewish life in Egypt. All sessions were videotaped, and hopefully some future financial support will make the publication of these papers possible. I am very grateful to Professor Jean-Marc Oppenheim, Chief Executive of the Middle East Institute of Columbia University for making all the local arrangements for the conference.

The community of Jews in Egypt was prosperous, multicultural, and mostly French, and Italian-speaking, with many educated in European or American-run schools. From 1840 and especially after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the Muslim leaders of Egypt invited foreigners to settle in the country, granting them special privileges in return for their skills and expertise. Among these settlers were thousands of Jews, who came from as close by as the Mediterranean lands and as far away as the East European Pale of Settlements,. in search of opportunities. Cairo, for example, once had both a Sephardic and an Ashkenazi chief Rabbi. Jews made incalculable contributions to the development of the Egyptian business world, the cotton trade, the railroads, manufacturing, and retailing. Many of Egypt's department stores, as in the U.S.A, were founded and run by Jews. In addition, Jews played a key role in the development of Egypt's famed movie industry.

The community ceased to exist because of xenophobia, in particular anti-Jewish, and anti-foreign, the nationalization of the Egyptian economy, and, above all, the rise to power of Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1952. Large numbers left at first because their means of making a living were taken away. The Company Laws of 1947 required that 75% of employees and 90% of the workers should have Egyptian citizenship. It is estimated that five thousands Jews had the Egyptian nationality, thirty thousand had foreign nationality, and forty thousand were stateless. (Shimon Shamir, 1987). Jews with an Egyptian passport had to give it up, and received documentation with the words; "with no return". I lost my own job in 1948 because I had an Italian passport.

After the Suez campaign of 1956, most of the Jews with French or British citizenship faced arrest and confiscation of their property. Many were imprisoned in Egyptian detention camps, where they endured deprivation and sometimes torture and were later expelled. In time, the Jewish community in Egypt eroded almost completely. There was also a failure in the efforts to have the archives copied and sent abroad. We are certainly concerned about the fate of the archives after the last Jew in the country dies. We are not optimistic that they will be taken care by the Egyptian authorities.

Because of their skills, their knowledge of foreign languages, and their excellent education, the majority of Egyptian Jews, though expelled with little in the way of personal belongings, were able to reestablish themselves successfully in Israel, France, England, Italy, Australia, Latin America and the U.S.A. As a group they have compiled an impressive record

of achievement, particularly in Israel, as reflected in a book Succes et Contributions des Juifs d'Egypte en Israel published by **Levana Zamir**. It was reviewed in newsletter number 7. The book was sponsored by **l'Union des Juifs d' Egypte en Israel**, 56 Pinsker St., Tel-Aviv.

Many Egyptian-born Jews, scattered around the world, have risen to high levels in business, intellectual life, and the arts. But what of the land and property they left behind? Within a short time, aside from a few tourists and diplomats, there will be no presence of Jews in the country, and this once-proud community of tens of thousands will come to an end. The remaining archives will soon crumble to dust. As for those who left Egypt, many are aging and will not live many more years. This entire episode is not well documented; indeed, it is almost not addressed in the annals. Our newsletter was a modest attempt to provide information on what has been called he "Second Exodus" of Jews from Egypt.

In the course of my work on Jews from Egypt, I became aware that many of them have written their memoirs, either in book form or in short reports. All this documentation needs to be solidified to reflect on their general experiences. I can report on the following published books:

1. Behar, Clement – (2005) HISTOIRE D'UNE VIE PAS COMME LES AUSTRES. To get a copy, write to Mr. Behar, 168 rue du Marechal Leclerc, 94410 Saint-Maurice, France
2. Latifa, Sultana. (2003). THE JASMINE NECKLACE (2004), EXTADAY, A CHILDHOOD IN CAIRO (1939-1949), THE BLUE SLIPPER OF EXILE (2005). She also wrote a novel, which she entitled "Till Love Do Us Part". You can write to Sultana Pirotte Vidal, Ave. des Linaigrettes, 1 B-4801, Verviers, Belgium.
3. Oudiz, A. (2004). JE VIENS D'UN PAYS QUI N'EXISTE PLUS.
4. Pardo, A. (2003). L'EGYPTE QUE J'AI CONNUE.

The above two books can be ordered from the **Association for the Preservation of the Cultural Heritage of the Jews from Egypt**. (ASPCJE) 8 Rue des Tanneries, 75013 Paris, France

The unprinted individual memoirs are too many for me to mention in this preface, but **The International Association of Jews from Egypt** will make great efforts to obtain the financial support to put together all these individual memoirs, which reflect positive and negative experiences that Jews from Egypt have incurred during the "Second Exodus". It provides valuable information for future historians, who are hoping to get a picture of their lives in the mid 50s, before and after their dispersion around the world.

B. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE OF THE I.A.J.E

The **International Association of Jews from Egypt** was established to document a collective history of the contemporary Egyptian Jewish community, particularly in the periods prior to 1948 and 1956, when most of the Jews of Egypt were expelled or forced to leave for economic reasons. The following are some of the objectives:

1. **To establish contacts** between Jews from Egypt currently residing in various countries around the world. To facilitate such contacts, a newsletter was established in 1999, and its readers have been encouraged to send information and make requests to locate friends and family members around the world.

2. **To produce a directory** of Jews from Egypt with representatives appointed in every major city to further communal contacts and retrieve pertinent biographical data.

3. **To organize international conferences** in major cities, such as Paris, Jerusalem, London, and even Cairo, the capital of the country of our birthplace, whenever it becomes feasible.

4. To print, videotape and distribute worldwide **the proceedings** of such conferences and local meetings.

5. **To conduct videotaped interviews** with Jews from Egypt currently living in the U.S.A., France, Israel and Australia, narrating the various aspects of their lives in Egypt, their departure from it, and their problems of adaptation in the countries that received them. A number of interviews have already been videotaped, but they need to be transcribed. They will ultimately be placed in a major library. It should be noted that the Iraqi Jews have already established an important center in Israel, where archives, books and artifacts from Iraq are deposited for future references. . We sincerely hope that the Egyptian Jewish community will also see to it that they have their own center, containing the collected documents.

6. **To produce short articles** on different aspects of Jewish life in Egypt for publication in local magazines to inform the general public, Jews and non-Jews, of the modern history of Jews from this part of the Middle East. Of course, it would be ideal to have full-length books on the subject, or journals dealing with this topic. Another way to further the recognition of such a history is to make documentaries and possibly feature regular films with Cairo, Alexandria, and Port Said as background, a la "Casablanca"!

7. To **sponsor tours to Egypt** for former Jews of Egypt with their children and grandchildren to enable them to become familiar with the life of their forebears.

8. To **establish a Center for the Study of Egyptian Jewry** associated with a major university to act as a repository of original or photocopied archives and artifacts from Egypt obtained from former Egyptian Jews. We hope in time, the Egyptian government will find it advantageous to allow Egyptian Jewish artifacts to get out of the country.

9. The following professors are members of the **Academic Committee of IAJE.** most of them having conducted research on Egyptian Jews.

Joel Beinin, Ph.D., *Stanford University, USA*

Ya'acov Choueka, Ph.D., *Bar Ilan University, Israel*

Jacob Landau, Ph.D., *Hebrew University, Israel*

Pittu Laungani, Ph.D., *South Bank University, U.K.*

Yoram Meital, Ph.D., *Ben Gurion University, Israel*

Tobie Nathan, Ph.D., *University of Paris, France*

Shimon Shamir, Ph.D., *Tel Aviv University, Israel*

Sasson Somekh, Ph.D., *Tel Aviv University, Israel*

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C. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF VICTOR D. SANUA

UNIVERSITY STUDIES:

B.A. Social Sciences. American University in Cairo (1945)
B.A. Education, American University in Cairo (1947)
M.A. Experimental Psychology. Michigan State University (1953)
Ph.D. Clinical Psychology, with a minor in Sociology and Anthropology. Michigan State University. (1956)

TRAINING:

Intern in psychology at Bellevue Medical Center, New York University (NYU).

POST DOCTORAL WORK:

Research Fellow at Cornell University Medical School, in their psychiatric division, Payne Whitney Hospital, New York, N.Y. and Yeshiva University Albert Einstein Medical School.

Research Fellow at Harvard University, Department of Social Relations (faculty status), Cambridge, Ma.

TEACHING POSITIONS:

Associate Professor, Yeshiva University
Professor City College, City University of New York. (CUNY)
Professor Adelphi University, Garden City, New York
Research Professor, St. John's University, Department of Psychology, Queens, NY
(Tenured positions in all four Universities)

ACTIVITIES ABROAD:

1. Sabbatical (1966-1967), Fulbright Professor at the University of Paris (Sorbonne), lecturing in French in Social Psychiatry, invited lectures given at various European Universities arranged by the American Embassy in Paris.

2. During this sabbatical Dr. Sanua received a U.S. grant to conduct cross-cultural research in cerebral palsy in various European countries.

3. University Sabbatical in Israel 1973-1974 when the Yom-Kippur war broke out.

- In charge of war psychiatric casualties at Tel Hashomer Hospital
- Lecturing at Tel-Aviv University, Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Haifa University. Conducted interviews with bereaved parents and wives of soldiers who

died in the war, and attitudes of USA students attending colleges in Israel and their thoughts about the country at war.

4. Sabbatical from St. John's University (1987-1988). Research on schizophrenia at St. Anne Hospital, a major psychiatric hospital in Paris. Conducted research on infantile autism in various European countries under a USA grant

ACADEMIC RECOGNITION:

Fellow in 8 Divisions of the **American Psychological Association, Washington D.C.**

President of the Academic Division of the **New York State Psychological Association**

President of the **International Council of Psychologists**

Vice President of The **Inter-American Society of Psychology**

Recipient of the **Wilhelm Wundt Award** in recognition of contributions to the field of psychology (Prof. Wundt, is the founder of Scientific Psychology.)

PUBLICATIONS:

More than 350 articles, chapters, monographs and books (About one third deals with the studies of Jews, Arabs, and the Middle East conflict, and research studies on Jews from Egypt.)

JEWISH STUDIES CREDENTIALS:

Recognized in the **Encyclopedia Judaica Jerusalem (1972)** as a pioneer in modern Jewish studies. (Entry on Sociology, Vol. 15, p. 68)

Biographical sketch in the **Who's Who in Israel and Jewish Personalities all over the World.**

Recipient of a Scientific Award from the **National Association of Jewish Center Workers** for:

> "His creative contributions in the field of group work research in Jewish Agencies as Director of Research of the Associated YM and YWHA's of Greater New York."

LANGUAGE SPOKEN:

- English
- French
- Spanish
- Italian

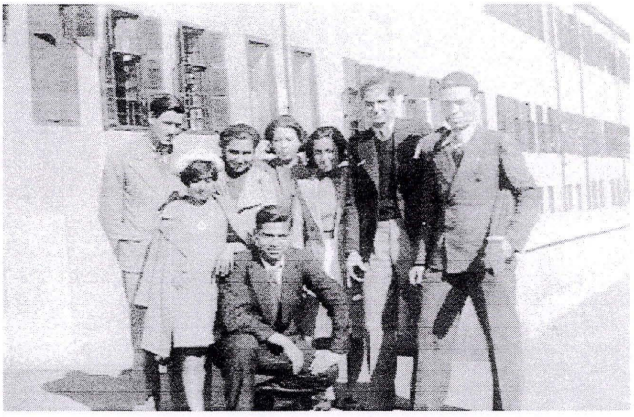
Citizenship in Egypt: Italian

D. PHOTOGRAPHS IN EGYPT AND OTHER COUNTRIES

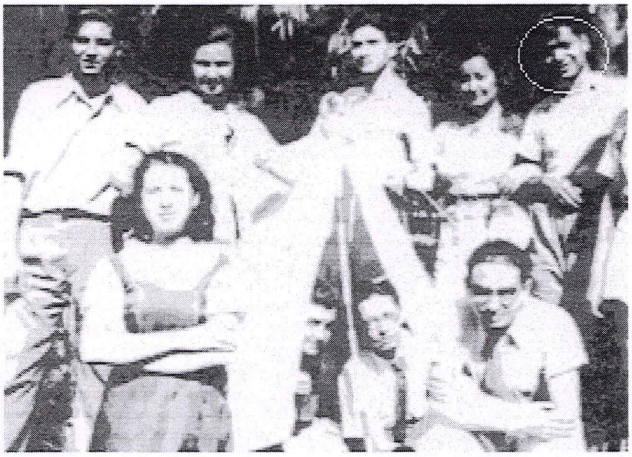
Mary and David Sanua's family in Cairo, Egypt 1923. on Victor Sanua's third birthday.

Family picture of Victor, Marie, Odette, and David Sanua. Fortunee and Vicky standing, 1931. Picture taken in Brussels, Belgium.

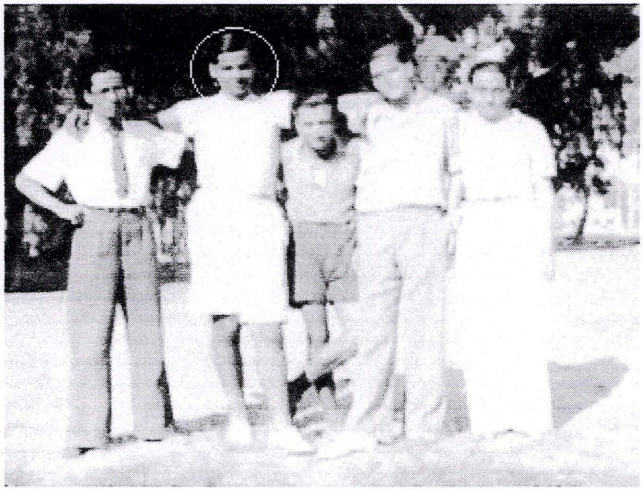
Photograph taken in 1936 of an outing of the Junior High School students of the College des Frères of Bab el Louk. Visiting the Zoological Gardens in Cairo, Egypt.



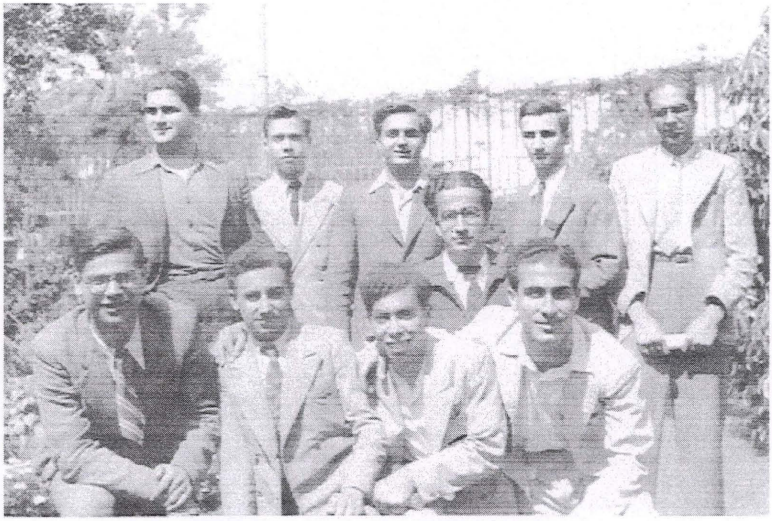
On our way to Gezirah Island before crossing the Kasr-el Nil bridge in 1937. The British barracks are in the background. Now there is the building of the Hilton International Hotel.



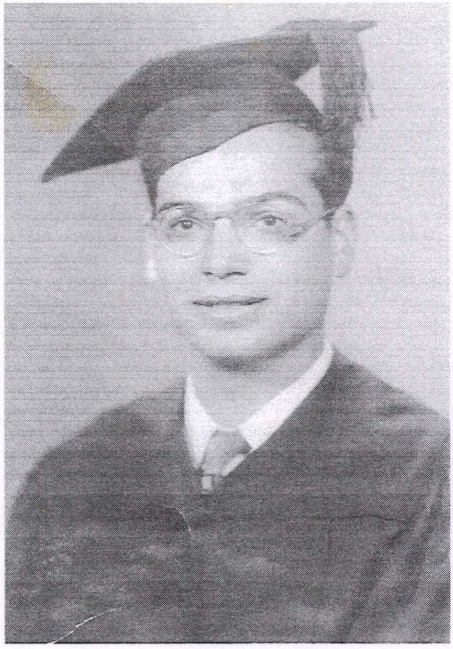
The Jewish Camping Club in the forest of Meadi, Cairo July 4, 1937



The executive committee! of the Cairo Jewish Camping Club. Picture taken during an excursion in Heliopolis, Cairo, July 25, 1937.

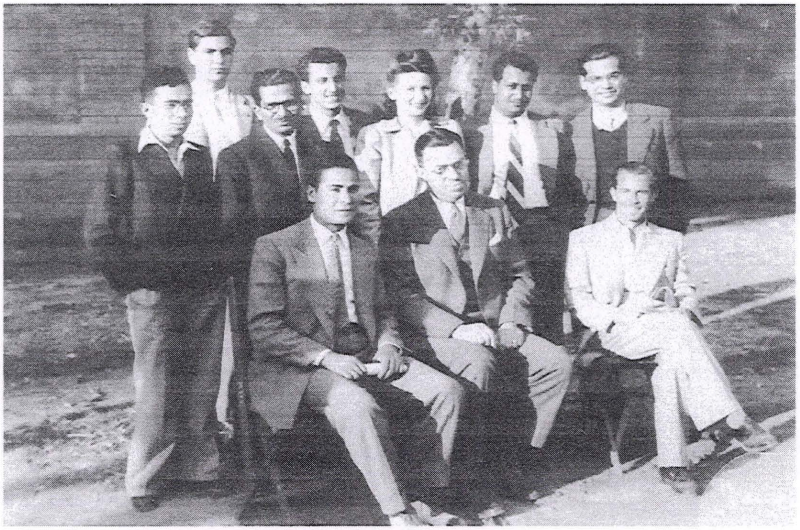


Graduating High School class of Lincoln School attached to the American University in Cairo, 1939. Kneeling on the far left is Victor D. Sanua.



Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences graduate picture, Victor D. Sanua, 1945.

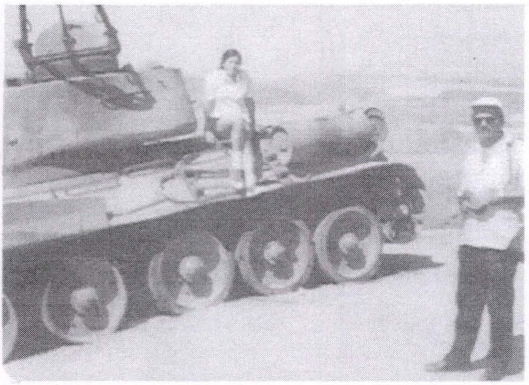
Victor Sanua and his family at home. Picture taken before his departure to America, summer of 1950. The address was 23 Malika Farida (wife of King Farouk), changed to 23 Abdel Khalik Sarwat Pasha after Farouk's divorce. The word pasha was dropped with the revolution in 1952.



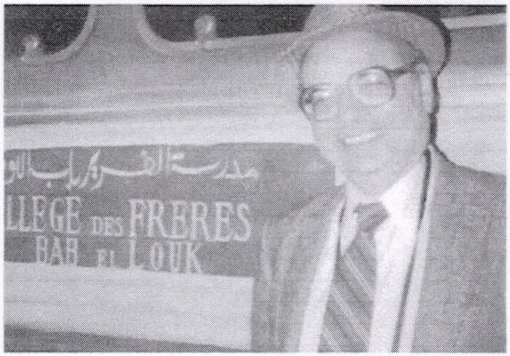
Picture taken on the campus of the American University in Cairo, 1944, with President John Badeau who later became Ambassador of the United States to Egypt. There was a discussion on the epidemic of cholera in Upper Egypt.

A weekend trip 1961 with the New York State Psychological Association of the Psychology Department of Yeshiva University in the Catskill Mountains. Victor Sanua on the far left in his first Academic position in the USA.

Rue d' Orleans, Neully Sur Seine, Paris. The street where we had our apartment during my sabbatical at the Sorbonne. (University of Paris) 1965-66.

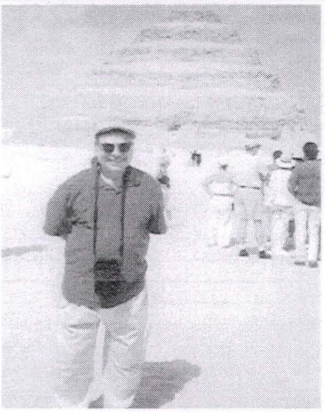


Visiting a battlefield near Kuneitra after the Yom Kippur War, 1973. My daughter, Marianne is sitting on a disabled Syrian tank.



A trip to Egypt in 1982, visiting College des Frères St Jean Baptiste de La Salle, Bab el Louk, the Junior High School, which I attended. 1933-36

Returns to Egypt as a tourist.
1982 and 1996



Visiting the Sakkarah Pyramids in Egypt, 1996.

The psychology Faculty of St. John's University. 1982.

Teaching a summer seminar in Research Methodology and Statistics at the University of Port au Prince. Haiti.

2. SECTION I

A. NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JEWS FROM EGYPT

There are nine issues of the newsletter included in the first section of this book, which is published bi-annually by the IAJE. It was first mailed to paying members and sent free to others, here and abroad, and to associations, particularly to some libraries interested in our efforts. In general, the newsletter includes an editorial, reviews of books related to Jews from Egypt and individual reports on conferences and meetings of Egyptian Jewry held in New York, London, Paris. Tel-Aviv, **The International Association of Jews from Egypt** encouraged Jewish groups to organize themselves as associations. Efforts to establish similar organizations in Italy, Brazil, Australia, and Switzerland have not been successful. A three-week visit to Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney, yielded limited results. I am pleased to report that I recently received information that Adelaide has now such an organization headed by Mr. Allen Bolaffi.

Reports of contacts with Jews from Egypt in other countries are published in IAJE newsletter along with pictures. In the course of the past year, two Jews from Egypt, **Albert Oudiz and Albert Pardo** have published books, both in French; one is a memoir and the other, a description of the sights and sounds of the old country. Both books have been reviewed in the newsletter. There are reports of well-known Egyptian Jews who made important contributions to the economy of Egypt and a little known report about Jews from Egypt who died in the Holocaust. The Germans captured them while they were traveling in Europe. The newsletter includes a special section called "Egyptian Rubric" with folkloric stories, jokes, common Arabic expressions, etc. Frequently we publish pictures of families and school class pictures of students often identified by name.

Quite a number of letters to the editor are published reflecting both positive and negative experiences. Members and readers are always invited to send us material that could be of interest to their Egyptian coreligionists. The editor has often received a number of comments for emphasizing the positive aspects of life with nostalgic pictures. This may be true, but later issues of the newsletters reflect on the suffering of the expellees after to 1948 and the problems of adjustment in the various countries which received them.

In a separate paper, in Section II, some details of such suffering appear under the title. "**A Short History of the Expulsion of Jews from Egypt as Revealed by their Experiences Following the Arab Israeli Wars.**" This paper was presented at the Conference on Egyptian Jewry at Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel, on January 17, 2004. I sincerely hope that the organizers will publish the papers of this conference as proceedings.

In this section I have added summaries of all the papers presented at the Middle East Institute of Columbia University by scholars from the U.S.A., Israel and France. It is to be noted that four of these scholars were Egyptian-born. The International Association of Jews from Egypt arranged this conference.

NEWSLETTERS NO. 1-9 OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JEWS FROM EGYPT ARE TO BE FOUND IN ADDENDUM No.1

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3. SECTION II

A. General Articles on Egyptian and Sephardic Jewry in periodicals by Victor D. Sanua

This section includes articles written in the course of the past few years on different aspects of the lives of Jews in Egypt, some of them having already been summarized in articles in Image Magazine found in Section III. Most of them describe at some length their arrests, internment in camps, and the difficulties they incurred at the Alexandria Customs, while leaving the country. However, in one article in this section (No.4), "A Jewish Childhood in Cairo," I elaborate on the good life that Jews had in Egypt and the opportunities of cultural possibilities, plays, operas, symphony orchestra, etc, mostly by foreign performers from Europe. During wartime, the British and the American armies arranged for cultural events performed by the military. I also provide some reminiscences of my own adaptation to life in the U.S.A. (No.8)

Included in this set, is a short article (No.12) reporting on an interview which I gave to a journalist, **Toby Axelrod** of Jewish Week, while I was making my yearly visit to a cemetery in Brooklyn, NY. The article features a picture of the burial monument of my mother in the Cairo Jewish burial grounds (Bassatine). She died two weeks before her intended departure to join me in the USA, where I was attending graduate school. The photographs of the burial monument were sent to the USA by my uncle and aunt who appear in the picture.

I have added to this section a research proposal which I made about 25 years ago to study the adaptation problems of Jews from Egypt in Israel after 1948. I was not successful in getting the necessary funds.

B. Titles of papers on Egyptian and Sephardic Jewry

1. Sanua, V. (1967). A STUDY OF THE ADJUSTMENT OF SEPHARDI JEWS IN THE NEW YORK METROPOLITAN AREA. Jewish Journal of Sociology. London. Vol. 9. (1), Pgs. 25-31.
2. Sanua, V. (1978). CONTEMPORARY STUDIES OF SEPHARDIM IN THE UNITED STATES. Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies. Vol. 2, pgs. 237-245. Jerusalem World Union of Jewish Studies.
3. Sanua, V. (1979). THE STATUS OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN FIVE LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES. Challenge. Vol. 3., pgs. 8-9.
4. Sanua, V. (1983). A *Jewish Childhood in Cairo* in FIELDS OF OFFERINGS, STUDIES IN HONOR of RAPHAEL PATAI. V. Sanua (Ed.). Fairleigh Dickenson University Press: Herzl Press, pgs. 283-295.
5. Sanua, V. (1994). EMIGRATION OF SEPHARDI JEWS FROM EGYPT AFTER THE ARAB-ISRAELI WARS. In Proceedings of the 11th World Congress of Jewish Studies. The History of the Jewish People – Modern Times, Jerusalem World Union of Jewish Studies, 1994. This article is based on research conducted with Jews from Egypt living in Israel and France. The purpose was to get a collective impression about the unpleasant experiences endured during the critical periods. (Pages 215-222) A shorter version was also published in Los Muestros (The Sephardic Voice), December 1996, pgs. 17-21.
6. Sanua, V. (1994a). THE VANISHED WORLD OF EGYPTIAN JEWRY. Judaism, 170,43 (2), (pgs. 212-219). The article refers to our return to visit Egypt with my daughter Marianne Sanua after more than 30 years, and, and includes our reflections on this vanished world.
7. Sanua, V. (1995). A DESCRIPTION OF THE ARREST OF YOUNG JEWISH MEN AT THE OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL ON MAY 15TH, 1948. Published in IAJE newsletter 2002 Vol.5 (1), p. 13-14.
8. Sanua, V. (2001) REMINISCENCES ON MY TRAINING AS A CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST. In Roth Roswith & Sandra Neil (Eds.), A Matter of life: Psychological Theory, Research and Practice.Pgs.487-501 Berlin: Pabst Publisher.

This paper reports on some personal experiences of events prior and subsequent to my departure from Egypt, and my adaptation in the new country.

9. Sanua, V. (2002). VIGNETTES AT THE CUSTOMS IN ALEXANDRIA. Door No. 6. The vignettes were obtained from interviews and correspondence with Jews from Egypt. Unpublished. To appear in IAJE newsletter.
10. Sanua, V. (2002a). MY VISIT TO ALEXANDRIA. Center Scene. Dec/Jan, 2001-2002, pgs. 44-45. (Brooklyn Sephardic Community Center)
11. Sanua, V. (2004). A SHORT HISTORY OF THE EXPULSION OF THE JEWS FROM EGYPT FOLLOWING THE ARAB ISRAELI WARS. Presented at the International Conference of Egyptian Jewry, Bar Ilan University, Israel. January 12-14, 2004.

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12. Axelrod, T. (1996). FAMILY STONES: VICTOR SANUA MOURNS THE DESECRATED JEWISH CEMETERY OF CAIRO - WHERE HIS PARENTS LIE BURIED. Written by Toby. Axelrod, a journalist of Jewish Week September 27, 1996.
13. Papers on the First International Conference on *The Jews in Modern Egypt From the Ottoman Period to the Present: Reflecting on the Second Exodus 1948-1998.* Thurs., Dec. 4, 1997, 9:00-5:45 pm, Middle East Institute, Columbia University.
14. THE ORIGIN OF THE CAIRO BASSATINE CEMETERY. Author Unknown, text in French found among the papers of the late Moise Sanua.
15. THE ADAPTATION OF EGYPTIAN JEWS WHO MIGRATED TO ISRAEL AFTER THE ARAB-ISRAELI WARS. This is a text of a research grant application written by Victor Sanua which was submitted to many foundations for support, however no foundation was interested in supporting our plan.

ALL THE ABOVE ARTICLES ARE TO BE FOUND IN ADDENDUM No. II

4. SECTION III

A. Introductory remarks on articles published in Image Magazine

Image Magazine is a trade journal devoted to the Sephardic Jews living in Brooklyn, NY and edited by Ben Gurion Mazza. A large group of Egyptian Jews, whose parents were originally from Syria and who had moved to Egypt at the turn of the century, came to the USA when forced out of Egypt around 1956. The new immigrants from Egypt now reside mostly in the Ocean Parkway area in Brooklyn, NY. where they built their own synagogue "Ahava ve Ahva". They felt it would be more appropriate for them to live in Brooklyn, where another similar group of Sephardic Jews, whose parents and grandparents came from Syria, and who also migrated also to the New World at the turn of the 20th.century. They originally settled on the lower East side in Manhattan and later moved to Bensonhurst in Brooklyn. Since World War II, the majority has lived around the Ocean Parkway area. Some have moved to Deal, New Jersey and Great Neck, New York, where they established new Syrian communities. Others can be found in Hallandale and Turnbury in Florida.

Most of the other Jews from Egypt live in Manhattan, Long Island and in other states of the USA, particularly in Texas, California and Florida. They do not form a cohesive group, and furthermore, their parents and grandparents came to Egypt early in the 20th. Century from various European countries.

During the latter part of 1997, 1998, and 1999, fifteen articles on different aspects of Egyptian Jewry, written by Dr. Victor Sanua appeared in Image Magazine and are included in this volume. On the next page are the titles of these articles.

B. TITLES OF ARTICLES BY VICTOR SANUA ON JEWS OF EGYPT, WHICH HAVE APPEARED IN IMAGE MAGAZINE

1. **GROWING UP AS A JEW IN CAIRO**. April/May, 1997. Pages 20, 22, 26.

2. **EMIGRATION OF SEPHARDIC JEWS FROM EGYPT**. May/June, 1997. Pages 22, 26.

3. **INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JEWS FROM EGYPT**. June/July, 1997. Pages 78, 80.

4. **THE STORY OF ELIE COHEN:** An Egyptian born Jew who became Israel's greatest spy. July/August, 1997. Pages 44, 58.

5. **THE SECOND MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JEWS FROM EGYPT**. August/September, 1997. Pages 98, 104.

6. **"EGYPT FOR THE EGYPTIANS"**: The story of Abu Naddara (James Sanua) 1839-1912. A Jewish Egyptian Patriot. September/October, 1997. Pages 76, 78.

7. **INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE JEWS IN MODERN EGYPT**, Dec. 4th 1997. The Middle East Institute of Columbia University, November/December, 1997. Pages 72, 74.

8. **FIRST CONFERENCE ON THE "SECOND EXODUS FROM EGYPT,"** January, 1998. Pages 144, 146, 212.

9. **RABBI HAIM NAHUM EFFENDI (1872-1960) SEPHARDIC CHIEF RABBI OF EGYPT**. February 1998.

10. **THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF SEPHARDI JEWS TO THE ECONOMIC AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT OF EGYPT**. March 1998. Pages 82, 84, 114.

11. **JEWISH LIFE IN ALEXANDRIA:** Ancient and Modern Times. May, 1998.

12. **JEWISH LIFE IN CAIRO**: Medieval and Modern Times. June 1998.

13. **A SHORT HISTORY OF THE EXODUS OF JEWS FROM EGYPT.** August 1998.

14. **THE MEETING OF JEWS FROM EGYPT AT THE HOTEL ETOILE-ST. HONORE, PARIS, FRANCE**. December 1998.

ALL THE ABOVE ARTICLES, WHICH APPEARED IN IMAGE MAGAZINE ARE TO BE FOUND IN ADDENDUM No. III

5. SECTION IV

A. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

A LISTING OF ORGANIZATIONS DEALING WITH JEWS OF EGYPT AROUND TE WORLD

It was thought that it would be very helpful to any Jew from Egypt to know about the existence of associations around the world devoted to the documentation of our lives in Egypt. We are familiar with 15 organizations in the following countries, Australia (2), Brazil (1), Canada (1), Israel (3), France (3), Switzerland (1), England (1), and United States, (3).

We have asked all of them to send us a one-page report on the purpose of their organization. In cases we received no reply, we were able to locate information from various sources. Such a listing could be of great use to students who would like to undertake studies on Egyptian Jewry. It I also hoped that the material found in this book could be of great use to professional historians and journalists who would like to know more about the historical events leading to the expulsion of Jews from Egypt.

B. LISTING OF ORGANIZATIONS

1. **AUSTRALIA**- Brève Histoire de **L'Association Séfarade de Victoria (Australia) et de sa Synagogue de Melbourne.** – Joseph Mazza, jademaz@labyrinth.net.au

2. **AUSTRALIA -Adelaide Jewish Museum, (Australia), Allen Bolaffi** allen@rfwb.com.au

3. **CANADA- Association of Jews from Egypt (Canada), Irene Buenavida**, 2991 Jean Talon Ouest, Montreal, secmontreal@hotmail.com

4. **ISRAEL- Center for Studies of the Jewish Heritage in Egypt** - Prof. **Arie Schlosberg**, E mail aries@post.tau.ac.il. Fax 972-3-6424065.

5. **ISRAEL- Foyer des Juifs d'Egypte, G0SHEN. Avner Assael**, P.O.Box 589 Haifa 31004,

6. **FRANCE- Association for the Preservation of the Cultural Heritage of the Jews from Egypt. Secretary, Andre Cohen**, 8 Rue des Tanneries 75013 – Paris, France, E mail aspcje@ifrance.com,

7. **FRANCE-Association Internationale Nebi Daniel, Yves Fedida**, 22 Cours Ferdinand de Lesseps, 92500 Rueil Malmaisom (**France**), admin@nebidaniel.com

8. **FRANCE–Association des Juifs Originaires d'Égypte,** President **Philippe Partouche** philippe.partouche@free.fr

9. **SWITZERLAND- AAHA – Amicale Alexandrie Hier et Aujourd 'hui, , Sandro Manzoni**, Chemin de Planta 31, 1223 Cologny, **Switzerland** E-mail smanzoni@aaha.ch,

10. **ENGLAND- The Association of Jews from Egypt (United Kingdom),** Chairman, Maurice **Maleh**, 4 Folly Close, Rodelfits, Herts, WD7 8DR - pmmaleh@yahoo.co.uk

11. **UNITED STATES - Amicale Alexandrie,** Dr. **Albert de Vidas**, erensia@aol.com

12. **UNITED STATES - Historical Society of Jews from Egypt, Desiré Sakkal**, dsakkal@hsje.org

13. **BRAZIL-The "Synagogue of the Egyptians"** in **Sao Paulo** written by Mrs. **Sarina M Roemer**

14. **UNITED STATES - International Association of Jews from Egypt, (IAJE)** Prof. **Victor D. Sanua**, E mail sanuav@stjohns.edu **United States**

15. **ISRAEL** – Essay on **Union des Juifs d'Egypte en Israel, Assisting New Immigrants.** President **Arieh Ohanna,** 156 Pinsker Street, Tel Aviv.

1.

Breve Histoire de L'Association Sefarade de Victoria (Australie) et de sa Synagogue de Melbourne

Par

M. Joseph Mazza

Au milieu des années cinquante une nouvelle vague d'immigrants juifs, pour la plupart venus d'Egypte a débarqué en Australie. Ils se sont installés à Melbourne, Sydney et Adelaïde. A Melbourne et Sydney ils étaient en assez grand nombre pour former des communautés autonomes. Ne trouvant pas goût au "minhag" des synagogues Askénaze, et cherchant à passer à leur enfants leurs propres traditions culturelles, ils ont réussi à fonder Synagogues et centres Séfarade dans les deux villes.

En Août 1965, 14 membres de la communauté Séfarade dont 9, venus d'Egypte, se sont réunis formellement pour fonder l'Association Séfarade du Victoria. En Novembre de la même année, 50 membres ont assisté à une réunion où ils ont voté pour une constitution et un comité. Ci-dessous, une photo prise à l'occasion de cette réunion. Maurice Levy, Isaac Sabto, Maurice Tueta, tous les trois immigrants d'Egypte ont fait partie du premier comité de l'association.

Les premiers services du jour de l'an et de kippour ont été célébrés dans une salle de la synagogue Ashkénaze du quartier de Moorabbin. Le"Heichal" a été emprunté à la synagogue de St Kilda. Messieurs Maurice Gamil et Isaac Sabto se sont partagés les lectures et M. H. Barr a pris sur lui le "Shofar". M. Jacques Ammir (décédé) a légué la première donation de $250 à l'inauguration. Pendant 12 ans, les comités qui se sont succédé, ont loué diverses salles pour y célébrer les fêtes. Des "Sepharim" nous ont été offerts par les communautés de Londres, Bagdad, Singapour et Montréal.

En 1973, M. Denzil Montefiore, que était alors Président de la Fédération Mondiale des Séfaradim, en visite à Melbourne, nous a fait honneur de sa présence à une réunion. Pour nous encourager à avancer notre projet d'établir une synagogue, il nous a fait le don de £5000. Peu après, nous avons fait l'acquisition d'une propriété à la rue Darling, au faubourg de Malvern. En 1975, Haham Gaon, le Grand Rabbin du Royaume Uni et du Commonwealth, nous a rendu visite et nous a encouragé à achever de convertir notre propriété en synagogue. Ce fut fait et l'inauguration a eu lieu en 1977, en présence du premier ministre d'Australie, Malcolm Fraser.

En 1990, nous cherchions déjà à nous déplacer, pour satisfaire ceux de nos membres qui étaient "Shomer Shabbat" et qui ne pouvaient pas atteindre la synagogue à pied pour les prières du "Shabbat". Avec des fonds limités, nous avons néanmoins réussi à trouver une propriété au cœur de la communauté juive, à la rue Hotham, dans le faubourg de St Kilda. Ce quartier compte à lui seul 15 synagogues, et est entouré par un "Eruv". Sur ce site nous avons construit une nouvelle synagogue (la photo ci-dessus).

La nouvelle synagogue a été inaugurée en 1994 par l'ancien gouverneur juif d'Australie, Sir Zelman Cohen, en présence de l'ambassadeur d'Israël, des présidents et rabbins des synagogues de Melbourne, et du président et rabbin séfarade de la communauté de la Nouvelle Galles du Sud. Le bâtiment, conçu par un éminent architecte juif de Melbourne, évoque la Méditerranée, région dont tant de nos membres sont originaires, par sa coupole, ses murs blanchis à la chaux, ses longues fenêtres et ses arcades.

La communauté a obtenu les services d'un rabbin Séfarade, venu d' Israël, avec pour mission, de soutenir les traditions et la culture Séfarade et de les inculquer à nos enfants. La nationalité des membres de notre association représente celle de la communauté séfarade de Melbourne. Elle se compose d'ethnies diverses, originaires de multiples pays à travers le monde: Algérie, Egypte, France, Inde, Irak, Israël, Italie, Maroc, Singapour, Brésil, Syrie et Tunisie.

Aujourd'hui à Melbourne, de nombreux Séfaradim occupent de hautes fonctions dans tous les domaines de la vie publique. On trouve des Australiens de descendance séfarade occupant des fonctions dans le domaine technique, commercial, médical, scientifique et artistique. Grâce à un système éducatif d'intégration, et à un pourcentage grandissant de mariages entre juifs de diverses origines, la société Séfarade de Victoria demeure pleine d'esprit, vibrante, créative et unie. Elle est unie par son amour pour Israël.

The above story was taken from the newsletter **of Goshen, Bulletin des Juifs d'Egypte en Israel No. 20, Decembre 2003**

2.

ADELAIDE JEWISH MUSEUM, AUSTRALIA

Allen Bolaffi, allen@rfwb.com.au

Dear Victor,

After your visit to Australia some years ago, I was stimulated into establishing the Adelaide Jewish Museum. See www.adelaidejmuseum.org. This is a collection of the personal stories of our community members that have come from Egypt or elsewhere. We have collected over 100 stories to date and have them orally collected and professionally edited before publishing them on the web. I credit you with the success of this initiative, which was launched by the Governor General of Australia in September 2000. If not for your encouragement, this would never have happened and these stories would have been consigned to the annals of unrecorded history.

3.

ASSOCIATION OF JEWS FROM EGYPT (CANADA)

Irene Buenavida, 2991 Jean Talon Ouest, Montréal, secmontreal@hotmail.com

A new association of Jews from Egypt was created in Canada: AJOE-Canada.

The first meeting was held on September 21, 2003 and the following is a listing of the board members:

Irene Buonavida, President

Henry Simon, Vice President

Sarah Balaciano, Secretary

Roland Harari, International relations

Esther Hassoum and Eddy Cohen, Treasurers

Mireille Galanti, Social and cultural programs

Asher Cohen, Community Relations

Moshe Sadeh and Albert Hercovitch, in charge of the media

4.

CENTER FOR STUDIES OF THE JEWISH HERITAGE IN EGYPT

Prof. Arie Schlosberg, E mail aries@post.tau.ac.il. Fax 972-3-6424065, Israel.

In April 1999 a group of Israelis from Egypt formed a non-profit organization called the Center for Studies of the Heritage of the Jews in Egypt, duly registered as No 58-006585-2 at the Ministry of Interior, in Israel. Postal address: P.O.B. 65141, Tel-Aviv 61651 Israel. Its aim is to perpetuate the spiritual, cultural, and historical heritage of this community across the ages, by creating a chair or Institute in Tel-Aviv University for this purpose. We received the approval and encouragement from the University President and Vice-President.

Our group is instrumental in connecting members of our community who are interested to contribute to this academic project from: Australia, Brazil, Belgium, Canada, France, Israel, Italy, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and the United States.

Our activities mostly in Tel-Aviv University from 1999 were:

- 22 Academic lectures about our community. (Abstracts to be published.)
- Establishing collaboration with scholars involved with different aspects of our project, and the creation of a scientific committee.
- Establishing research scholarships for graduate and postgraduate students about our historical, spiritual and cultural heritage.
- Establishing three research scholarships for scholars studying our community, and prizes to students studying our community.
- Collecting oral testimonies of former members of our community.
- Compilation in the TAU campus, of books, documents, journals, and memorabilia pertaining to our heritage which are available in Israel.
- Participating in the preparation of a book on our community as a joint project, of the Ministry of Education, and the Ben Zvi Institute.

Members of the Academic Committee:

Tel-Aviv University: Professors: Ami Ayalon, Israel Gershoni, Yair Hoffman, Emmanuel Marx, Arie Schlosberg, Shimon Shamir, Sasson Somekh.

Ben-Gourion University: Professors: Jimmy Weinblat, Dr Yoram Meital.

Haifa University: Professor: Yoav Gelbar

Open University: Professors: Dr Ha**yim Saadon, Dr. Hagar Hillel.**

The Hebrew University Jerusalem: Professor: **Yaacov Landau**

5.

FOYER DES JUIFS D'EGYPTE, GOSHEN

Avner Assael, P.O. Box 589. Haifa 31004, ISRAEL

Dear Victor,

I received your letter and am happy to hear that you are issuing a book on Egyptian Jewry. It is true that the academic libraries have very little information about the history of contemporary Jewry, of times bygone or any at all. Our journal "Goshen" which appears once a year is in fact mailed all over Europe, South America, North America and even Australia besides Israel. Many libraries and academic institutes have asked us to mail them copies, it is sent free. The first issue of our "Goshen", the bulletin of Jews from Egypt, appeared in September of 1985 and has been appearing regularly, since then, for some twenty years. The bulletin was initiated after the foundation of our organization. We have also a monthly meeting with a lecture about our roots given by university professors who give their lectures without compensation. Everybody works as a volunteer in our organization.

A gala party was the first activity we had with several aims in mind and one of them was to collect money to enable us to start activities around the world, the second aim was to get the maximum number of Jews from Egypt and even sympathizers of our community. We were quite successful and encouraged us to keep giving this gala party once a year, and at the end of Hanukah and the New Year's Eve. Lately arrangements for such parties have become very expensive. Despite such high costs, we still keep them by subsidizing the difference in order to have our members take part in our activities. We cordially invite you to come if you happen to be in Israel. We also used to organize a one-day trip with a lunch of "foul"[Egyptian beans] with hard-boiled eggs and oriental cakes for dessert. But as we grew older we are not able to carry on this activity, as it requires too much work and responsibility.

The founders of our organization in 1985 were the following: **Cesar and Allegra Mizrahi, Eliahu and Diane Brakha, Fernand Sedbon, Lucie Gottesman, Ada and Haim Aharoni, Nelson Israel, Fortunee Nissim, Robi Camhi Avner, Assael, Elie Cohen, Gilbert and Esty Baron.** But unfortunately some passed away, others retired and to whoever remained, a few new members were added to the committee. Among them are **Mr.Albert Papushado, Mr.Yossi Mizrahi as** treasurer**, Mr.Daniel Goshen,** as volunteer lawyer**, and Mr. Yaacov Amiel**, as volunteer chartered accountant, besides a few more who help to carry on with our activities. They are part of the wider committee. There is a smaller group for every day work and the bulletin and they form the actual committee: **Avner Assael, Gilbert Baron Esty Baron, Allegra Mizrahi, Nelson Israel, Yossi Mizrahi.**

I would like to add that we have also issued a hard cover compilation of our 20 years of "Goshen" and activities, which we sell for $100. It might be useful for your book and whoever in your community who wishes to purchase it, we are ready to mail it. Wishing you success and all the best. **Avner**

6.

Association for the Preservation of the Cultural Heritage of the Jews from Egypt. (ASPCJE)

Secretary, Andre Cohen, 8 Rue des Tanneries 75013
Paris, France, E mail aspcje@ifrance.com

ASSOCIATION POUR LA SAUVEGARDE DU PATRIMOINE CULTUREL DES JUIFS D'EGYPTE

(Loi du 1er Juillet 1901 -Art.5 – N° d'ordre 79/1530 du 25-9-79)

(Association for the Preservation of the Cultural Heritage of the Jews from Egypt)

Secrétariat : André COHEN
8, Rue des Tanneries - 75013 – Paris
E-mail aspcje@ifrance.com

Our Association was founded in September 1979, after a meeting of over 300 Jews from Egypt which took place at the Rachi Center in Paris. Directed by Jacques Hassoun, M.D., the Association organized a number of conferences in France and abroad that drew over a hundred people. These meetings disseminated knowledge, history, and cultural legacy of Jews from Egypt.

Thanks to Edmond Harari, we have displayed a plaque in the Egyptian Synagogue in Paris in memory of Egyptian Jews who were deported from France during World War II. We also launched campaigns to help preserve the Bassatine Cemetery of Cairo, and to rehabilitate the Eliahou Hanabi Synagogue in Alexandria.

The Association published:

I- The Jews of the Nile, in 1982, Paris, Sycamore Press, with a revised edition in 1990 by Minerve Press, and a third edition at L'Harmattan (Paris)

II- Jews of Egypt, Images and texts at Scribe Press, Paris, first Edition in 1984, and a second revised and expanded in 1993.

III- Nahar Misraïm, a journal, 33 issues from December 1980 to May 1989.

At the beginning of the 1990's, the Association went through an inactive period of time due to the death of several members and the departure of others. Meanwhile, president Jacques Hassoun had maintained contacts with several persons and organisations that showed keen interest in the Association's targets.

In November 1999, after Jacques Hassoun passed away, some of his friends decided to take over and give the Association a second start, to honour its president's memory.

The members of the board are now: **Joseph Chalom** Président
André Cohen, General Secretary
Emile Gabbay, Dario Yohana, Albert Oudiz, Albert Soullam.

Since that time, the Association has:

- Organized a breakfast meeting in March 2000, attended by 80 people.
- Edited a book:"Alexandria and other Short Stories" by Jacques Hassoun which includes several of his articles
- Published a quarterly newsletter: "Bulletin de Liaison - NAHAR MISRAÏM"
- Participated with other associations in debates and conferences about our history
- Organized twice a year, conferences about Egypt.
- Edited 2 books written by Jews about their youth in Egpt

"L'Egypte que j'ai connue", by **Albert Pardo &** "Je viens d'un Pays qui n'existe plus" by **Albert Oudiz**.

7.

ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE NEBI DANIEL
YVES FEDIDA, 22 COURS FERDINAND DE LESSEPS,
92500 RUEIL MALMAISOM (FRANCE), admin@nebidaniel.com

Roger Bilboul, Yves Fedida & Alec Nacamuli, members of the council, went on a mission to Egypt from January 4th to 11, 2004. They were able to meet practically all members of the Alexandria community in order to explain and obtain their acceptance of the association's objectives. They were also introduced to the appropriate authorities to investigate the best method of attaining these objectives in conformity with Egyptian laws.

They were able to appreciate mostly positively:

- The synagogue gardens in excellent condition
- The state of the building itself- somewhat in need of minor repairs
- The security around the perimeter of the grounds and the management of M. Salama
- The safeguarding and collection of registers and artifacts – under the enthusiastic management of Rita and Avraham Dayan, who have instilled a measure of efficiency, dedication and youth.

Some reservations were made as to:

- The state of the cemeteries which needs a lot to be done with regards to cleanliness. Moreover the community was pressured by a local real estate developer to accept planting of a great number of trees at his expense. They will have to control and uproot with determination any tree likely to damage the tombs.

A number of pictures were taken relative to this trip, the synagogues and the cemeteries, including plant details. You can view them by visiting the following links:

- http://homepage.mac.com/fedida/Synagogues/
  Password: ZAKHOR (Capital Letters)
- http://homepage.mac.com/fedida/CEMETERIES/
  Password: MAZARITA (Capital Letters)

Our Objectives

1. Preserve in situ and in perfect condition the remaining assets of the Jewish Community
2. Maintain synagogue services for resident and visiting Jews.
3. Provide authoritative, secure and unrestricted access to the Registers of civil status for individuals and researchers both in Egypt and abroad.
4. Exhibit permanently in situ and abroad religious artifacts in excess of local requirement for religious services.
5. Develop a professional management structure within an entity that can survive the present limitations.

The Nebi Daniel Initiative currently consists of an Ad-Hoc Committee with the following members: **R. Bilboul, R. Farhi, Y. Fedida, A. Nacamuli S. Baruch.** We currently have the support of: Association of Jews from Egypt, UK Association des Juifs Originaires d'Egypte, France Association pour la Sauvegarde de la Culture et du Patrimoine des Juifs d'Égypte, France. We can be reached at: 22 Cours Ferdinand de Lesseps 92500 **Rueil Malmaison France** E-mail : admin@nebidaniel.com

8.

Association des Juifs Originaires d'Egypte (AJOE)

President, **Joseph Diday**, philippe.partouche@free.fr

Philippe Partouche has been elected new President

Note: Two visits by Professor Victor Sanua to Paris initiated the formation of the above organization.

Objectifs de l'Association

Perpétuer l'apport culturel spécifique de la communauté- des juifs originaires d'Egypte et qui se caractérise par l'esprit de tolérance et d'ouverture **P**erpétuer, et promouvoir la richesse de l'histoire multiséculaire de la présence juive en Egypte et plus particulièrement l'apport exceptionnel de cette communauté au développement de ce pays au 19eme et au 20eme siècles en utilisant les moyens modernes de communication **R**enforcer les liens entre les communautés juives originaires d'Egypte dispersées à travers le monde **R**enforcer les liens d'amitié entre les juifs originaires d'Egypte et les diverses composantes de la société Egyptienne. Février 2002, lancement du site AJOE. C'était un défi ! Sans archives, sans réseau d'adresses, et tout de suite, à notre grande joie, les messages d'encouragement et d'intérêt affluent du monde entier. Le site compte environ 5000 visites par mois :France, Angleterre, Italie, Suisse, Belgique, Israël, Etats-unis, Canada, Brésil, Pérou, Australie, Nouvelle-Zélande **Nous nous sommes trouvés.** Il ressort de tous les contacts et messages que nous recevons, que le moment est venu pour chacun de nous de raconter, de témoigner, d'expliquer et de transmettre son expérience, ses souvenirs et ses réalisations....

Les grandes étapes de l'AJOE

- *Date de Création AJOE : Mars 2000*
- *Date de Création du site Web : 27 janvier 2002*

Activités de l'AJOE:

- **Couverture d'événements artistiques : exposition de peinture, de sculpture de spectacle**
- **Organisation de conférences historiques et sur des sujets d'actualité.**
- **Organisation de retrouvailles entre anciens élèves du Caire et d'Alexandrie.**
- **Organisation de formation : peinture, cuisine, littérature, etc..**
- **Organisation de fête champêtre (Cham el Nessim).**
- **Organisation de visites culturelles (musées, expositions, conférences).**
- **Organisation de voyage (Egypte, France, Israël)**

We have received a listing of the new members of the board by Mr. Partouche as follows:
Président d'honneur : **J.A. Diday** , Président **Philippe Partouche**
Vice président **: Michel Hara, Maurice Abergel, Aslan Cohen Sabban**
Trésorier : **Claude Fermon** , Secrétaire : **David Harari** , Conseillers : **Simone Diday, Micheline Abergel.**

9.

Amicale Alexandrie Hier et Aujourd'hui (AAHA)

Dispersés, mais unis; unis, mais divers

Sandro Manzoni, chemin de Planta 31, 1223 Cologny, **Suisse**
E-mail: smanzoni@aaha.ch; Site web : www.aaha.ch

L'AAHA est une amicale à caractère **récréatif** et **culturel** qui regroupe principalement des personnes qui ont résidé ou qui résident à Alexandrie. Grâce à ses moyens, elle fait connaître l'Alexandrie d'hier et d'aujourd'hui, elle jette des passerelles entre ses membres dispersés sur les quatre continents et elle favorise la rencontre de personnes de cultures et de traditions diverses.

Année de fondation : 1993

Diffusion : actuellement, elle compte des membres sympathisants dans les pays suivants :
Europe : Allemagne, Autriche, Belgique, France, Grèce, Danemark, Angleterre, Italie, Pays-Bas, Norvège, Suisse, Espagne, Turquie, Chypre, Portugal, Malte, Luxembourg, Monaco, Slovénie.
Afrique et Asie : Egypte, Israël, Liban, République d'Afrique du Sud.
Amériques : Argentine, Brésil, Venezuela, Mexique, Canada, Etats-Unis.
Océanie : Australie et Nouvelle-Zélande.

Moyens :

- **Sections** : des sections locales existent dans les villes suivantes : Genève, Lausanne, Paris, Nice, Rome, Milan, Sydney, Melbourne, Sao Paulo, Washington et Montréal. Ces sections organisent des réunions périodiques.

- **Bulletin** : l'Amicale publie un bulletin **Alexandrie *Info*** qui constitue un lien privilégié entre tous ses membres. Ce bulletin paraît en juin et en décembre.

- **Cahiers** : l'Amicale publie des Cahiers qui traitent un thème en relation avec Alexandrie.

- **Rassemblements** : l'Amicale a organisé des rassemblements. Paris en 1995, Montréal en 1997.

- **Voyages à Alexandrie** : l'Amicale organise des voyages à caractère touristique et culturel à l'intention de ses membres. Le premier voyage a été organisé en mai 1997, le deuxième en mai 1999 et le troisième en mai 2001. En mai 2004, un voyage de groupe a été organisé pour les membres.

- **Publications sur Alexandrie** : l'Amicale aide à faire connaître des ouvrages sur Alexandrie.

- **Fichier** : le fichier de l'Amicale est à la disposition des membres qui cherchent une adresse.

Participation aux frais : les membres sont invités à participer aux frais (essentiellement frais d'impression et de port). Cette participation leur assure de figurer sur la liste de diffusion du Bulletin ainsi que des diverses circulaires et publications de l'amicale. A titre d'orientation, une participation de 20.- francs suisses, $US ou euros par adresse et par an

permet juste de couvrir les frais courants. Chaque don reçu fait l'objet d'un accusé de réception écrit.

Alexandrie *Info*

A la demande de membres, les numéros anciens du bulletin ont été réimprimés. Actuellement, tous les numéros parus (no 1, de décembre 1993, au no 22, juin 2004) sont disponibles sur commande (5.- francs suisses, $US ou euros l'exemplaire).

Les Cahiers de l'AAHA (Collection : Que sais-je d'Alexandrie ?)

Tous les cahiers (liste complète : voir site web) sont disponibles sur commande (5 CHF, $US, euros l'exemplaire)

- no 1 : **"Alexandrie La Grande"**, par Attila Jakab
- no 2 : **"Plans de la ville d'Alexandrie"**
- no 3 : **"Les Juifs d'Alexandrie"**, par Attila Jakab
- no 4 : **"Album de cartes postales du début du XXème siècle"**
- no 5 : **"Les trams d'Alexandrie"**
- no 7 : **"Voyage à Alexandrie, de Rosette à El Alamein"**
- no 8 : **"Marc et les origines du christianisme à Alexandrie"**, par Attila Jakab
- no 9 : **"Youssef Chahine, l'Alexandrin"**, par Elisabeth Moustaki
- no 11 : **"Album des anciens élèves du Lycée Français d'Alexandrie, 1940-1960"**,
- no 12 : **"Maalesh"**, par Hanna Betaa el Hanafia
- no 13 : **"Le Canal Mahmoudieh"**
- no 16 : **"La Place Mohamed Ali"**
- no 19 : **"Alexandrie, il y a une centaine d'années (1850-1870)**, par Dimitri Caritato
- no 20 et 21 : **"Alexandrie, porte de l'Ouest"**, 1ère et 2ème partie, par Fernand Leprette
- no 23 : **"La Bibliothèque d'Alexandrie ou l"universalité" du savoir"**, par Attila Jakab.
- no 24 : **"Georges Moustaki"**, par Elisabeth Moustaki
- no 25 : **"Alexandrie, anciennes mosquées"**
- no 26 et 27 : **"Sur le miroir brisé du Nil, 1948-1961"**, 1ère et 2ème partie, par James G. Clarke
- no 28 : **"Alexandrie, exemple d'une société pluri-culturelle"**, par Alain Lévy
- no 29 et 30 : **"Alexandrie, Les Guides Bleus Hachette, 1956"**
- no 31 : **"Les Grands cotonniers d'Egypte, 1895-1945"**
- no 32 et 33 : **"Boire et manger à Alexandrie, 1930-1960"**, par Maurice Bensoussan
- no 34 : **"Le cosmopolitisme d'Alexandrie"**, par Paul Balta
- no 35 : **"De Philon d'Alexandrie aux églises coptes"**, par Henri Persoz
- no 36 : **"L'Alexandrie que j'ai connue"**, par Marcel Fakhoury
- no 37 : **"Bibliotheca Alexandrina, reborn from the ashes of history"**, by Jacques Tocatlian
- no 38 e 39 : **"Cronologia e cronache di Alessandria contemporanea"** 1863-1981, a cura di Roger Béraud
- no 40 : **"L'Hellénisme et la communauté grecque à Alexandrie"**
- no 41 : **"Le port"**
- no 42 : **"The Jasmine Necklace"**, par Sultana Latifa
- no 43 : **"Les cinémas d'Alexandrie"**, par César Pinto

Commandes (à faire si possible par courrier) :

- Ecrire lisiblement votre nom et adresse;
- Joindre le montant correspondant à votre commande dans l'enveloppe (billet de banque entre deux feuilles);Adressez votre courrier à l'adresse ci-dessous.

Sandro Manzoni, chemin de Planta 31, 1223 Cologny, Suisse

✆ +4122-736 63 87 ; Fax +4122-736 61 40

E-mail : smanzoni@aaha.ch; Site web : **www.aaha.ch**

10.

Association of Jews from Egypt (AJE, UK)

Chairman, Maurice Maleh, 4 Folly Close,
Rodelfits, Herts, WD7 8DR, England - pmmaleh@yahoo.co.uk

The AJE (UK) was founded in the Summer of 2000 as a result of an open invitation in London of the Egyptian Jewish community by Prof. Victor Sanua. This first ever reunion at the Dorchester Hotel was attended by many people as a result of which, a further meeting was organized by Esther Dee and Gerard de Botton so as to officially launch the Association. Shortly thereafter Maurice Maleh (the current Chairman) joined them (see full Committee below) and a membership drive undertaken. Our Mission Statement was agreed as 1) to form a not for profit social and cultural club for members of the Egyptian Jewish community and charge a small annual fee 2) to offer cultural activities related to our heritage 3) to publish a quarterly Newsletter to keep the community in touch with its program of activities and to invite members to publish articles 4) the Association would not be political. Meetings have generally taken place at the Sephardi Centre in Lauderdale Road, Maida Vale.

Since its foundation there have been many interesting talks given by leading members of the community in the UK and abroad as well as outside speakers on a relevant subject. I can name a few here to give a general idea of what we have been up to in the past few years:

Speakers included:

- Alec Nacamuli, Ellis Douek (who has just published a book called 'A Middle Eastern Affair'), Sir Ronald Cohen, Stefan Reif (Director of the Geniza project at Cambridge University), Professor Georges Bebawi, Joe Assouline (nephew of Leila Mourad) Professor Gaby Rosenbaum (a fascinating talk about Jewish Arabic). Future speakers will include Moise Rahmani from Belgium (author of L'Exode Oublie) and Alain Farhi on the subject of genealogy.

Apart from such speakers, the AJE has organized trips to the Geniza Unit, the Fan Museum, the film 'Silent Exodus', and been to the theatre to see 'My Mother's Soup' with Nessim Zohar from Israel. In addition, each year our Garden Party has proved a most popular event held in members' houses (which this year included songs in Ladino, Hebrew, Arabic and Yiddish, apart from the delectable food prepared by our Catering Committee led by Doris Wolanski). Finally, the AJE has also raised money for charity and produced its own testimonial video called 'Our Time to Speak'.

But the main problem facing the Association is what of the future? Our future existence is at stake, the age-old problem of 'continuity'. The membership is quite elderly and younger members are not always interested in active participation. We must attract them by our Program offering but this perennial problem applies equally to sister Associations around the world with whom we keep up a dialogue. We have visited our friends in Paris and received visitors to our events. Recruitment is a key aspect of the life of the association and all on the Committee are involved.

In conclusion, I must say that over the past 4 years, much has been achieved with the AJE gaining respect and being much appreciated. We must continue to offer our members an interesting program and contribute our little bit for posterity. With our dedicated Committee I know we can continue in our successful mission and I am proud to have been involved.

Committee Members (in alphabetical order) **Gerard de Botton, Esther Dee, Sara Kemp-Perez, David Hazan, Maurice Maleh, Mary Messeca, Ted Nahmias, Suzi Sidi, Doris Wolanski. Other members who have served include Lys Goldstein, Maurice Douek.**

11.

BULLETIN DE L'AMICALE ALEXANDRIE

Editeur, Dr. Albert de Vidas
amicalalex@aol.com

L'Amicale Alexandrie, fondée en 1997, est une association des anciens élèves des écoles de la ville d'Alexandrie. Elle sert de trait-d'union entre tous ces anciens alexandrins, maintenant éparpillés aux quatre coins du monde.
L'association publie un **Bulletin** deux fois par année, permettant ainsi aux anciens alexandrins de garder le contact et de retrouver leus amis. Bien des anciens camarades des écoles de notre ville, ayant perdu le contact à cause des départs précipités, se sont ainsi retrouvés grâce au **Bulletin** qui est vraiment le reflet d'un glorieux passé, à jamais disparu.

Le **Bulletin de l'Amicale Alexandrie**, entre 10 et 20 pages, présente des rubriques, des articles sur la ville d'Alexandrie et la vie des Alexandrins avant l'exode des années 40 et 50. Le tout est agrémenté de plusieurs photographies, desseins plans et cartes de l'époque envoyées par les nombreux lecteurs, permettant ainsi de garder la nostalgie d'une vie à jamais détruite pour ne plus jamais revenir.

Les rubriques couvrent la géographie, l'histoire, la littérature, les écoles, les lieux de culte, les plages et le dévelopement de la ville depuis l'arrivée de Bonaparte jusqu'à la guerre de Suez, permettant de situer les grandes heures d'Alexandrie dans un contexte mondial. La Deuxième Guerre Mondiale, qui fut presque fatale pour Alexandrie, est aussi une rubrique importante dans le **Bulletin**; les bombardements des forces aériennes de l'Axe, les pertes en vies humaines, les immeubles détruits, la poussée des forces de Graziani, puis de Rommel, les flottes britanniques et françaises (vichyste) dans le port, les différents mouvements des troupes alliées, la résistance de Bir Hakeim par les Français Libres et puis El Alamein et la fin de l'épreuve, du moins pour la ville, tout cela est décrit du point de vue historique et par des souvenirs personnels.

La montée des extrémistes, l'abdication du Roi Farouk et son départ de Ras-el-Tin, la fin de la démocracie, même imparfaite, la main-mise des militaires et de la dictature qui existe encore aujourd'hui et qui influença le début de l'exode, cela aussi est documenté dans les rubriques.Les articles écrits par de nombreux lecteurs sur leurs souvenirs de jeunesse, sur nos plages, nos amusements, nos salles de cinéma, nos écoles, nos camarades, enjolivent et enrichissent la présentation du **Bulletin.** Les articles sont surtout en français, mais aussi, parfois, en anglais, italien et espagnol, les langues les plus parlées dans l'Alexandrie des belles années.

En collaboration avec d'autres associations alexandrines, **l'Amicale** et ses lecteurs participent à des réunions et des rencontres, surtout en Amérique du Nord. Le réseau de **l'Amicale** s'étend aux cinq continents et le **Bulletin** est le seul lien qui reste de notre passé et de nos souvenirs nostalgiques. Il permet aux lecteurs, avec les autres bulletins et associations alexandrins de revivre leur jeunesse et la faire connaître à leurs enfants.

12.

Historical Society of Jews from Egypt (HSJE)

Association Culturelle des Juifs d'Egyte - Brooklyn

Desire Sakkal (Email: dsakkal@hsje.org)

Preamble

We the undersigned Jews from Egypt, as a consequence of the Arab-Israeli conflicts, having reached these shores of the United States of America, and now after close to 40 years of sojourning in this free land, have counseled among ourselves to preserve our rich cultural heritage, and to serve our community in the manner that our fathers and forefathers have enjoyed being attended to in Egypt by the " La Communauté Israélite du Caire et d'Alexandrie " or the Jewish Community of Cairo and Alexandria and their institutions.

This organization shall be known as HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF JEWS FROM EGYPT, not of Egyptian Jews, but FROM EGYPT for the purpose will be to include all our co-religionists whose lineage have sojourned in the Jewish Communities of Egypt.

The aims of this society are to preserve, maintain, coordinate the implementation, and to convey our rich heritage to our children and grand children, using all educational means at our disposal to bring into being the necessary foundations.

We find it necessary to include in our Society numerous committees, among them archives, education, genealogy, publication, rabbinical, research, and social projects.

We call on everyone around the world to join us in this endeavor to achieve these goals.

Founders:
Desiré L. Sakkal, President
Victor D. Sanua, Ph.D, Vice President
Menahem Y. Mizrahi, Ph.D, Treasurer
Joseph E. Mosseri, Secretary
Joseph I. Malki
Elie M. Mosseri
Nissim C. Sabban
Done on April 15, 1996 New York County of Kings.

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Synagogue of the Egyptians"in São Paulo –

Mrs. Sarina M. Roemer sarina@osite.com.br

As soon as 1959, only two years after the first arrivals, a group of immigrants refugees from Egypt decided to form a synagogue Egyptian style to preserve the traditions they brought with them. Upon their arrival in 1957, they were welcomed for their religious practice by a Sephardic community founded in the twenties by immigrants from Turkey, Greece, and Morocco, situated in the center of the city, where the newcomers lived in the beginning. It offered the advantage of having many French speaking members (Alliance Israélite Universelle was very active in those countries). To this day some families from Egypt still attend the services of that synagogue. They find their traditions of their ancestors who came to Egypt from Turkey, their Spanish/ladino roots. But the Jews from Egypt wanted to have their own space and looked for other premises. First they occupied a house that had been for years the community center and synagogue of Jewish refugees from Germany, since that group was moving to a new building. It must have been their first contact with the Liberal Line, originated in Germany.

This arrangement did not last too long, the desire for a building of their own, motivated a group who managed to raise funds for the acquisition of an old house that was transformed into a beautiful community center. The author of the project was a well known architect from Egypt, Ezra Chammas, graduated from Egyptian University who had a successful office in Cairo, much appreciated by clients from the upper class of Egyptians. We have interviewed his daughter, Mrs. Viviane Souss, who keeps all the drawings of the synagogue.

In the beginning the services were conducted by the more learned and observant members of the Egyptian community among them David Simhon who served as cantor . As of July 1975, they could hire their own Rabbi, Egyptian born, French speaking Rabbi Moshe Dayan, indicated by the Israeli Sephardic Rabbinate, a great Rabbi who conducted this community of mostly not very observant Jews with maestria. After his premature death, Rabbi Isaac Dichi took over, and performs to this day, giving his own touch of strict orthodox observance, which is not exactly the line of most Jews from Egypt. Years later, there was an afflux of Jews from Lebanese and Syrian origin in Sao Paulo, who affiliated to the synagogue, among them a Rabbi from Beirut who frequently occupied the pulpit giving sermons and religious commentaries in Arabic. So there was a change in the original route idealized by the "Egyptians" who do not feel so much "at home" anymore but who continue to be deeply attached to the oriental liturgy and traditions. The Congregation is thriving with its own school, a monthly magazine, several groups for studies, mostly due to the presence and activity of its very observant Syria-Lebanese members. We have in our files the life stories of one of this congregation's long time President (**Albert L.Dichy**) of founders and directors (**Ibram Salama, Victor Lagnado**) as well as of the administrative manager (**Vita Gomel**). **© Note: The above article appeared in the newsletter of issue # 15, September 2004 of the Association of Jews from Egypt (UK).**

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International Association of Jews from Egypt (IAJE)

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ALL INFORMATION ABOUT IAJE IS INCLUDED IN THE BOOK

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Note: While the previous organization were established by Egyptian Jews after many years of residence in foreign countries, the major purpose was social, for reminiscing about what was life like in Egypt prior to the dispersion of Jews from Egypt, and in some instances to document historically this life. The Union des Juifs d'Egypte en Israel was established rather early in 1948 after the foundation of the State of Israel for the sole purpose of assisting the newcomers in their adaptation to the new country. The following is a description of the early arrival of Jewish migrants from Egypt. The Union is still functioning to-day.

UNION DES JUIFS D'EGYPE EN ISRAEl
Assisting new immigrants from Egypt
Mr. Arieh Ohanna, President
156 Pinsker St. Tel-Aviv. 03-5285534

In section II of this book, I have included a prospectus for a research application, which was submitted about 25 years ago to Foundations to get financial support to investigate the problems of adaptation of Jews from Egypt in Israel. As indicated before, we were not successful in persuading any foundation of the desirability to conducting such a research. In this section, I shall write briefly on the early arrival of Jews from Egypt and name some of the places they resided early in their migration and provide information on the establishment of the UNION DES JUIFS D'EGYPTE EN ISRAEL for the purpose of assisting the newcomers in their adaptation to the new country.

I shall name a few of the areas, which were settled by Egyptian Jewry after they were housed in immigration camps called "Maabarot" (transit camps) where the living conditions were not favorable. Some Jews of Egypt managed to get out of the "Maabarot" and find jobs in bank, industries and businesses. Because of their knowledge of several languages, many found positions in banks, travel agencies, airlines, shipping companies, etc. Others were placed in Kibbutzim with the assistance of the Jewish Agency. Itzik Sanua visited me in New York after he had the opportunity to interview **Yaacov Hadassi and Arieh Ohanna,** and provided me with the following information. Arieh Ohanna is currently President of the Union.

Egyptian Jews settled in a number of Kibbutzim prior to the 1948 events. Those who managed to reach Palestine settled in Degania (South of the Lake of Galilée). In those days Palestine, being under the rule of the British, was not accessible to Jews in general, but somehow a number of Jews from Egypt came clandestinely. The reader is referred to article, "A Short History of the Exodus of Jews from Egypt" in Section III of this book which provides more details about the subterfuges used to escape from the watchful eyes of the British and Egyptian frontier authorities.

A group of Jews from Egypt in Degania moved to another Kibbutz Gvat. At that time, there was a railway line connecting Cairo, via El Arish to Rehovot and Jaffa. The immigrants got off in Rehovot and from there they dispersed to various areas. They settled in Raanana, Kfar Vitkin, Brur Chail, Ein Hachoresh. Moshav Emunim near Ashdod was established after 1949. Some immigrants went first to France where they were taught agricultural work, (Hachshara). Practically, all Jews from Egypt were white-collar workers, and somehow never managed to make their farming profitable, and thus most of them abandoned this kind of work for a living.

In 1949-1950, most of the Jews from Egypt arrived from the port of Brindisi (Italy) and they were sent directly to immigration camps "Pardes Chana", "Benyamina".and others. Mr. Shlomo Ohanna, brother of Arieh Ohanna who worked as a coordinator on behalf of the Jewish Agency, encouraged them to settle in Kibbutzim and Moshavim.. Through the hard work of Mr. Emmanuel

Mizrahi, he convinced the Jewish Agency that the Jews of Egypt would be capable to do agricultural work and a village near Gedera, named Bashit, later on Kfar Hayeor was established as a "moshav." Later on, it was renamed Kfar Aviv.

By the year 1949, Emmanuel Yedidya and Shlomo Cohen Sidon (both judges) decided to establish a center, which they named, **"Union des Juifs d'Egypte en Israel"** on Perez Street in Tel Aviv, near the Central bus station. Moise Sanua, the father of Itzik Sanua, worked at this Center for about 18 months as the secretary. In 1957, there was a great influx of Jews from Egypt arriving in Israel, mostly expelled by Gamal Abdel Nasser.

Judge Yedidya Halevi opened a larger office at 56 Pinsker Street in Tel Aviv. It is a big apartment on the ground floor of a building. The funds to pay for the purchase of the locale came from The Jewish Agency, the Israel Discount Bank and individual donations. The Sephardic Federation in Israel assisted in the foundation of the UNION with contributions as well.

The following is a listing of names of individuals who were connected with the management of the Union:

Between 1949-1957

Lebesh Mishori , President for many years, **Felix Ben Said**, Chairman, (recently diceased), **Polici,** (junior member)**, Efraim Cohen, Maitre Taragan** (legal adviser), **Samuel Bachbout** (welfare officer). In 1957, the Center was officially established as a non-profit organization on Pinsker St. The protocol for it foundation was signed by **Elyakim Sheinin** (Accountant)

After 1957

Lebesh Mishori continued to be chairman, **Menashe Terem** was also chairman for few years**, Elie Cohen**, from Haifa,. **Danwa Sabaton** (activist), **Anmon Levy** from the Israel Discount Bank, **Yaakov Hadassi** (from 1992-2000), Dr. **Abraham Matalon** (from 2000-2001), **Arieh Ohanna** is now the president and **Sara Rosano** is the secretary of the Union. One of the founders of the UNION was Robert Hayim who also served as Mayor of Ashdod.

ACTIVITIES OF THE ORGANIZATION

Some 10 members of the board volunteer to help in the managing of the office. The Center has about 100 regular members who pay their yearly dues. Other sources of income are the Ministry of Education and the Sephardic Federation and private donations. Purposes are;

1. To keep Egyptian Jewish Heritage alive (Lebesh Mishori wrote a book about it)
2. Assisting those who need housing, jobs, translation of documents, etc.
3. Accommodations for Students, books, etc.
4. Provide lecturers to any forum on request.
5. Assisting in communication between the Egyptian community and other communities.
6. Memorial services for the deceased (soldiers, civilians and Egyptian Jews who were executed by the Egyptians **(Marzouk , Elie Cohen** etc.) Preparation of brochures on the departed
7. The Center is also used to conduct religious services particularly on Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur.
8. Celebrating of private parties, Bar Mitzva, etc.
9. The UNION also helps the activities of the Club of Holon.
10. Future planning for the Egyptian section in the museum of the city of Lod.

When Egyptian Jews arrived in Israel, mostly in 1957, the organization Union des Juifs d'Egypte, got in touch with the Jewish Agency to obtain the names of the new immigrants. Some of them had already approached the UNION on their own when they needed help. Others were contacted for the purpose of providing services and inviting them to become members of the Union. Although the annual fee for membership was very low, many managed to adapt to the difficult times without needing assistance from the Union

To illustrate the frame of mind of a Jewish family **(Isaac Crespin)**, I shall include here a poem, which he wrote in honor of his boss when he had to retire, after 30 years of service. He was quite a successful businessman in Egypt, but he felt the need to leave the country with his wife and three young children. He was first housed in a "maabara" after a life of luxury in Cairo. On his own, he managed to find employment with a large shipping line EL YAM owned a Mr. **Jacques Recanati.**

A Mr. Jacques Recanati, en souvenir des annees 19570-1987

J'étais un immigrant
Agé de trent'cinq ans,
J'avais mes cheveux noirs
Et j'étais plein d'espoir,
En me croyant de taille
A trouver du travail.

Apres un mois d'efforts
Je me sentais moins fort,
Le fait d'être chomeur,
Faisait mon grand malheur,
Je perdais tout espoir
Et me sentais déchoir.

Dès qu'arrivait le soir,
Je voyais tout en noir,
J'étais desespéré
Et fort désemparé,
Le jour où le destin
Vous mit sur mon chemin.

Depuis lors, corps et âme,
Travaillant pour EL-YAM,
Je fus toujours constant
Et quoiqu'un peu distant,
Je n'avais qu'un desir
Celui de vous servir.

Les gens vous considerer
Pour vos belles manières
Et votre modestie,
Monsieur Recanati,
Fait de vous le meilleur
Des administrateurs.

Le moment est venu
Et comme convenu,
Il me faut vous quitter
Pour aller regretter,
Ce passé mémorable
Pour moi inoubliable.

Je forme de tout coeur
Mes bons voeux de bonheur
Et garde en moi l'espoir
De pouvoir toujours voir
Votre flotte grandir
Et ne plus se réduire.

Je revivrai toujours,
Le souvenir des jours
Où j'avais eu la veine
De servir à la chaine
De votre dynastie,
Monsieur Recanati.

Sincerement Votre, I. Crespin **31 Mars 1987**

6. SECTION V

A. BOOKS AND ARTICLES ON THE DISPERSION OF EGYPTIAN JEWRY WRITTEN MOSTLY BY EGYPTIAN-BORN AUTHORS

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* names with an asterisk were born in the Middle East.

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Jacques, Paula. (1991). DEBORAH ET LES ANGES DISSIPES. Paris. Mercure de France.

Note: The next text is an abstract of memoirs Jacques Maleh found in the newsletter from A.J.E. (UK) Dec. 2004 on his journal that he published called **L'AURORE**

"En 1943, le Gouvernement, par decret royal, suspendit la publication de mon journal en refusant de renouveler mon permis de publication. Les chefs du Bureau de Presse, Tashin Bey et ses acolytes étaient bien connus pour leur antisémitisme. Dans les numèros de l' Aurore de ces années on peut lire les articles, pamphlets, compte rendus d'audiences du Tribunal Mixte concernant, notamment, le procès de la Lica contre l'Agence Telegraphique des Nouvelles allemande DNB, celui de l'Ambassade d'Allemagne contre la Lica et L'Aurore, nous poursuivant pour mes articles de fond hebdomadaires, et autres. L'édition complete du journal L'Aurore de 1909 a 1939 se trouve a la bibliothèque Hebraïque de Jérusalem, aux Archives de l'Organisation Sioniste de Jérusalem, à la Bibliothèque du Congres American, ainsi qu'a la Bibliothèque Nationale Egyptienne au Caire (numéros de 1921 a 1940). Une collection de vieux numeros se trouve au Musée d'Art et d'Histoire du Judaisme à Paris. "

ADDENDUM NO. 1

NEWSLETTERS No. 1- 9 of The International Association of Jews From Egypt, New York, U.S.A.

150 PAGES

I.A.J.E. NEWSLETTER

1

International Association of Jews from Egypt
Association Internationale des Juifs d'Egypte

EDITOR: Prof. Victor D. Sanua

1999 Volume 1 No.1

EDITORIAL

This newsletter is addressed to all the **Jews from Egypt** who had to leave the country during the 1940's, 50's and 60's and find refuge in other parts of the world. Today the number of Jews left in Egypt does not exceed 50 individuals, all old and on their way to extinction, This is a far cry from the **80,000 Jews** who once made their homes in the **Nile Valley**.

For a number of years now, we have tried to establish a link between the Jews from Egypt living in various parts of the world. **Dr. Jacques Hassoun's** group in Paris was formed for the purpose of "*sauvegarder le patrimoine des Juifs d'Egypte*." In the United States, **Dr. Albert de Vidas** has established l'**Amicale Alexandrie**, which publishes a newsletter. In pursuing these objectives it has become quite clear that the general public, Jews and non-Jews alike, has very little knowledge of our existence.

With the publication of this international newsletter we hope to place the Jews from Egypt on the map. The history of Egyptian Jewry in modern times must be documented and efforts are being made in that direction by individuals around the world.

An initial effort was made in New York City in December, 1997. (See article inside) We are preparing for another international conference to be held either in Paris or in Israel in the early part of 2,000. Please write to us with your preferences and suggestions. Other activities include a monthly lecture, discussion and social meeting in New York City, where our life as a community is explored. Interviews have been conducted with Jews from Egypt in various parts of the world, reflecting on their experiences during the exodus and the problems encountered overseas,

The major countries of exile include Israel, France, England, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, Canada, the United States, Brazil and Australia. Most of the activities and interviews mentioned have been videotaped; soon they will be transcribed in order to provide a permanent visual and written record.

The International Association of Jews from Egypt is your link to a glorious past. In order to succeed it needs your financial and moral participation. Only you can provide the resources needed to preserve our precious heritage and pass it on to our children.

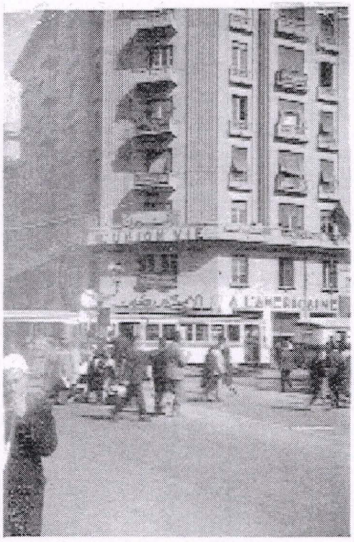
All tax-deductible contributions in American currency can be made payable to the **AAJFT**, our affiliated organization, in the name of the **IAJE** and sent to **Dr. Victor Sanua, editor, 2416 Quentin Road, Brooklyn, NY 11229, USA.**

Ce bulletin s'adresse à tous les **Juifs d'Egypte** qui ont du quitter le pays dans les années 40, 50 et 60 et trouver refuge dans d'autres parties du monde. Aujourd'hui le nombre de Juifs qui restent en Egypte ne dépasse pas la cinquantaine, tous agés et en voie de disparition. C'est bien loin des **80,000 Juifs** qui habitaient la **Vallée du Nil.**

Depuis quelques années, nous avons essayé d'établir un lien entre les Juifs d'Egypte à travers le monde, Le groupe du **Docteur Jacques Hassoun** à Paris fut formé afin de "*sauvegarder le patrimoine des Juifs d'Egypte*." Aux Etats-Unis, le **Docteur Albert de Vidas** a formé l'**Amicale Alexandrie** qui publie un bulletin. Nous avons découvert toutefois, en poursuivant ces buts, que le grand public, Juif ou non-Juif, n'a pas une grande connaissance de notre présence.

Avec la publication de ce bulletin international, nous espérons mettre les Juifs d'Egypte sur la carte. L'histoire moderne des Juifs d'Egypte doit être documentée et des efforts à cette fin ont déjà débutés à travers le monde.

Un premier effort a été déjà fait à New York en Décembre, 1997. (Voir l'article qui suit) Nous préparons une autre conférence internationale pour l'an 2,000 à Paris ou en Israel. Faites-nous connaître vos préférences et envoyez-nous vos suggestions. Une conférence mensuelle agrémentée de discussions et de réunions sociales prend place à New York et explore notre vie communautaire. Des interviews avec des Juifs d'Egypte dans diverses parties du monde ont été conduits afin d'enregistrer leurs expériences durant l'exode ainsi que les problèmes rencontrés outre-mer.



Shariah Fouad, center of town with "A L'Americaine" - 1945

Les plus importants pays d'exil sont Israel, la France, l'Angleterre, l'Italie, la Suisse, la Belgique, le Canada, les Etats-Unis, le Brésil et l'Australie. La plupart des activités et des interviews ont été vidéographiés et seront bientôt transcrits afin d'établir une source permanente visuelle et écrite.

L'**Association Internationale des Juifs d'Egypte** est le lien à votre glorieux passé. Afin de réussir elle a besoin de votre aide financière et morale. Les ressources nécessaires à la préservation de notre précieux patrimoine et à sa transmission à nos enfants, ne peuvent venir que de vous.

Toutes vos contributions en devises américaines peuvent être déduites de vos taxes. Envoyez-les à notre organisation soeur, l'**AAJFT**, au nom de l'**IAJE**, au **Docteur Victor Sanua, éditeur, 2416 Quentin Road, Brooklyn, NY 11229. Etats-Unis.**

LIVRES ET REVUES
BOOKS AND MAGAZINES

The Cairo Geniza: One Hundred Years of Discovery and Research
No. 21, July, 1997.

The Jews of Modern Egypt: A Retrospective
No. 23, June, 1998.

Both of the above bulletins were published by The Israeli Academic Center in Cairo, while Prof. Sasson Somekh, professor of Arabic Literature at Tel-aviv University, was the director of the center.

Bulletin de l'Amicale Alexandrie
Published by Dr. Albert de Vidas
46 Benson Pl, Fairfield, CT 06430 USA

The following books will be reviewed for inclusion in future issues of the newsletter.

The Dispersion of Egyptian Jewry, Culture, Politics and the Formation of a Modern Diaspora
by Joel Beinin (1998)
Univ. of California Press, Berkeley

L'Egypte, Passion Française
by Robert Solé (1997)
Editions du Seuil
27 rue Jacob, Paris, VI

Jacob's Children in the Land of the Mahdi Jews of the Sudan
Syracuse University Press
Note: The majority of the Jews of Sudan originally lived in Egypt.

The Forgotten Millions - The Modern Exodus of Jews from Arab Countries
by Malka Hillel Shulewitz (Israel)
to be published in March, 1999.

The One Facing Us
(The exodus of a family brought about by Pres. Gamel Abdel Nasser)
by Ronit Matalon
Metropolitan Books

From the Nile to the Jordan, An Epic and Historical Novel Sublime and Forgotten
by Ada Aharoni (Haifa, Israel, 1998)
Michael Lachmann, Ltd.,
62 Pevzner Street
33135, Haifa, Israel

The Forgotten Years
by Dr. Yehuda Ozari
Wayne, New Jersey, U.S.A.
A manuscript relating the experiences of a ten year old and his family on leaving Egypt and growing up in the State of Israel.

RESEARCH ON THE JEWS FROM EGYPT / RECHERCHES SUR LES JUIFS d'EGYPTE

The following are from letters and manuscripts sent to the editor.

Sylvia Modelski (born Cohen, Washington, D.C.) "... I have just written a book titled Port Said." It has three parts, (1) "Genesis of a City," (2) " A Port Said childhood," (3) Postscripts - which consist of reports on two visits to Port Said in 1966 and 1981.

Racheline M. Barda (Sydney, Australia) "At the present time I have taken on the task, together with a friend, Lana Wolf also from Egypt, of gathering the stories and recollections of the Jews from Egypt living in Australia, by means of tape-recorded interviews."

She further writes, " I believe that the time is running out and unless we do something quickly the history of the Jews of Egypt will just fade away into obscurity." She is considering using all that data for a Ph.D. degree.

Richard Milosh (Adelaide, Australia) "Multicultural Encounters in Egypt and Australia: The cultural experiences of "foreigners" who lived in Egypt and migrated to Australia." Mr. Milosh had this topic approved for a Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Adelaide.

Mrs. Liliane Dammond (New York) is collecting oral histories of Jews from Egypt in the New York area. Her project is housed in the Archives of the Graduate Center of the Institute of Sephardic Studies of the City University of New York and will be available to researchers and historians interested in developing information of Jews from Egypt.

Prof. Victor D. Sanua (New York) has been collecting video-taped interviews of Jews from Egypt reporting on their experiences upon leaving the country and the problems of adaptation in the countries that received them. Interviews have been conducted in New York, Australia, France and Israel.

Marion Germain (Ben Gurion Research Center, Negev 84990) "Le Départ des Juifs d'Egypte: 1948-1956, Le Second Exode," her Master's thesis presented at the University of Charles de Gaulle, Lille III. (157 pages.) She indicated that this thesis is available upon request.

Mara A. Leichman (Michigan) "A Vision in Retrospect: A Study of the Egyptian and Moroccan Immigrant Communities in Israel," a 205 page thesis. The conclusion of her work was that Moroccan Jews fit best, as a whole, in the pioneer mode. They came to Israel from a more modest background and were influenced by the "true Israeli" hard working pioneer convictions.

Presently, Ms. Leichman is studying for a doctorate at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland.

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❑ Membership Contribution $30.00
(Includes newsletter subscription)

Donations to promote I.A.J.E. activities:
❑ $50 ❑ $100 ❑ $150 ❑ Other _____

Please see bottom of Editorial for mailing instructions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We are grateful to **Mr. Fred Lee Barber** of New York for generously providing the necessary funds to enable us to publish and distribute this issue of the newsletter.

CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS OF JEWS FROM EGYPT

Cairo, Egypt

The Israeli Academic Center in Cairo held a conference, "Jewish Life in Modern Egypt: a retrospective," in June 1997. Prof. Somekh arranged the conference which included the presentation of papers by Shimon Shamir, former ambassador to Egypt, Jacques Hassoun, Michael M. Laskier among others. All papers were published in the Bulletin of the Center No. 23 June 1998. For a copy write to the IACC, 92 El-Nil St. Apt. 33, Doki, Giza.

New York, U.S.A.

Two days of meetings were held on December 3 and 4, 1997. The first, a social gathering, was at the Sephardic Center in Brooklyn and the second, a conference at the Middle East Institute of Columbia University in Manhattan.

At the conference, a number of papers were presented by academicians, mostly from Israel, dealing with various aspects of the history of Jews from Egypt. This conference, which was arranged by Prof. Victor D. Sanua, was titled "The Jews in Modern Egypt from the Ottoman Empire to the Present, Reflections on the Second Exodus 1948-1998.

Dr. Jean-Marc Oppenheim directed the arrangements at Columbia University. The proceedings were all videotaped and it is hoped that the papers will be published in the near future.

Dr. Jacques Hassoun and friends at the Hotel Étoile St. Honoré on Oct. 17, 1998

Paris, France

The Association pour la Sauvegarde du Patrimoine Culturel des Juifs d'Egypte, headed by Dr. Jacques Hassoun, arranged for "Les Journées du Judaisme Egyptien, Hier, Aujourd'hui et Demain" 7-11 February, 1998. It included the films "Ghazi El Banatt" with Leila Mourad, "Hayat el Hob," "Chatt el Gharam," and "Bab el Hadid," a musical concert by "Saad El Sharif," a main presentation by Dr. Hassoun, "Le Judaisme Egyptien, Permanence d'un lien bi-millenaire," three round tables and a homage to Chief Rabbi Haim Nahum Effendi.

An exhibition "La Gloire d'Alexandrie," sponsored by Gilbert de Botton who is a native of Cairo, took place in Paris from May 5 to July 26, 1998. Mr. Botton hosted a dinner for 100 guests among whom were some of Egypt's top drawer Jewry (the Mosseris, Smouhas, Sinigaglias, Mehrez, Nadlers, Sharons, Castros, Danons, de Picciottos, Najars, Doueks, Mizrahis, Riches, Naccamulis and Zilchas.)

São-Paulo, Brazil

A group of Jews from Egypt celebrated the 40th anniversary of their settling in Brazil. They produced a special publication carrying a number of stories about their expulsion from Egypt. Mr. Claudio Leon organized this activity.

Tel-Aviv, Israel

A conference of Jews from Egypt was held on June 19, 1998, at the Tabenkin Research Center. The purpose was to reminisce on the efforts made, more than fifty years ago, on the legal and illegal ways for the Jews from Egypt to go to Palestine and later Israel. Among the organizers of this conference were, the Brakhas, Sami Chemtob and Joseph Bousso.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Mr. Eric J. Adams

Mr. Adams' parents were born in Egypt and he is planning to produce a video documentary on Jews from Egypt. He is a writer/producer who lives in Petaluma, California and he stated that "I believe this is a fantastic opportunity to bring the story of Egyptian Jewry to a wide audience. Our goal is to see this film broadcast internationally and screened at film festivals worldwide."

We certainly hope that such a documentary will have a tremendous impact.

The Hotel Saint Aignan

This hotel, in the heart of the Marais, in Paris has been renovated for the purpose of establishing the first French museum of the history of Jewish communities. We would urge our French correspondents to pursue the inclusion of some exhibits about the Jews from Egypt.

Mr. Arturo Schwarz

Mr. Schwarz, a scholar, poet, art dealer, and passionate collector has given the Israel Museum more than 700 Dada and Surrealist artworks that are worth about $20 million. He was born in Egypt and moved to Milan in 1949. He has published more than 50 books, including many collections of his own poetry.

The Hakim Family

Three hundred members of the Hakim family, from around the world, participated in a family reunion in Israel in 1997. The gathering helped to create a genealogical tree and hopefully encouraged other families to hold reunions and celebrate their ancestry.

Most of the family members left Egypt during the 1956 exodus and can be presently found in Australia, France, Israel and the United States. Contact can be made through the Hakim website at http.www.webstazy.com/hakim. The e-mail address is hakim@webstazy.com.

The Beret Genealogy Center

Beth Hatefutzot Diaspora Museum in Tel-Aviv has launched its latest version of a genealogy software system. The Center has a 200,000 name databank.

FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR

During the past two years, I submitted articles on varied aspects of Egyptian Jewish history which were published in the Sephardic periodical Image Magazine printed in Brooklyn, New York. Copies of the articles can be obtained by writing to me. Any reader having short historical material of interest can send me such articles for possible inclusion in the Image Magazine.

In the course of the past year, I visited Australia and met Jews from Egypt and made video-taped interviews in Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney. I was assisted by Mr. Joseph Mazza in Melbourne, Mr. Joseph Bolaffi in Adelaide, and Mr. Herman Eisenberg in Sydney. In the course of this trip, I met former classmates with whom I attended the American University in Cairo.

In October of 1998, I visited Paris and arranged to meet a large group of Jews from Egypt. At this meeting it was decided that Jews from Egypt would meet on a monthly basis which would be arranged by Mr. Joseph Diday. He can be contacted at 5 Ave. Béranger, 95400 Arnouville, France, Tel. 0139856932.

I am planning a possible trip, during the month of October, 1999, and expect to visit London, Paris and Brussels where I hope to continue to promote the purpose of our organization and to solicit suggestions for future meetings and conferences.

Letter to the Editor

A reader comments on her wonderful childhood in Cairo, in spite of all the vicissitudes most of us encountered in leaving Egypt.

Dear Victor Sanua:
Your article "Growing up as a Jew in Cairo" in the Image magazine has moved me deeply. Your photograph of the "Shaar HaShamayim" Synagogue triggered a big??? to my memory, and with a tear rolling down, I could not read your documentation quick enough, and for me two pages was too short.

Looking at the photograph of the synagogue which I guess was the "Ismalia Synagogue," (because of the name of the road), I could visualize my father (G-d rest his soul) sitting and praying while my mother and I upstairs would be most of the time looking down for a glimpse of him at Shabbat and all of the holidays.

You brought back to me all the beauty of the evenings when we were driving slowly along the Nile, eating "***Grilled Dora***" (corn) and "***Tin Shoky***" (Prickly pears), from the vendors selling all different kinds of goodies. And then I look up and see the beautiful full moon placed right between Cheops and Chephren (the pyramids) as if it was placed there for a theatrical decor. And the "***Feluccas***" (special boats or barges) sailing down with all the "***Marakbyyah***" (in charge of the barges) saluting each other.

And in the summers the open air cinemas in the afternoons and evenings with a beautiful breeze, with the sky and stars as a ceiling.

And Oh! My happiness when I could follow a shooting star making a wish supposedly come true. What a happy memory with so much beauty in my eyes forever.

Thank you Doctor Sanua.
Ninette Dwek (Brenner)

Lettre De S.EM. Haim Nahum Effendi et René Cattaui

Dans une lettre envoyée, le 14 Juin 1943, à l'Université Hébraique concernant l'établissement de la Société d'Etudes Historiques Juives d'Egypte, une demande est faite pour obtenir le concours de l'Université pour la préparation d'une revue annuelle consacrée à l'histoire des Juifs en Egypte. Par suite des événements à cette période, ce projet n'as pas pu être realisé. Serait-il possible de mettre sur pied une revue pareille aprés 55 années dans la diaspora.

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E-mail: sanuav@stjohns.edu

We urge our readers to join us in preserving and promoting our precious Jewish-Egyptian heritage. Your tax-deductible contributions should be made payable to the A.A.J.F.T. and sent to:

Dr. Victor D. Sanua, Editor
Int'l Association of Jews from Egypt
2416 Quentin Road
Brooklyn, New York 11229, U.S.A.

I.A.J.E. NEWSLETTER 2

International Association of Jews from Egypt
Association Internationale des Juifs d'Egypte

EDITOR: Prof. Victor D. Sanua — 1999 Volume 1 No.2

EDITORIAL

This is the second issue of the IAJE newsletter. We hope that you received the first issue. We thank you for the numerous letters which have indicated your interest and appreciation for our efforts. It is most encouraging.

We have allocated more space in our newsletter to include long excerpts from those letters which deal with topics of concern to all of us, such as the maintenance of our "*Patrimoine culturel*." Within a short time, this "*Patrimoine culturel*" will vanish, unless we make every effort to insure its existence.

Now we shall turn to a problem we are facing in pursuing our goals as established by the **Statement of Mission** which we are sending you. The number of subscriptions and donations received are insufficient to allow us to carry on with our work. To be sure, there is abundant interest in what we are desperately trying to achieve. But the essential financial support from our readers has not matched the enthusiasm expressed in the letters received.

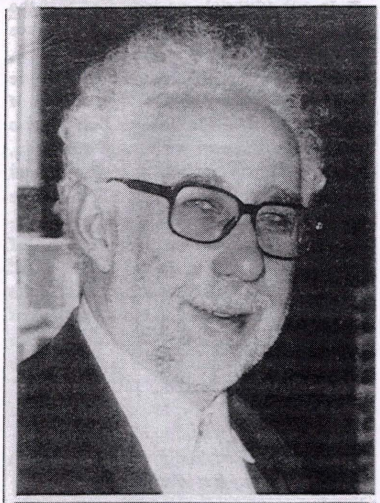
We must, once again, call the attention of our readers to our urgent need to receive the financial support which is required to carry on our work. **Do not let us down**! Help us continue to publish this last link to our glorious past for the greatest benefit of all **the Jews from Egypt**.

Voici le second bulletin de l'AIJE. Nous espérons que, vous avez bien reçu le premier numéro. Nous vous remercions pour les innombrables lettres que nous avons reçues et qui indiquent vôtre intérêt et vôtre reconnaissance envers nos efforts. Cela est bien encourageant.

Nous avons dédié plus d'espace dans notre bulletin afin de publier de longs extraits de ces lettres qui décrivent des sujets qui nous tiennent tous à coeur, tel que le maintien de notre patrimoine culturel. Dans un très proche avenir ce patrimoine culturel cessera d'exister, à moins que nous fassions tous nos efforts pour assurer son existence.

Nous devons maintenant faire face, à un problème qui nous hante constamment dans la poursuite de nos buts, tels qu'ils sont décrits dans notre **Déclaration de Mission,** que nous vous faisons parvenir. Le nombre d'abonnements et les dons qui nous sont parvenus sont insuffisants pour nous permettre de continuer notre mission. Nous savons qu'il y a un grand intérêt dans ce que nous essayons de faire. Mais l'apport financier n'a pas d'égal à l'enthousiasme exprimé dans les lettres reçues.

Nous sommes forcés à nouveau de faire part à nos lecteurs de notre besoin urgent de recevoir l'apport financier qui nous permettra de continuer notre travail, **Ne nous abandonnez pas!** Aidez-nous à continuer à publier ce dernier trait-d'union à notre, glorieux passé pour le plus grand bénéfice de tous les **Juifs d'Egypte**.



Dr. Jacques Hassoun
(1936-1999)
see page 5

From the desk of the Editor

The following is an overview of the various contents of letters received: 1) An expression of thanks for providing this forum for Jews from Egypt, 2) Some correspondents sent various unpublished materials about their life in Egypt with the hope that someday they will be able to publish them as memoirs, 3) Requests to locate friends and relatives around the world, 4) Some letters provided constructive suggestions to make IAJE more viable in undertaking important projects, 5) Letters providing some information about Jews from Egypt, for example, the number of Jews from Egypt who were caught in France and deported by the Germans during World War II. PLEASE KEEP WRITING TO US AND WE SHALL SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS.

During our recent trip to Paris and Tel Aviv, we had the opportunity to meet a large number of Jews from Egypt. In Paris, a committee headed by **Mr. Alfred Hemmo, Mr. Joseph Diday and Mr. Aslan Cohen Sabban** is making arrangements for holding an international conference in Paris during the year 2000 which hopefully will be followed by one in Israel in 2001.

Midan Ibrahim Pacha, 1950
Continental Hotel in the background

Stanley Bay Beach
Alexandria, 1950

The invitation by the Beth Hatefutsoth, Israel, is most welcome. We shall take advantage of this opportunity to have our Jewish Egyptian cultural patrimony included in the **Beth Hatefutsoth, A Museum of the Jewish Diaspora**, which, so far, has very little information about us. (see page 8)

■ In our editorial, we indicated that the "patrimoine culturel" will vanish unless we make every effort to insure its existence. The "old generation" is dying out. We are saddened to report on the death of two of our dear friends, **Mr. Joseph Bolaffi** who was our host when we visited Adelaide, Australia, last year, and was instrumental in arranging for us to give a talk to a large group of ex-Egyptians. He was a wonderful and a gentle man, with a great sense of humor. He could tell a lot of "nokats" (jokes) to which we were accustomed in the "old country." The second loss was that of **Dr. Jacques Hassoun** who founded, in Paris, the "Association pour la Sauvegarde du Patrimoine Culturel des Juifs d'Egypte." Prior to his death, Dr. Hassoun expressed the hope that he would not be forgotten after his death. Personally we owe so much to Dr. Hassoun, that if any center of Egyptian Jewry is established, it should be dedicated in his name. We are happy that we video-taped a few remarks which he made in Paris to a group of Jews from Egypt in the Fall of 1998 (included in this newsletter) . This could probably be considered as his last public statement. His plea was "**Jews of Egypt Unite**." We have also added a short biography of his remarkable career.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We are grateful to **Mr. Michael Recanati, Dr. José Nissim, Mrs. Odette Benjamin, Mr. Charles Chehebar, Mr. Marco Matalon (São Paulo, Brazil) and Mr. David Abadi (England)** for providing funds to help publish and distribute the second issue of the Newsletter. Thanks.

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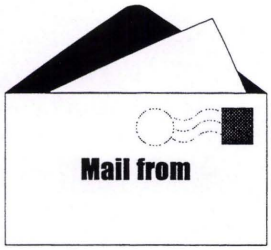

"I believe like you that time is running out and that unless we do something quickly, the history of the Jews of Egypt and their dispersion and settlement all over the world will just fade away into obscurity."

Racheline Barda
Sydney, Australia

"Thank you very much for your gift to our library of "Articles on the Jews of Egypt" which appeared in the Image Magazine, 1997-1998. We are grateful for this valuable contribution and wish you every success in your efforts to document this community."

Arthur Kiron
Curator of Judaica Collection, Univ. of Pennsylvania

"I am eagerly looking forward to hearing from you and thank you, once again, for being so energetic to keep the memory of our now scattered community alive."

Tania & Roger Sciuto
Lyon , France

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❑ Membership Contribution $30.00
(Includes newsletter subscription)

Donations to promote I.A.J.E. activities:

❑ $50 ❑ $100 ❑ $150 ❑ $500

❑ $1,000 ❑ $5,000 ❑ Other _____

All tax-deductible contributions and subscriptions should be made payable to our affiliated organization, the American Association of Jewish Friends of Turkey (AAJFT), and in the memo section of the check add "For IAJE."

For donors outside the USA, international money orders or your own currency could be used.

All funds are to be mailed to:
Dr. Victor D. Sanua, Editor
Int'l Association of Jews from Egypt
2416 Quentin Road
Brooklyn, New York 11229, U.S.A.

"I have had this deep longing to reconnect with my roots... After, avidly reading all the publications you sent me, I found myself in your written word, "Growing up as a Jew in Cairo," hit home. Your association is just what I have been waiting for. I too feel very strongly that "we should preserve and promote our precious Jewish Egyptian heritage."

Margie Kuper
Boca Raton, Florida

"My parents came to Australia from Egypt in 1957, and there were several hundreds that came from 1950-1960 to Adelaide. They retained their culture, language and tradition. This was especially amazing as they came to an Anglo-Saxon Ashkenazi community. I did not speak English till I was 5 years old only French. I need to find out more of my heritage, as this generation is dying out. Is there anywhere I can get more information and can we assist in collecting the oral histories of these people here? ...My grandfather was the manager of Phillips, Egypt. He did not emigrate well and died a broken man in 1972. He never successfully integrated into Australian society... They only remember the good times, and when they get together with their friends, they talk about Cairo and Alexandria like they left last Tuesday!! Is there an internet site that would be of assistance?"

Allen Bolaffi
Adelaide, Australia

"Bravo et bonne chance pour la première édition des nouvelles de ton association. En le lisant, j'ai eu des vagues de nostalgie pour ce qui était notre Egypte d'antan. J'ai vu passer sous mes yeux ma jeunesse et je te félicite d'essayer de garder cette flamme vivante en nous et surtout - par tes efforts - de garder ce lien entre nous ... Je te remercie aussi d'avoir mentioné le projet de mon fils Eric (documentaire par video) qui annonce quelque chose de promettant pour nous tous, s'il trouve les fonds pour la mise en action de ce projet. Il y pense très serieusement."

Ginette Adams
Roslyn Heights, N.Y.

"Your proposed newsletter, to be mailed internationally, sounds like a praiseworthy achievement. The series of articles which have appeared in Image Magazine and other publications were absolutely fascinating, as they contained such a

wealth of historical data and brought back for me many wistful memories of days gone by. I wish you good luck in your future endeavours to "put the Jews of Egypt on the map."

Albert Salinas,
Ashfield, Australia

"Je salue donc avec beaucoup de joie et beaucoup de bonheur la naissance de votre association d'autant plus que depuis fort longtemps je considère pour ma part qu'il y a du coté des Juifs d'Egypte un manque dramatique de regroupement. C'est ce qui m'avait d'ailleurs amené à fonder avec quelques amis notre propre association en 1978."

Dr. Jacques Hassoun
Paris, France

"Well, I just wanted to get in touch with you to tell you that I recognize myself (as thousands do) in what you write and in the experiences you share with your readers. Bravo and je vous remercie d'avoir pris cette initiative."

David Harari
Rocquencourt, France

J'ai constaté combien tu es passioné par la question des Juifs d'Egypte et je t'en félicite. Je vais m'y mettre moi aussi et j'espère pouvoir te fournir des élements qui, peut-être, t'intéresseront."

Albert Pardo
Marseille, France

"J'ai reçu avec beaucoup de plaisir et d'intérêt votre exposé sur les Juifs d'Egypte. Je me suis empressée de le faire copier et j'ai envoyé la copie à nos quatre enfants et la famille."

Nina Romano
Teaneck, NJ

"I must compliment you for organizing this wonderful endeavor. Ours is a very valuable heritage and, for the sake of our children, we must try to preserve it."

Joseph Bijou
Brooklyn, NY

"Thank you for the information on I.A.J.E. Even though I was six years old during my year long visit to Egypt and Palestine, I identify strongly, as you know, with my family connections, grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins, to my experience including attending school in Cairo. It might be of interest to include some of my experiences of that year which gave me two long lasting sense of connections with ancient and modern Egypt. The display of King Tut-ankh-Amoun left a life-long interest. I visited again as an adult several times and looked for the old family home just off Midan Abdin, across the square from the palace of the King Fouad , and son, Prince Farouk. From our balcony, I watched the daily march of the Royal guard. Please sign me up in I.A.J.E."

Dr. Carmi Harari
New City, N.Y.

"Je tiens à vous remercier pour l'envoi de l'IAJE et des articles que vous avez joints. Ils m'ont vraiment interesée et ils ont circulé auprès d'autres anciens d'Egypte. J'ai trouvé un nombre d'information que je vais poursuivre. Je reste très attachée à tout ce qui peut me rappeler d'une part l'Egypte et d'autre part mon héritage Judéo-Espagnol. Je souhaite longue vie à votre bulletin."

Janine Coen
Paris, France

"C'etait vraiment un plaisir de faire votre connaissance par téléphone, et par la suite recevoir toute cette riche documentation comprenant, en majeure partie, la profusion d'articles écrits par vous au sujet de l'Egypte et de ses Juifs. C'est vraiment admirable que vous trouviez moyen de consacrer tant de temps à ce projet en sus de vos responsabilités professionelles."

Sarah Douek & Rachel Cwerner
New York, NY

"We even went with my children to Ma'adi and the synagogue there that I remembered as a child, was padlocked. It was disheartening to see first hand how the glory of this one Jewish community had departed. Please put me on the mailing list."

Rabbi Daniel Greer
New Haven, Connecticut

"Your newsletter has given me tremendous pleasure and tears. Even though we left when I was a little girl, I remember so much."

Rachel A. Braly
Boca Raton, Florida

"Alfred Hemmo m'a donné votre nom et adresse. J'ai en plus lu les documents que vous lui avez envoyés. J'étais en classe avec Alfred au Lycée à Bab-el-Louk. Italien de naissance et de passeport, je n'ai jamais vecu en Italie. Je ne suis même pas Juif, mais tous mes amis que j'ai eu le bonheur de retrouver dans ce Paris cosmopolite ... Pouvez vous me faire l'amitie et l'honneur de me mettre sur vos listes? J'aimerai continuer à vivre la drescription de ce que fut aussi ma vie, grâce à l'acceuil et à l'hospitalité de mes amis Juifs."

Hughette et Mario Rispoli
Meudon-la-Foret, France

"Please accept my congratulations for having advanced things to this point. Best wishes for fruitful and successful conferences."

Nadav Safran, Ph.D.
Cambridge, MA.

"I read with great interest about your efforts to work out some networking between the various groups of Egyptian Jews. It is, as you say, an ambitious project but it is also a worthy one: if all these groups -- in France, Switzerland, Israel, the US and other countries could unite for some joint action, then perhaps some of the endemic problems of the preservation of the Jewish heritage in Egypt could be solved."

Shimon Shamir, Ph.D.
Tel Aviv University, Israel

"Roberta and I think you are doing very important work in reminding people of the wonderful Jewish community that lived in Egypt until the rise of Islamic and nationalist sentiment against Jews and forced them to leave the country..."

Noach Milgram, Ph.D. &
Roberta Milgram, Ph.D.
Tel Aviv University, Israel

"Thank you very much for sending us your documentation about the Jews from Egypt ... They are precious to our readers. Please inform your members that the Alliance preserves a lot of archives concerning the Jews of Egypt (Cairo, Alexandria, Tantah, etc.) and that the researchers are welcome to use them. Wishing you all the success in your new challenge."

Jean-Claude Kuperminc
L'Alliance Israélite Universelle, Paris

"I was very impressed with the papers (papers presented at Columbia University Middle East Institute by IAJE), but at the same time I became increasingly angry and frustrated. After studying in Israeli and American schools and getting an advanced degree in Jewish history from Columbia, I feel that I have been denied access to a rich history of the Jews of the Middle East. I have since begun to read extensively on the topic and attend lec-

tures and conferences so that I can begin to integrate this history into my courses at Hunter College High School. You will be glad to know that almost everything at the conference, which you sponsored , has now filtered into my Modern History course. In appreciation of your work and commitment on behalf of a good cause."

Batya Braun Kleinfeld
Hunter College, New York

Authors of the aforementioned letters can be contacted by writing to the editor of this newsletter.

Dr. Victor D. Sanua
2416 Quentin Road
Brooklyn, New York 11229 USA

Salon Lectures in 2000 Arranged by I.A.J.E.

Dr. Abraham David, of the National and University Library of Hebrew University in Jerusalem, will discuss "**The Jews of Egypt and their Ties with the Land of Israel in the 16th Century**." From various sources, such as memoirs of immigrants and pilgrims to the land of Israel via Egypt, passages from the responsa literature, as well as letters and documents found in the Cairo Genizah, an interesting picture emerges of a variety of reciprocal relations between the Jews of Israel and of Egypt. This lecture is scheduled for Sunday, February 6, 2000 at 330 3rd Avenue in Manhattan. Prior to the lecture there will be a reception at 4 PM and a collation will follow the talk. All those interested in attending are requested to call the editor, Dr. Victor D. Sanua at (718) 339-0337. Please make your reservation as early as possible since space is limited.

Another lecture will be given by **Mr. Victor Cohen,** a lawyer from Montreal, Canada, who was closely associated with the Rabbinate in Cairo. His presentation will generally be concerned with His Eminence **Haim Nahum Effendi**, Chief Rabbi of Egypt. He will discuss the Rabbi's services in the Ottoman Empire till the Ataturk Revolution. He served in two major missions, delegate to the Lausanne peace mission and his efforts to appoint Prince Fouad to govern Montenegro. The lecture will be given at the above address, on Sunday April 2nd, 2000.

Comments made at previous Salons

"Thank you so much for inviting me to your home on February 21st. 1999. 1 had such a stimulating evening with you and your friends. You have opened a whole new world to me as I know so little about Sephardic Jews and their culture."

Estelle Fleischmann
Brooklyn, NY.

"I want to thank you again for the opportunity of knowing you and your friends at the most interesting gathering Sunday night. It was most informative as well as enjoyable as we got acquainted and learned more about Egyptian Jewry... It was a privilege to be in the company of so many authorities on the subject. I am glad that you will be passing on (in your talk) the "new message" at Madison Jewish Center.

Perhaps this contribution, small though it be, can be used to further your work."

Ruth Siegel
Brooklyn, NY.

Research on the Jews from Egypt

"Thank you for the material you forwarded to me. As you are aware, our archives, as well as our Chief Rabbi Haim Douek Memorial Collection in the Sephardic collection in the Sephardic Reference Room, has a great deal of material on Egyptian Jewry. You should come to see the material on some occasion."

Dr. M. Mitchels Serels
Yeshiva University, New York, NY.

"I have compiled 190 biographies found in the two "Annuaires des Juifs d'Egypte et du Proche-Orient, 1942-1943." The two yearbooks were published by the Société des Editions Historiques Juives d'Egypte. Some 10% of the names are Ashkenazi, the other 90% are Sefardi or oriental Jews. Here is the list of all the names. Numbers in brackets show the number of biographies for the same family name. The biographies are in French like the yearbooks themselves. A whole article on these biographies has been published in the Journal of the Israeli Genealogical Society "Sharsheret Hadorot," vol. 13, Nos. 2-3, Summer 1999."

Mathilde Tagger
Jerusalem, Israel

Editor's note: In view of the large number of names, we shall only provide names which start with the first two letters of the alphabet.

Future issues of the newsletter will carry more names: Abecassis, Acher, Adda (4), Ades, Agami (2), Aghion (2), Alexander, Algalgli, Ambar, Amiel, Aptekman, Arwas, Azoulai, Babami, Baragan, Barcilon, Bassan, Benacher, Benghait, Benveniste, Benyacar, Benzakein, Beressi, Berman, Bigio, Bitchal, Blattner, Bondi, etc...

Mrs. Mathilde Tagger has also sent a listing of 68 names of Jews born in Egypt and deported from France by the Germans. We shall only provide those whose names start with an A.

Surnames	Names	Birth Place	Convoy
Abastado	Mathilde	Cairo	57
Ades	Joseph	Alexandria	71
Aghion	Clementine	Alexandria	61
Aghion	Ernest	Alexandria	61
Ascher	Abraham	Cairo	60
Asher	Clemy	Cairo	60
Axelrod	Simon	Cairo	70

More information could be obtained from Mrs. Mathilde Tagger, 513 Elroy St. 92108 Jerusalem, Israel.

Future issues of the newsletter will carry the names of the other deportees. It is sad to know that Jews from Egypt, who had the misfortune to be in France during World War II, could not escape from the Holocaust.

"I am now finishing a study on the secret language ("argot") of Jewish goldsmiths in Egypt ... I am also preparing a large study concerning the Hebrew element in the Arabic dialect of the Jews from Egypt. I have collected very interesting material by working with Egyptian Jews. If you know of people who are willing to contribute from their personal knowledge and memory, I'll be grateful and they will be most welcome. This study will preserve the special language of Egyptian Jews , before this language becomes extinct, as there is practically no Jewish life in Egypt. Preserving the language means, of course, preserving many aspects of Jewish culture as well."

Dr. Gabriel Rosenbaum
Hebrew University, Isreal

"I am working for the last two years on a Ph.D. dissertation at Haifa University titled, "The Zionist movement in Egypt 1918-1950". The thesis emphasizes the role of the Zionist youth movement during this period. I will be grateful if you could publish in the next newsletter of I.A.J.E. the fact that this research is being conducted and if possible, ask ex-members of the youth movement, who think they can contribute to the research by giving testimonies or documents."

Ruth Kimche
Ramat Hasharon, Israel

If any reader can help the above investigators, please contact the Editor.

Dr. Jacques Hassoun (1936-1999)

Dr. Jacques Hassoun, died on April 24, 1999, in Paris, at the age of sixty two due to a brain tumor. He was born in Alexandria in 1936. His early education was in a Jewish School and at the age of 17 he was involved in political activities which led to his imprisonment. Dr. Hassoun spoke Arabic and Hebrew in addition to French. In 1954, he resumed his studies and attended the Paris medical school, which ultimately led him to become a well-known psychoanalyst. At one time, he was medical director of the "Centre Medico-Psycho-Pédagogique" of Aubervilliers (1966-1974). He is the first physician to include psychologists on his therapeutic team. He was instrumental in the publication of a number of professional periodicals.

In 1977, he worked for the establishment of the "Association pour la Sauvegarde du Patrimoine Culturel des Juifs d'Egypte" which edited the periodical **Nahar Misraim**, a mine of information about the life of Jews in Egypt. He also contributed largely in the publication of **Juifs D'Egypte** (Images et Textes, Editions du Scribe, 1984), a book which has become very popular among Jews from Egypt and which has hundreds of pictures of life in Egypt. Dr. Hassoun published ten books, some professional and some about Egypt. He was interested in the problem of identity of a Jew from Egypt living in different cultures. His major works include, "Fragments de Langue Maternelle" (Payot, 1979), "Juifs Du Nil (Le Sycomore. 1981), "Alexandrie" (La Découverte, 1986) "Les Passions Intraitables" (Aubier, 1989), "La Cruauté Mélancolique" (Aubier, 1995). He also wrote numerous articles.

An evening celebration in memory of Dr. Jacques Hassoun, was arranged by Mrs. Liliane Dammond, at her apartment in New York, with a get-together of his friends and people who knew him. Mrs. Carole Naggar spoke about Dr. Hassoun providing us with a picture of the man. The following are some of the excerpts from her talk:

"Because Jacques was erudite with a sense of humor, I propose that we keep today light, more of a picnic than a pilgrimage. Still, one of things that Jacques was most obsessed with in his last months was that he should not be forgotten: so let this text and yours be small pebbles and palms to his memory... His search for Jewish culture was constant and he had accumulated an enormous library as well as a huge collection of Middle-Eastern Judaica and manuscripts, including an Egyptian Torah written in Arabic, Aramaic, Ladino and Ethiopian- Jewish manuscripts and scrolls ... Feeling the need to explore his origins, Hassoun had gone back to Egypt in 1975: It was the first of many trips that he then helped organize for other Egyptian Jews, and where they explored whatever was left of the community of 150,000 (sic) people scattered the world over, from Montreal to Hawaii since the Nasserian Revolution of 1956... It was one of Jacques's gift to make each person special. He carried much beyond his profession his capacity for listening, an almost uncanny intuition that allowed him to switch on his full attention to the person next to him, and to accompany them along the way as ideas, thoughts, meditations, were brought to the surface. This made him very special to artists as he was able to be a catalyst to things half-thought, half-said, half-created, written words or painted paintings, and give the person that little push that helped establish confidence and believe with him that these could, indeed, exist, become artistic expression...

Jacques was a link and made links for us. It is now up to us to circulate through those links and get together other people who knew him, to pursue the projects we had started together: this way his memory will truly be a living thing, accrued from our thoughts, our laughs and our creations."

Carole Naggar, June 10, 1999

Une Causerie Avec le Dr. Jacques Hassoun à Paris, Septembre 17, 1998 à L-Hotel Etoile St. Honoré

Durant une réunion des Juifs d'Egypte dans la salle de reception de l'Hôtel Etoile St. Honoré, on demanda au Dr. Jacques Hassoun de faire quelques commentaires. Ce qui suit est une transcription de ses propos:

"Je suis trés honoré par votre invitation de vous parler, mon état de santé est tel que je ne pensai pas que j'aurai pu vous adresser ces quelques mots. Ceci c'est dans le domaine du miracle. Bon, nous sommes un petit groupe qui survie. Il est important qu'on maintienne ce que vous maintenez, c'est essentiel. Il y a des différents réseaux, les Juifs d'Egypte, ici et là. Notre Judaisme est différent d'autres Judaismes.

Je vais vous donner un example, il y a quelques années, nous avions des réunions à Paris de 200 à 250 personnes, nous avions pu maintenir notre propre revue Nahar Misraïm, maintenant malheureusement épuisée. Nous avons des possibilités réelles, il faut les maintenir, c'est essential, il ne faut pas qu'elles disparaissent, simplement car nous n'avons pas l'énergie ou la force. Il faut transmettre cette histoire coûte que coûte. Et pourquoi? Elle est assez unique notre histoire, une histoire exceptionnelle, d'emblée on était profondément Egyptien et profondément cosmopolite. Ceci était notre force. Au point de vue politique, nous avions des gens de la droite jusqu'à des grands groupes communistes, des groupes Zionistes de différentes tendances.

J'ai en possession des revues et journeaux écrits dans, peut-être dix langues différentes. Nous sommes la seule communauté au monde, plus qu'en Iraq qui était autochthone, nous avons écrit des livres de prière en langue Arabe, pas des transcriptions hébraiques. Nous avions des livres de prière en Italien. Nous avons imprimé environ 120 livres en Arabe de 1920-1962. C'était une communauté étonnante. Nous parlions Français, Ladino, Italien, Allemand, et Yiddish.

C'était une communauté extrêmement ouverte. Elle a éclaté et on peut la voir dans différents pays ou elle continue à vivre, en France, en Angleterre, aux

Etats Unis, Brézil, Canada, etc. Il faut poursuivre ces communautes. On ne doit pas abandonner ce projet. If faut que nous ayons des contacts avec les Juifs d'Egypte, et les maintenir, même avec les gens qui ne sont pas dans la communauté.

Il est nécessaire une fois chaque deux ans de maintenir ce contact, une fois en France, une fois aux Etats Unis, une fois en Israel, Brézil. Aujourd'hui, il y a des jeunes personnes qui font des recherches, qui ne sont pas même d'origine Egyptienne. Notre projet est de maintenir cette histoire. Notre histoire est devenue un object de recherche, if faut reconstituer cette histoire.

Notre Judaisme est très particulier. Il y a eu toute une période où le Judaisme était grec, c'était le haut lieu de la pensée, durant 4 siecles, et il a existé jusqu'au Sud de l'Egypte comme Judaisme hellénisé. Les Juifs n'ont pas disparu. Il y avait environ 40,000 Juifs lorsque les Arabes sont venus en Egypte. Ils ont crée un Judaisme complètement Arabe qui a survécu. Maimonides a écrit une grande partie de sa litérature en Arabe, c'était une culture énorme. Durant le 17ème jusqu'au 19ème siècle, cette culture a baissé, et au 19ème, siècle, elle est remontée, une partie Française et une partie Arabe, c'était une culture excessivement vivante.

La grande casse, c'est lorsqu'ils ont été expulsé, non par la violence, mais c'était complétement inattendu. Maintenant il faut reprendre la tâche. Qu'es ce qu'on attend?"

Note de l'éditeur:
Cette présentation a été suivie par une discussion parmi le groupe. Tous semblaient bien d'accord avec les propos du Dr. Jacques Hassoun, et c'est à ce moment qu'un comité Français fut organisé, afin qu'on puisse maintenir cette culture exceptionelle décrite par le Dr. Hassoun. Il y eu une grande discussion pour expliquer les raisons pourquoi les Juifs d'Egypte ont adopté la langue française. Il y eu quelques commentaires sur le fait que peux de gens savent qu'il y avait une communauté de Juifs en Egypte qui était très active. Un des buts de l'Association Internationale des Juifs d'Egypte, est de documenter notre existence.

Experiences of Jews from Egypt

A number of readers have sent us long letters in which they have added some biographical information. Most of them have not been published. It is hoped that with some financial support, all these biographical sketches could be made into a book, and left as a legacy of the personal experiences of Jews from Egypt to future generations. Readers are invited to send the copies of their writings to the Editor so that he can refer to them in future issues of the newsletter.

1) **Mr. Leon Delbourgo**, of Bologna, Italy, sent us information about his family. In his letter, he inquires about the whereabouts of the Kibrit family.

2) **Jacob Wahba M.D.** of Beachwood, Ohio, writes about his experiences while training as a Jewish medical student and about other Jewish medical students at Kasr-el Eini Hospital during the critical period. He entitled his work, "The sequence of events from 1952-1957 as seen and felt and interpreted by a young Jewish university student in Cairo University Medical School."

3) **Mrs. Fortunée Hemsy**, of Geneva, Switzerland, sent the manuscript of a presentation she made to a group of ladies in a Geneva club. She reports on her life in Egypt and her family hardships during her immigration to Italy.

4) **Mrs. Blanche Sacks** of Randallstown, Maryland, sent a short article entitled, *"Blanche Sacks Scales Tower of Babel,"* which appeared in a local newspaper. Since she speaks several languages, she has been working as a freelance interpreter. She has had some experience dealing with court cases of non-English speaking felons.

5) **Albert Pardo** of Marseille, France, a childhood friend, writes, "J'ai une pensée qui m'oppresse. Notre génération des Juifs d'Egypte est, petit à petit, en train de disparaître. Rien que ces derniers mois, nous avons subi la perte de plusieurs comme Jacques Hassoun, Nissim Chamla, Edouard Betito, etc. C'est pourquoi je crois qu'il FAUT ABSOLUMENT assurer la relève par la DEUXIEME GENERATION, c'est-à dire nos enfants, d'abord ceux nés en Egypte puis ceux nés à l'étranger. Il y en a plusieurs autour de moi qui seraient interessés à réaliser cette relève. Tu me diras ce que tu penses. J'aurai bien voulu ajouter dans le numéro deux du prochain newsletter une annonce concernant mes écrits et mes activités. En voici les unes et les autres:

Livres:
L'Egypte Que J'ai Connue; **A L'Hombre du Sphinx**; **Proverbes D'Egypte**, avec traduction en Français et l'a propos de leur énoncé; **Propos à Tire-Larigot**; **La Cuisine Juive D'Egypte.**

Tous ces manuscripts sont à paraître bientôt.

Albert Pardo, originaire du Caire, serait heureux de correspondre en Français ou en Anglais à toute personne qui voudrait bien le contacter pour évoquer souvenirs d'Egypte et échanger textes et poêmes.

6) Lettre de **Levana Zamir**, Tel Aviv, "J'ai écrit un article pour l'Institut des Tribus d'Israel, donnant un compte-rendu sur l'apport des Juifs ex-Egyptiens vivant en Israel, et leur participation au développement de l'Etat d'Israél depuis 1948 jusqu'à nos jours .... Nous pouvons être trés-trés fier de notre apport à l'Etat d'Israël, dans tous les domaines, excepté la politique - domaine où les ex-Egyptiens n'ont pas voulu s'en mêler...

7) **Mr. John Mazza** of Melbourne, Australia, who was instrumental in establishing a synagogue for Jews from Egypt in Melbourne, sent an article in which he wrote on **The Sephardi Presence in Australia** which includes references to Jews from Egypt.

8) **Mr. Maurice Hazan** of Paris, France, who is working on the genealogy of the Hazan family submitted a book of articles written by his niece, **Nicole Darcy**, Journaliste, *Témoin De Son Temps, Vol. II 1948-1955*, Oeuvres diverses. (201 pages).

9) **Mr. Allen E. Feldman**, an attorney from Montreal, Canada, sent a 12-page report entitled. "**The Jews of Modern Egypt**" which is an excellent overview of the history of Egyptian Jewry. Because of the importance of the topics discussed, the titles of all the sections are provided, "Origin and the Formation of the Community," "Nationality and Privilege," "Some Prominent Families," "Jews in the Economy," "The Era of Rabbi Nahum and

Cattaoui Pacha," "Parallel Developments Clouds on the Horizon," "The Post Cattaoui Period and Futile Attempts at Stabilization," "The End of the Community," "Analysis and Conclusions." It is to be noted that Maitre Allen E. Feldman is not Egyptian-born. It seemed that he lectured at his synagogue on the subject of Jews from Egypt, inspired by the presence of 20 Jewish families from Egypt. Kol Akavod! Maitre Feldman.

10) Nous avons reçu de **Mr. Jacques Hasson** de Marseille un rapport sur ses experiences comme ancien interné au Caire, Motakal No.5 Ambar No.8, Novembre 1956. Le titre de son rapport est EVENEMENTS DE SUEZ - OCTOBRE/ NOVEMBRE/DECEMBRE 1956 - EPILOGUE. Nous vous donnons le premier et dernier paragraphe, "Il serait bon de revenir une quarantaine d'années en arrière afin que tels évènements - la deuxième sortie des Juifs d'Egypte, ne tombent pas dans un oubli définitif, Mieux cela pourrait servir de mémoire pour tous nos enfants qui ont grandi à l'étranger ou sont nés hors de notre port d'attache: ALEXANDRIE... Je suis persuadé que tous les exilés Egyptiens garderont toujours un très bon souvenir de notre jeunesse, de notre vie en Egypte. Adieu Alexandrie, ... tu ne seras jamais plus la même que nous avons connu.

Meeting in Paris & Tel Aviv

A conference was held at the Espace Rachi on September 27, 1999, which was attended by 70-80 Jews from Egypt. The meeting was presided over by **Mr. Joseph Diday** and the facilities of the Center were made available and arranged for by **Mr. Aslan Cohen Sabban**.

Dr. Victor Sanua of New York spoke on the founding in New York of the International Association of Jews from Egypt whose purpose is to bind the Jews who reside in various countries of the world, and thus save their patrimony before it is too late since it is quite an aging population. The plan is to document and transmit to our youth the memories of a beautiful life that Jews had in Egypt which unfortunately was interrupted with their expulsion from the country, or because of the economic difficulties which were imposed on them after the Arab-Israel wars. Emigrations started after 1948, with the largest number leaving after 1956 following the Suez war. To date, the number of Jews still living in Egypt could not be more than 100 individuals. In time, Egypt will not have any more living Jews.

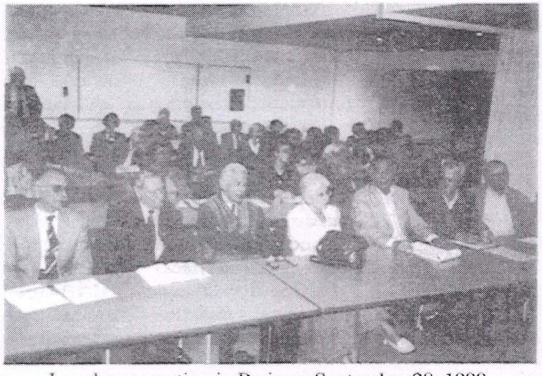
Dr. Sanua proposed to hold two international conferences, one in Paris in year 2000, and another one in Israel during 2001. Time and place are still to be determined. Such conferences should include 1) academic sessions to document the history of the expulsions of Jews from Egypt, events that are mostly unknown to the outside world, and how they adapted in their new environment. 2) A number of Jews from Egypt to relate their personal experiences during those difficult moments before and after their emigration. 3) Some entertainment by well-known singers who are Egyptian born, such as **Mr. Mustacchi**.

Following Dr. Sanua's presentation, **Mr. A. Cohen** paid tribute to the late **Dr. Jacques Hassoun**, who pioneered the establishment of the "Association pour la Sauvegarde du Patrimoine Culturel des Juifs d'Egypte." His death was a great loss to Jews from Egypt. The floor was opened for discussion. Mr. Aslan Cohen Sabban made an eloquent appeal for the need of Jews from Egypt to get together and support the efforts to establish activities on behalf of Jews from Egypt and urged the audience to give their financial support to these efforts. Besides the international conferences, some suggestion was made that it would be most enjoyable to arrange a cruise when Jews from Egypt would be able to interact socially for a few days.

The members of the **French Committee** include **Mrs. Simone** and **Mr. Joseph Diday**, **Mr. Aslan Cohen Sabban**, **Mr. Alfred Hemmo**, **Mr. Claude Fermont**, **Mr. David Harari**, **Mr. Lucien Perez** and **Mr. Raymond Stambouli**. The Committee met the next day for further discussion during a luncheon meeting.

On October 5, 1999, Dr. Sanua met a group (about 50) of Israeli Jews from Egypt at the Sheraton Hotel in Tel Aviv, informing them of his meeting in Paris and the need for them to join forces for a viable overall organization, which would have some responsibility in representing Israeli Egyptian Jewry. The group from Haifa, headed by its President, **Mr. Avner Assaèl**, was strongly represented at this meeting. During his short stay, Dr. Sanua had the opportunity to talk on the phone with Jews from Egypt who were not able to attend the meeting. He had a long conversation with **Dr. Arié Schlosberg** who is in the process of establishing an academic group in Israel.

The meeting in Paris was videotaped. Many pictures were also taken and are available upon request.
Your comments and/or suggestions are most welcome.



Luncheon meeting in Paris on September 28, 1999.
(l to r) Mr. Aslan Cohen Sabban, Mr. Alfred Hemmo, Mr. Joseph Diday, Mr. Claude Fermont and Mr. Harari

Meeting at the Espace Rachi in Paris on September 27, 1999

Aujourd'hui il est important de Mobiliser les Juifs D'Egypte

The following letter, with the above heading, was received from **Solomon Baruch** of Ecully, France,providing suggestions to make the IAJE a viable organization. He writes:

1) "La communauté restant en Egypte disparait, il est vital de faire une pression politique sur les autorités d'Egypte, E.U., France, et Israel pour le transfer ou bien les copies de toutes les archives communautaires des Beth Din d'Egypte.

2) **Fédérer Toutes Les Organizations Des Juifs D'Egypte** dans tous les pays où nous somme dispersés pour faire une force unie. Ceci pour participer aux négociations Israelo/Palestiniennes sur "le retour des refugiés ou la compensation financière? Il ne faut pas laisser le gouvernement Israelien négocier uniquement pour ses propres intêrets...

3) Il faut trouver un accord structurel avec le Dr. Sanua. Je suggère que dans tous les pays où il y aura une organization locale comme en France, la cotisation sera partagée entre le local et IAJE... Pour la bonne coordination, il faudrait un "executive committee" au sein de l'IAJE ou siègeront des représentants de l'organisation existante dans chaque pays ...

4) Thèmes pour la Conférence Internationale pour pouvoir réunir le maximum des participants. Raconter le passé lointain (Ah, on était bien en Egypte, ou bien le passé moins lointain, les années difficiles d'intégration dans les nouveaux pays) ...

5) Confier L'organization materielle à un grand voyagiste international tel l'**American Express** qui a une grande experience world-wide pour ce type de package. Etablir un budget de publicité, affiches, medias, et trouver les sponsors... Ceci est un programme difficile et qui demande un certain volume de travail. Si vous avez besoin d'aide je suis a votre disposition..."

In another letter written in English, Mr. Baruch writes, "I would like to suggest that a directory of the addresses, fax No., or e-mail address of all the members of the different associations in the different countries where there is a local correspondent be constructed and may be on a web server so as to be used by the members, after of course pay a fee to buy the directory or to consult the WEB. Of course many will try to reestablish contact with old friends that have disappeared... It is about time that we mobilize the members of the Jewish Egyptian Associations, The International Jewish Committees, the Israeli Public Authorities so as to microfilm the archives of the Jewish communities of Egypt before it is too late. Did some one contact The World Sephardic Federation?"

Etablir une Fédération Internationale

Mr. A. Meriems of Israel, provides some detailed suggestions about how to organize Jews from Egypt around the world. While we believe that his views tend to be ambitious, it is worth mentioning them. After giving an overview of the work conducted in the past regarding the organisational efforts on behalf of Egyptian Jewry, he writes:

"A mon humble avis, il serait peut être bon grâce à votre dynamique initative d'essayer de créer une **Fédération** ou mieux encore une **Confédération Internationale** qui pourrait servir de liens entre divers groupes éxistants dans différents pays, tout en leur laissant leur autonomie, indépendance, liberté d'action et leurs spécificités et en les poussant à coopérer aux grands buts pour la réalisation, de cette belle vision... Pour faire cela il est nécessaire d'avoir un soutien, une aide financière et une organisation très sérieuse et fonctionnant parfaitement. If faudrait faire appel à l'Agence Juive, l'Organisation Zioniste Mondiale et à tout les fonds Juifs dans le monde portant les noms de gens célèbres. Et il faudrait une très bonne équipe pour faire fonctionner tout cela... donc si vous pouvez prendre une année sabbatique, et venir ici (Israel) pour 6 mois. Je pense qu'il pourrait y avoir des résultats. De même quelques mois en France, en Australie et au Brésil, à part New York..."

Save the Jewish Archives in Egypt

Dr. Jeffrey Malka M.D. of Vienna, Virginia, raises many questions about Jewish records in Egypt:

"It was a pleasure to read your excellent articles which you were so kind to send me. I found the articles extremely interesting and informative and learned a lot from them. Thank you for all the efforts you are making in preserving the memory of the Jewish communities and Jewish life in Egypt ... I wonder if you or some of your contacts might know the answer to some of the following questions:

1. Where does one write to obtain birth certificates for Jews born in Egypt? 2) Where does one write to obtain death certificates for Jews born in Egypt? 3) Does anyone know Mrs. Weinstein, in Cairo, sufficiently to get her to permit making photocopies of the Jewish paper records (Sephardic and Askenazic) which she controls in Cairo and which are at a risk of loss (a simple fire could do it) and which, under her control, are now inaccessible to researchers needing information? 4) Does anyone know what happened to the records of the Jewish communities of Port-Said and Ismailia which were significant at the turn of the century? 5) Where are the records of the 'Jewish Old Age' house in Cairo and the Jewish Hospital at Abbassia?

Any information or help in directing these queries to the appropriate people would be of tremendous help to Jewish genealogists."

Beth Hatefutsoth Interested in Jews from Egypt

Mr. Joel J. Cahen, Deputy Director General Curator of Beth Hatefutsoth, Tel Aviv, Israel, sent the following e-mail: "We received the announcement from Dr. Victor D. Sanua and are very interested in trying to spread interest in Egyptian Jewry and its rich heritage.

A conference on the subject could be hosted by us and accompanied by an exhibit or exhibition provided we could find the financial means ... In any case, we are interested in helping and advancing the idea. Sincerely yours."

Editor's Note:
This e-mail was followed by a letter detailing possible options:
1) a conference of one day and exhibit of computerized slides,
2) Exhibition in small hall and 3) In-depth exhibition. The last option would require a minimum preparation time of 2 1/2 - 3 years.

Any readers interested in participating in this unique offer by Beth Hatefutsoth should contact the Editor.

News from around the World

Israel

We have received a letter about **Dr. Abraham Matalon's** activities. The following are excerpts from his letter: "L'Union des Juifs d'Egypte a enduré une longue période d'inaction qui a duré plus de quatre ans ... Finalement, les membres ... ont convoqué une Assemblée générale qui s'est tenue le 15 Novembre passé ou cours de laquelle a été élu un nouveau comité directeur composé de sept membres. Dr. Abraham Matalon a été élu par l'Assemblée président de l'Union... Nous souhaitons d'oeuvrer avec énergie afin d'organiser et accroître ses activités, en coordination avec toutes autres organisations qui travaillent dans un but commun. J'ai donné une conférence le 2/11/99 sur le Judaisme d'Egypte dans le cadre d'une activité organisée en commun par le Centre de Recherches du patrimoine des Juifs d'Egypte et le Centre pour la Conservation du Patrimoine du Judaisme d'Irak à Or Yehuda. Le programme comportait une partie qui a été mise sur pied par Dr. Arie Schlossberg et par moi... Cela fait déjà quelques mois que j'ai entrepris l'organisation d'une chorale composée d'anciens membres de la chorale de la Synagogue Eliahou Hannabi d'Alexandrie qui chantait les mélodies liturgiques du Maestro Alberto Hemsi ... L'une des activités en préparation est l'organisation d'une soirée consacrée au compositeur Juif Egyptien, Daoud Husni, qui a composé entre autres pour Um Kalsoum... Je te serre une main amicale."

Paris

An e-mail was received from **Mr. A. Strum** of Melbourne, Australia, about an important event that took place in Paris. One of the highlights for the Egyptian Jewish Diaspora was the **GLOIRE D'ALEXANDRIE** exhibit which took place in Le Petit Palais. Visitors viewed several centuries of treasures from the ancient megalopolis. It was inaugurated by Presidents Chirac and Mubarak. The following persons were invited for a dinner hosted by **Gilbert De Botton** who was born in Egypt. The guests included the names of well-known Jewish families from Egypt such as **Mosseri, Smouha, Sinigaglia, Mehrez, Nadler, Sharon, Castro, Danon, De Picciotto, Najar, Douek, Mizrahi, Riches, Naccamuli, Zilcha**. If any of these persons or if readers know the whereabouts of these families, the Editor would be pleased to have their addresses so that they can be apprised of the work which is carried out by the International Association of Jews from Egypt. Write to Dr. Victor D. Sanua, IAJE, 2416 Quentin Road, Brooklyn, NY 11229, USA

Santiago, Chile

A letter was received from **Mr. Avi Shlush** of the World Sephardi Federation, Jerusalem, Israel stating that the Sephardi Federation in Latin America will hold a Congress in Santiago, Chile, around March, 2000. The precise date of the Congress has not yet been decided. IAJE will inform the readership as soon as we hear about the details of the meeting. It is felt that the Congress will probably be attended by Jews from Egypt since many of them have settled in Latin America.

Schedule of Lectures presented by the International Association of Jews From Egypt

- **Ada Aharoni Ph.D.***
  Technion, Israel
  Nov. 3, 1998
  Identity of Jews from Egypt
- **Eli Malka**
  White Plains, New York
  Author of "Jacob's Children in the land of the Mahdi: Jews of Sudan"
  November 15, 1998
  Jews of Sudan
- **Marianne Sanua, Ph.D.**
  Florida Atlantic University
  Dec. 20, 1998
  Review of Beinin's Book
- **Sasson Somekh, Ph.D.**
  Tel Aviv University
  Jan.17, 1999
  Report on the Israeli Academic Center in Cairo
- **Pierre Cachia, Ph.D.***
  Columbia University
  Feb. 21, 1999
  Folk Beliefs and Practices
- **Jean-Marc Opppenheim Ph.D.***
  Columbia University
  March 21, 1999
  Gezira Sporting Club[1]
- **Albert de Vidas, Ph.D.** *
  Editor, Erensia Sefardi and Amicale Alexandrie
  April 18, 1999
  Sephardic Sayings and Tales
- **Victor D. Sanua Ph.D.***
  St John's University
  May 16, 1999
  Jews from Egypt in Australia & France

As in the past years, most of the lectures have been videotaped.

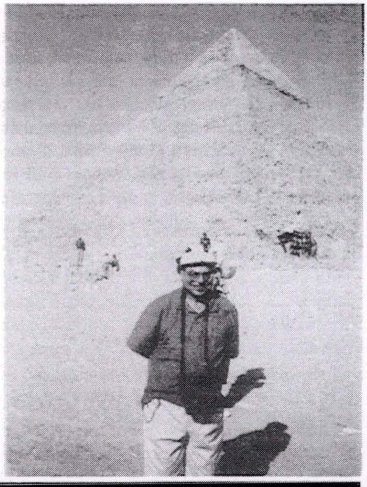
*Born in Egypt

[1] An expanded version of this lecture was published in the 1999 winter issue (Vol. 11 #4) of **Peace Review**.

Expansion of the S.E.C.

The Sephardic Educational Center in Jerusalem, Israel, was established to promote our traditional Sephardic educational, cultural and religious programs. It is in the process of expanding and has purchased three buildings from the Israeli Government. For information, please contact Dr. José Nissim, SEC, 420 N. Beverly Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90212

Greetings from your Editor on a visit to Egypt on Oct. 8, 1999



Search for Friends and Family Members

1) **Mr. Ives Zacot** from Paris is trying to locate his cousins in São Paulo, Brazil: Albert et Vivianne Sasson, Elvire Del Giglio, et Yvo Fatraggi.

2) **Mme. Claude-Andrée Saporta** de Marseille écrit, "J'aimerai savoir s'il reste des Saportas en Egypte et entrer en relations avec un membre de ma famille s'il a pu survivre à tous les tourments qui ont bouleversés nos familles. Un des frères de mon grand père est parti vivre en Egypte. Nous avons en 1992 organisé une réunion SAPORTA où nous étions près de 150, mais tous n'était pas là car c'est un travail long et compliqué de retrouver tous les membres d'une famille dispersée aux 4 coins du monde."

3) **Mr. Mario Modiano** of Athens, Greece, is particularly interested in researching the Modiano genealogy. He writes, "I knew that a few branches of the Modianos lived in Egypt. However, the one that is giving me most trouble is the one that counts its surviving member Patrick Modiano, the French novelist. It appears that around 1880, his great grandfather (Abraham son of Giacobbo) moved from Salonika to Alexandria where his grandfather and great-uncles were born. I tried to obtain further information from the Jewish Community of Cairo, but was given a rather reticent reply saying that it possessed no records that could assist me in my search..."

4) The **Malka family** of Sudan is trying to locate the relatives of their mother who was Egyptian-born in Cairo and who married the Chief Rabbi of Sudan, Shlomo Malka. Her name was Dora Goldenberg. Her father was a well-known optometrist in Cairo.

5) **Dr. Victor Sanua** is trying to locate a Goldenberg who attended the American University in Cairo. He directed plays during war times at the University and became an announcer in English at the Egyptian National Radio. Dr. Sanua received information from Mrs. Mathilde Tagger, a specialist in Jewish genealogy, that in 1866, a man by the name of Mosche Sanua, son of David Sanua, married Esther, daughter of Baruch Laniado. Please contact the Editor if you know anything about this branch of the family whose track we have lost.

Deux Generations D'Amis Retrouvés

J'ai reçu le nom d'un "**Viola**" né en Egypte mais qui vit au Marrakech. Etant donné que j'avais un ami de classe au Collège des Frères à Bab-el- Louk qui s'appelait **Robert Viola**, je lui ai écrit pour lui demander s'il était le Viola que j'ai connu au Caire. Il m'a répondu que son nom est **Lucien**, mais que son père s'appelle Robert et qu'il vit à Queens. Naturellement, j'ai eu le plaisir de me mettre en contact avec Robert. Quelques jours plus tard, je reçois un e-mail d'Australie me demandant si je peux retrouver un ami dont le nom était **Lucien Viola**. Naturellement, j'ai mis les deux personnes en contact, et la e-mail lettre suivante m'a été envoyée par Lucien Viola pour me remercier:

"Cher Mr. Sanua: De retour à Marrakech, il y a seulement quelques jours, je retrouve avec joie votre courrier. J'ai reçu également un e-mail d'un très cher ami d'enfance, Tico Malki, avec qui j'avais partagé ces belles années de notre jeunesse, de bonheur et d'innocence. Je revois encore son visage bon enfant, au Caire. Ce Caire était malheureusement devenu une ville combatante sous le joug de Nasser, perdant ses amis, familles et même citoyens. *Je vous remercie de retrouver, dans le temps, des amis perdus dans l'espace, de ce Caire d'antan.*

Lucien Viola, Marrakech, Maroc

POESIE

***NOSTALGIE DU PASSÉ* (Alexandrie)**
Vivianne Borg-Fleri, 1996

Il y avait une fois un pays bien-aimé,
Au ciel bleu d'azur et au sable doré.
Nous marchions les pieds nus tout le long du rivage
Le soleil sur la peau et le vent au visage.
Nous plongions notre corps dans la mer cristalline,
Et le soir nous dansions au son des mandolines ...
Ce fut un temps jadis, quand nous avions vingt ans
Nous étions jeunes et beaux comme un jour de printemps ...

Terre de notre enfance, terre où nous somme nés,
D'où un cruel destin nous a déracinés
Nous étions tous unis, on nous a divisés,
Et par le monde entier nous sommes parsemés
Les jours se sont enfuis et nous cherchons en vain
Ces moments si précieux d'un passé lointain
Malgré l'envol du temps et les ans écoulés
Alexandrie toujours, sera dans nos pensées!

From the Newsletter of the *Amicale Alexandrie Hier et Aujourd'Hui (AAHA, edited by Mr. Sandro Manzoni, Coligny, Switzerland)*

The Hatikva in Ladino

Mr. Victor H. Menache of San Diego, California, writes: "I am sending you the words of the 'Hatikva' in Ladino, as I remembered it. My mother used to sing it to me."

"Que abrió la puerta del Ziòn,
General Allenby como un Léon.
El Salvo a la populacion,
Biva su madre et su nacion.
Todos en juntos cantaremos,
A l'unico bien diseremos,
Signor Balfour, saludaremos.
Reposo Israel veeremos."

"Who opened the door of Zion,
General Allenby like a Lion.
He saved the population,
May his mother and nation live.
Altogether we shall sing,
To the one, rightly we shall say,
Our greetings to Signor Balfour.
We shall see Israel at Peace."

The editor is aware that there were other parts to this song and would appreciate hearing from any reader who cares to comment and/or provide additional verses.

Books on Jewish-Egyptian Themes

Cairo Chronicles: in Memories of a Lost Egypt ($20: Clarkson Potter) by **Colette Rossant**. She weaves recipes into her exotic tale of growing up in Cairo with a French mother, Egyptian father and Jewish grandparents.

One of Us: by **David Freeman** (Carroll & Graff, paperback, $9.95). A novel set in Egypt in the 1930's to World War II. Most of the stories take place in and around the Palace of Abdin. There is an excellent description of the flavor of life in Egypt, particularly around King Farouk. **Mrs. Blanche Sacks** sent us a review of the book.

Alexandrie Sur Seine: by **Frederick Galimidi** (Cousins de Salonique, 115 F. l'Enclos Vert -Ave. Guynemer - 13150, Tarascon, France). Galimidi describes the life of Jews in Alexandria, the hardships of life before and after the exodus as immigrants to France.

The book also includes descriptions of the daily Jewish life in Istanbul as narrated by his grandmother.

Struggle For Peace: Continuity and Change, 1967-1977 by **Joel Beinin**, Stanford University (Un. Press of Florida). Available at Barnes and Noble.

The Forgotten Millions: **The Modern Jewish Exodus from Arab Lands**. (Cassel, London). Edited by **Malka Shulewitz**. It includes two very important chapters, "The Expulsion of the Jews from the Arab Countries: The Palestinians' Attitude Towards It and Their Claims" by **Ya'akov Meron** and "The Integration Processes of Eastern Jews Into Israeli Society" by **Pnina Morag-Talmon**.

The Jews of North Africa during the Second World War, by **Michael Abitbol** (Wayne State Un. Press). According to the author, Germans planned to send Jews off to concentration camps as they did in Eastern Europe. Geography, transport facilities, allied attacks, some interventions from Franco's Spain and Mussolini's Italy benefitted North African Jews.

The Sun at Midday. A tale of a Mediterranean Family, by **Gini Alhadeff** (Pantheon Books. $23). Memoirs of how the Alexandrian beautiful life came to an abrupt end.

Books about Jews from other Muslim Countries

Mother of the Pound: **Memoirs on the Life and History of the Iraqi Jews**, by **David Kazzaz** (Sepher Hermon Press). Dr. Kazzaz, a psychiatrist, provides a general picture of the Jews of Iraq and their devotion to traditions and spiritual values.

The Jews of Aleppo, Syria, by Walter Zenner, Ph.D., SUNY, Albany (Wayne State University Press) This book includes some discussion about Syrian Jews who immigrated to Egypt.

Jacob's Children in the Land of the Mahdi - Jews of the Sudan by **Eli Malka**, White Plains, N. Y. (Syracuse University Press, phone orders. 800 365-8929)

Editor's Note:
A large percentage of Jews who lived in Sudan were originally from Egypt.

Attempts to Regain Property

Mr. Justus Weiner of Jerusalem is interested to hear from anyone who has attempted to regain (via litigation or any other process) property, real or personal, lost in 1948 or 1956 when they were forced out of Egypt. He is interested in learning about such attempts, even if they were unsuccessful.

Album of Pictures of Egypt

During the meeting in Tel Aviv of the Jews from Egypt on October 5th. 1999 at the Sheraton Hotel, Dr. Victor Sanua received from Mr. Elie Cohen, of the Israeli Painters and Sculptors Association, an album of pictures of his paintings exquisitely reproducing the familiar sights in Egypt such as the "arabeah khantour," the vendor of "irq sous," woman fanning "dorra" over a charcoal fire, vendor of "termes" with "gargoulettes," tarbouche cleaning, children collecting cigarette butts, mattress wool thrashing by a "menagit," a "bawab" at the door of a house, smoking "narguileh," street barber, fortune teller, etc etc. I believe that his paintings should be on exhibit at a future conference of Jews from Egypt. He also provided a picture of a maquette of a building constructed by him with a Pharaonic door, to be used as a Center for Jews from Egypt. We hope that it will become a reality.

Malka Family Commemorates Rabbi Shlomo Malka

The Malkas and Jews of Sudan came from all parts of the U.S.A., U.K., and Israel to commemorate in Jerusalem and Clifton, N.J., the 50th. anniversary of the passing of their former leader **Rabbi Shlomo Malka** Z'L', former Chief Rabbi of Sudan (who was reburied in Israel). Both gatherings were sponsored by David S. Malka of Secaucus, N.J. who published, for the occasion, his book, "From Generation to Generation - A Legacy of Faith and Tolerance" which contains many of Rabbi Shlomo Malka's teachings and writings.

La Lettre Sépharade in English

"Jean Carasso et moi-même avons le plaisir de vous annoncer qu'une édition Americaine de la **Lettre Sépharade** est en cours de préparation. Cette édition s'adressera avant tout aux anglophones, Sépharades ou autres personnes interéssées par la culture Sépharade. Connaissez-vous des Sépharades anglophones ou des amateurs de la culture Sépharade qui pourraient être interéssés par notre publication? Nous faisons appel à vous et serions heureux de leur envoyer une édition de la Lettre Sépharade ainsi qu'un synopsis de cette même édition en Anglais. Votre courrier devra étre envoyé à l'adresse suivante **Rosine Nussenblat**, 9206 Cedarcrest Drive, Bethesda, Maryland 20814 - rosine48@hotmail.com.

Reminders

A lady from the Middle West sent the following e-mail after I sent her material about the activities of the IAJE.

"Dear Victor, ... I enjoyed reading about your meetings. I have to confess I did not realize your expulsion* (Exodus) from Egypt was over the Egypt-Israeli problem. I guess I did not realize that it went back to 1960. However, as I am typing this I remember so clearly reading about all the problems in books such as "Exodus" and "The Hadj." I did not associate what you had experienced with the Israeli situation when you talked to us about it."
*Victor Sanua left on his own.

Editors Note: I must admit that I am often confronted by a lack of information by my Ashkenazi correligionists. Here are some examples. I was asked once by a gentleman if we had "mohels" (circumciser) in Egypt! A lady who visited Egypt and was able to attend a religious service in Cairo indicated that she could not follow the service, my assumption was that she thought the form of prayers by Jews from Egypt is esoteric. I recall once telling a gentleman that I was from Egypt, whereupon he stated that he thought that all Jews left Egypt with Moses!

I am sure that many readers have had similar experiences, and we would be pleased to relate them in future issues of the newsletter.

Articles on Jews from Egypt

The following articles which have appeared in "Image" magazine were written by the Editor and deal with different historical aspects of Jewish life in Egypt. If interested, they can be mailed to you. The cost in the USA is $15.00 plus $3.00 for postage. For requests from outside the USA, the cost for postage is $9.00 (air mail). Please make your checks payable to the AAJFT, and in the memo section add "for IAJE" and mail to Dr. Victor D. Sanua, IAJE, 2416 Quentin Road, Brooklyn, NY 11229 USA.

- **Growing Up as a Jew in Cairo**, April/May, 1997 pages 20, 22, 26.
- **Emigration of Sephardic Jews from Egypt**. May/June, 1997 pages 22, 26.

■ **Inaugural Meeting of the International Association of Jews from Egypt**, June/July, 1997 pages 78, 80.

■ **The Story of Elie Cohen:** An Egyptian born Jew who became Israel's greatest spy. July/August, 1997 pages 44, 58.

■ **The Second Meeting of the International Association of Jews from Egypt**. August/ September, 1997 pages 98, 104.

■ **"Egypt for the Egyptians"**: The Story of Abu Naddara (James Sanua) 1839-1912. A Jewish Egyptian Patriot. September /October, 1997. pages 76, 78.

■ **International Conference on the Jews in Modern Egypt**. Dec. 4, 1997. The Middle East Institute of Columbia University, November/December, 1997 pages, 72, 74.

■ **First Conference on the "Second Exodus from Egypt,"** January 11, 1998 pages 144, 146, 212.

■ **Haim Nahum Effendi** (1872-1960) Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Egypt, Feb., 1998.

■ **The Contributions of Sephardi Jews to the Economic and Industrial Development of Egypt**, March, 1998. pages, 82, 84, 114.

■ **Jewish Life in Alexandria: Ancient and Modern Times**. May, 1998.

■ **Jewish Life in Cairo: Medieval and Modern Times**. June, 1998.

■ **A Short History of the Exodus of Jews from Egypt**. August, 1998.

■ **Program and Report on the Papers Presented at the First International Conference of Jews from Egypt**. September, 1998.

■ **The Meeting of Jews from Egypt at The Hotel Etoile-St. Honoré - Paris, France**. December, 1998.

Historical Notes

"I send you here, as promised, the book "Minhat-Aharon" where you will find in the first chapter, a sketchy account of the life and deeds in Egypt of my beloved father, written by my brother Prof. Yaacov Choueka. In particular, you will find interesting details of the Synagogue and Yeshiva "Ahava ve Ahva" founded in Cairo by my father and which was for us, young Jewish boys, more of a meeting club and Education Center than a true Yeshiva in the Orthodox meaning, although we learned there a lot of our traditional culture. You will also find in this book a chapter written by myself, detailing my personal exegeses of the Israel bondage in Egypt. With best wishes for the success of the I.A.J.E. and all your undertakings and hoping for a future occasion to meet you. Cordialement."

Isaac Chavet, Ph.D., Rehovot, Israel

"If we look on the facts these were the years of 1880. At that time, my paternal grandmother, **Rosette Lalouche Wahba**, I was 13-14 years of age. She lived until I was 16 and I used to visit her frequently to hear from her living history, "this was my hobby beside medicine." She told me that she lived in Alexandria near the beach at the time the British navy and Admiral **Seymour** arrived to the port to put an end to the **"General Ahmed Orabi"** revolt against Khedive Tawfik. She remembered the day the city was shelled by British canons and the death, the looting and the anarchy that followed these events... I think that being the youngest child to older parents gave me the chance to hear from many people in a vivid way an interesting description of some of the events of the era."

Leon Wahba, M.D., Beachwood, Ohio

Advisory Academic Committee

To date, the following professors have consented to serve on the IAJE Advisory Academic Committee: **Joel Beinin, Ph.D.**, Stanford Univ., USA., **Yaacov Choueka, Ph.D.**, Bar-Ilan Univ., Tel Aviv, Israel. **Yoram Meital, Ph.D.**, Ben-Gurion Univ., Beer Sheva, Israel, **Tobie Nathan, Ph.D.**, University of Paris, France, **Jacob Landau, Ph.D.**, Hebrew Univ., Jerusalem, Israel, **Pittu Laungani, Ph.D.**, South Bank Univ., London, England, and **Sasson Somekh, Ph.D.**, Tel Aviv Univ., Israel, **Shimon Shamir, Ph.D.**, Tel Aviv Univ., Israel.

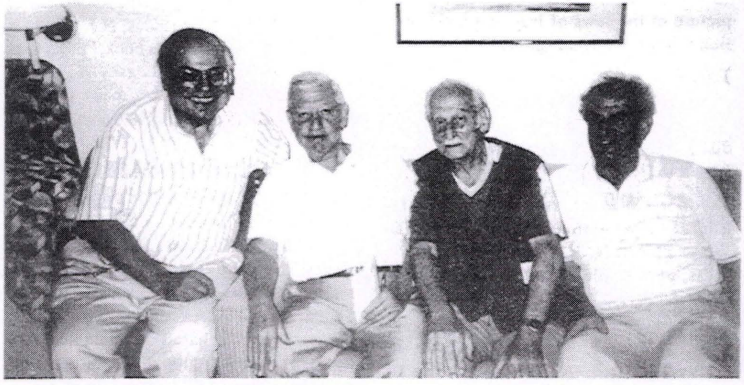
Book Review

Jacob's Children in the Land of the Mahdi: Jews of the Sudan by **Eli S. Malka**. Syracuse University Press, 1997. xiii, 262 pages, illustrations and index.

Reviewed by **Jean Marc R. Oppenheim, Ph.D.,** Middle East Institute, Columbia University, New York.

This is a timely work surveying a community which played an important role in the Sudan's economy; a community whose history is largely missing from the books on modern history of the Sudan. It is timely also because of the increasing focus of academics on the Jews of the Middle East and of the Arab world especially. The generation able to recount its collective history in, cultural and economic contributions to and exodus from those countries is passing on; hence its more articulate members are setting down their memories for the benefit of future generations of Jews and of historians. These efforts have been taking various forms: oral histories, memoirs, archives of personal papers and photographs, and associations whose aims are to the continued interest in this unique history.

Malka's work is a synthesis of history and memory and to reflect his impressive credentials: born and raised in Khartoum, president of his Jewish community, and business executive, he is eminently qualified to tell the story. The book encompasses personal narrative, documentary evidence, photographic archives, and literary devices. The author addresses the religious, sociocultural, and economic affairs of the Jews of Sudan. In the process, he surveys communal dynamics in the context of the British Colonial presence, Sudanese nationalism, and regional politics. Although some issues are treated more thoroughly than others, little misses his attention. One wishes that he had written a longer book; nonetheless, this is an important contribution to the literature of uprooted and vanished communities of the Jews of Arab lands in modern times.



At the Sheraton Hotel in Tel Aviv, Israel, on October 5, 1999.
(l to r) Dr. V. Sanua, Avner Assaèl, Elie Cohen (the artist, see page 11) and Moshe Khalaf

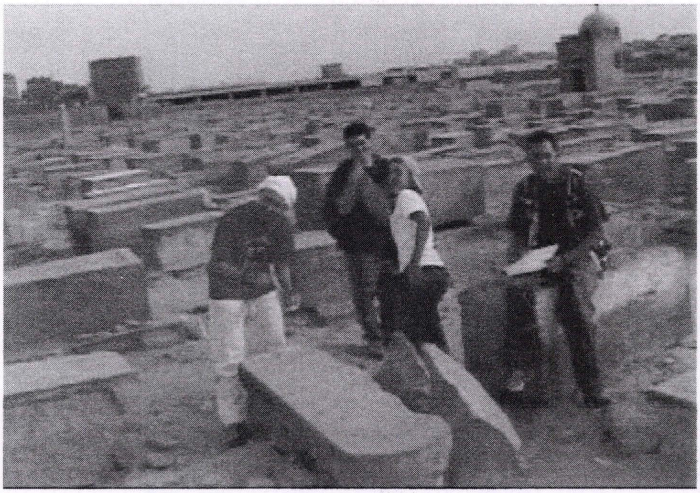
I.A.J.E. NEWSLETTER

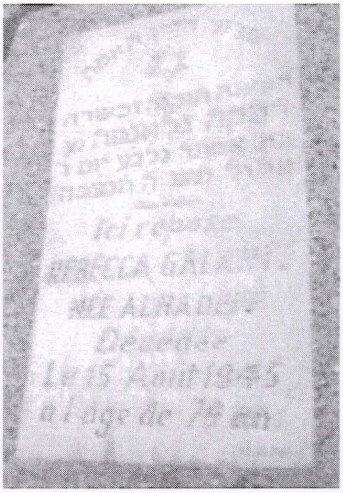
3

International Association of Jews from Egypt
Association Internationale des Juifs d'Egypte

EDITOR: Prof. Victor D. Sanua | IAJE, 2416 Quentin Road, Brooklyn, NY 11229 | 2000 Volume 2 No.1

The Bassatine Mapping Project





Shaar Ha-Shamayim Synagogue

(Gates of Heaven) Temple Ismaliah on Adly St.
Cairo, Egypt 1979

Local residents awaiting the arrival of visitors, to complete the "minyan," in order to conduct Sabbath services. (Photo archives, Beth Hatefutsoth)

We have added to this newsletter a flyer reporting on the research work by Mr.AARON KIVIAT on the BASSATINE MAPPING PROJECT. Mr. Kiviat was a student at the American University in Cairo, and he became interested in visiting former Jewish landmarks. Upon his return to the USA, he established THE FRIENDS OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN CAIRO in Seattle, Washington. During the summer of 2000, he was able to carry out the mapping with funds provided by non-Egyptian Jews of Seattle. Most of us would find his work rather comforting, since now there is the possibility to visit the graves of our dear departed.

With the assistance of volunteers, he has been able to record the names of almost 4000 legible tombstones and marked them so that they can easily be located from the map he prepared. Also available are digital pictures of these tombstones. Thousands of graves could not be identified since the tombstones were removed

or the inscriptions require further work because of lack of clarity. The identification of such graves has been left for another project which would require more time and expertise and, of course, more financing. Visits to the cemetery will have to be arranged by Ms. CARMEN WEINSTEIN at 13 Sabil el Khazindar, Abassiah, Cairo, who is in charge of the Rabbinate. See page 10, for the original letter from Mr. KIVIAT reporting on the poor condition of Jewish sites in Cairo.

Tribunal Mixte, at the end of Fouad el Awal St., now 26th July Street - 1945

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are grateful to **Mr. Elie Rofe**, his sons, **André** and **René**, **Dr. Victor Perlow**, **Mr. Victor Cohen**, **Mr. Charles Chehebar**, **Mr. Fred Lee Barber**, **Mr. Larry Behar** and **Mr. Tony Levi** for providing funds to help publish and distribute this issue of the Newsletter. Thanks.

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Editorial

In this issue, we have included extensive quotations and even full text of e-mail and letters received. It behooves us to inform our readers about the thoughts of former Jews from Egypt, since they include both news and reflections. We have received extensive reports, but unfortunately this rich material cannot be printed since **IAJE** does not have the necessary financial resources to do so. On the other hand, we have included as an addendum to the newsletter, synopses of books which have been requested by the editor and which reflect on the experience of former inhabitants of Egypt.

There is one particular letter sent to us by Mr. **JACK FELDSTEIN** of Australia which needs to be mentioned. Mr. Feldstein found the newsletter of the **IAJE** among his fathers papers shortly after he died. He realized, after his father's death, the significance of his early life in Egypt. As a result, he wrote a play about his father, which a film producer, MR. **PHAEDON VASS** in Australia, is considering putting on the screen. A regular film on Jews from Egypt would provide the recognition of our experiences which have received little attention. We would strongly urge readers of the newsletter to support such an important development. The conditions of the arrangements are included in the newsletter on page 9. The production of such a film would enhance the objective of the **International Association of Jews From Egypt**.

In the first issue of the newsletter, we provided an illustration of the limited general knowledge that Jews and non-Jews, around the world, have about the kind of life we had in Egypt. A Jewish magazine in Brazil which published an article of ours included pictures of individuals in native clothing, and one selling soft drinks, irci sous!!...

We have also added most of the content of a letter from **Mr. Maurice Levy**, of Chicago, about the difficult times his father had in adjusting to the new world. He suffered from mental illness for 14 years because of his depression and anguish. While the majority of Jews from Egypt have adapted nicely in their new countries, which was helped by their knowledge of several languages and good education, a number of them may have had a tragic ending after their exodus, with some having lost a lot of property. We would like to hear of successes and failures of adaptation, and our readers are requested to send us their stories.

JOIN THE I.A.J.E.

❑ Membership Contribution $30.00
(Includes newsletter subscription)

Donations to promote I.A.J.E. activities:

❑ $50 ❑ $100 ❑ $200 ❑ $500

❑ $1,000 ❑ $5,000 ❑ Other _____

All tax-deductible contributions and subscriptions should be made payable to our affiliated organization, the **American Association of Jewish Friends of Turkey (AAJFT)**, and in the memo section of the check add "For IAJE."

For donors outside the USA, international money orders, your own currency or dollars could be sent.

All funds are to be mailed to:
Dr. Victor D. Sanua, Editor
Int'l Association of Jews from Egypt
2416 Quentin Road
Brooklyn, New York 11229, U.S.A.

Reflections of the Editor

In the course of the past few years, since we have tried to establish the International Association of Jews from Egypt, we have been able to classify four categories of individuals that we have contacted:

1) Persons around the world whose names were given to us by readers because of the possibility that they might be interested in what we are doing. In spite of numerous announcements and newsletters, we never received any responses. At this time, we have decided that this group is "cause perdue."

2) This group seems to be interested in what we are doing and sends us e-mail, letters and faxes making specific enquiries, such as how to get res-

titution of lost assets, getting the genealogy of specific families, records of circumcisions, deaths, marriages, finding reliable local drivers in Egypt, etc. etc. We try to answer to the best of our ability. Since IAJE does not have a regular administrative office and staff, responding to these letters is time consuming and encroaches on the editor's time. The editor must also maintain academic activities of his profession. Again, no membership dues or donations were received.

3) This third group seems to be very excited about what we are doing, and extols us on the importance of our efforts to save our patrimony. This enthusiasm is not translated into generating subscriptions or donations.

4) We are very thankful to the fourth group who genuinely appreciate what we are doing and whose regular subscriptions and donations enable us to subsist.

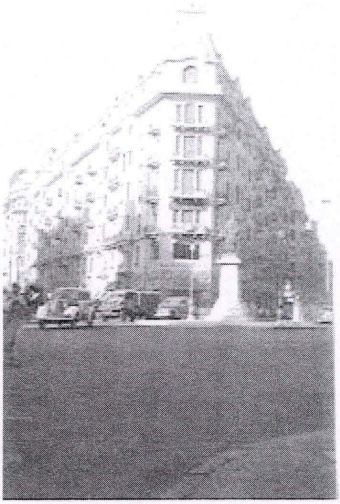
At this time, we are interested to hear from our readers if they can speculate about the reasons why Jews from Egypt, particularly those who do not seem to care about their patrimony, and those who feel quite nostalgic about their life in Egypt, which has been labelled as "édénien" by one of our correspondents, Mario Feininger, a concert pianist from Hollywood, Ca.

In our poetry corner, are two poems, one by Vivian Borg of London and one by Vivian Silver of Montreal expressing their nostalgia for Alexandria.

We would like to do more, but we are hamstrung by the limited funds we have been receiving.

All we can say again is: **PLEASE SUBSCRIBE AND SEND DONATIONS TO THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JEWS FROM EGYPT.**

Don't be left out - Join the growing ranks of supporters of our effort to preserve and promote the glorious history of Jews from Egypt.



Midan Soliman Pacha, picture taken from Groppi, now Midan Talaat Harb -1945

Inaugural Meetings in Florida, USA and London, England

During the early part of the year 2000, the **International Association of Jews from Egypt** arranged meetings in **Boca Raton** and **Hallandale, Florida** and **London, England.** Furthermore, a series of lectures were arranged in **Manhattan** and **Brooklyn, New York.**

BOCA RATON, FLORIDA

On February 19, 2000, at the Century Village in Boca Raton, a meeting was held with about 50 people in attendance. Each person was given the opportunity to talk about himself or herself regarding their experiences in leaving Egypt. The meeting was followed by a catered luncheon and singing of French and Ladino songs. Many Jews from Egypt have been retiring to or live only during the

(Above) Meeting in Boca Raton where presentations were made by guests. (Right) **Victor Perlow**, M.D., of Boca Raton urging the group to support the IAJE. On the left is **Professor M. Teicher**, former Dean of the School of Social Work at Yeshiva University at the time the editor was a professor there.

winter months in Florida, which reminds them of the beautiful weather they had in Egypt, particularly Alexandria.

HALLANDALE, FLORIDA

On March 20, 2000, another meeting was held in Hallandale, Florida, where a number of Jews from Egypt live in four large buildings on Ocean Drive.

The group was informed about the establishment of the International Association of Jews from Egypt by **Dr. Victor Sanua,** founder. Participating were **Mr. Larry Behar,** immigration lawyer, and **Dr. Victor Perlow,** a surgeon. At this meeting, the editor met **Mr. Albert Chemtob,** a friend he has not seen in more than fifty years.

At a subsequent meeting on 24, May 2000, an IAJE committee was set up with **Mr. Larry Behar, Dr. Victor Perlow, Dr. Fernande Bayda, Mr. and Mrs. David Levenson and Mrs. Rachel Jampolski.**

Persons who were invited by **Mr. David Levenson,** our contact person, to attend the meeting in Hallandale were: **Jacques Ammar, Rachel Suede, Dr. Jacques Cohen, Dr. Fernande Beyda, Charles Jampolski, Mark Zevi, Elie Rofé, Albert Chemtob, Claire Setton, Saul Charbani, Izidore Wolkowiez, Nadine Mesher, Raymond Dana, André Roffé, Henry Ades, Mary Keimer, Jeff Massouda, Mino Adigzir, Albert Salama, Simone Mourad** and **Clemence Wahba.**

(Photo left) **Larry Behar, J.D.,** addressing the Hallandale group urging them to communicate with one another. **Elie Rofé** seated at the extreme left. (Photo right) **H. Murad, Shueka, L. Levenson, S. Murad, V. Chammah, R. Suede.** At the back **J. Jampolsky, D. Levenson** (standing), and **H. Ades,** all being advised by speakers to join the **IAJE.**

LONDON, ENGLAND

On July, 18, 2000, **Dr. Victor Sanua** arranged a meeting of Jews from Egypt at the Grosvenor House Hotel, in London. We are pleased to report that the open house was quite successful and beyond expectation. While we have 45 names and addresses of individuals who attended, there were many more who visited us. Because of the unexpected number of visitors, we had to gather in the lobby of the hotel where we had interesting discussions about forming a chapter of the IAJE. This chapter will receive membership dues and donations and will develop local programs.

We were delighted, at one point during our meeting, to hear screams and see tears of joy when some ladies met who had not seen each other in decades. This illustrates one of the purposes of the IAJE which is to bring together Jews from Egypt living in different parts of the world and of people living in the same city. The names of the people who attended the open house will be found at the end of this report. You may possibly know some of them. **Mrs. Esther Dee (Goldstein)** and **Mr. Gerard De Botton** volunteered to establish a branch of IAJE in England. Those who joined them as a committee include, **Judith Amarilio, Maurice Dweck, Jean-Claude Samia** and **Suzy Sidi.** A videotape of the whole encounter was arranged by Mrs. Sidi. One of the first efforts of the committee is to arrange a one day international conference in London in the year 2001, which would possibly include a banquet. The details will be provided in a future issue of the newsletter.

We strongly encourage Jews from Egypt, living in various parts of the world, to form executive committees so as to make the **International Association of Jews from Egypt** really international.

The following persons attended the Open House on July 18, 2000: **Judith Amarilio, Alan Levy, Eliot L. Banoun, Sophie Levi, Maurice & Linda Bierbrier, Marcelle Maleh, Ralph & Lydia Biriotti, Maurice Maleh, Gerard De Botton, Raymonde Cole, Ralph Cadeaux, Marcel Nada, Solomon Cadranel, Ted Nahmias, Elie Cohen, R. Papouchado, Ann & Dr. Maurice Cohen, Denyse Pinto, Daisy Esther Collins, Mona Posner, Esther Dee, Gigi Reiss, Lucy Douek, Claudia Douek Roden, Dr. Edward Douek, Alphonse & Irene Salem, Maurice Dwek, Liliane Shabetai, Sara Fedida, Marcelle Shama, Jacqueline Fiss, Susy Sidi,**

Leopoldine Gaon, Maud A. Smith, Lys Goldstein, Mary Twynham, Arlette Gotkine, Irene Winsby, Salomon Green, Rosine Haller, Vivian Biriotti, Ronnie Harounoff, Jean-Claude Samia, Phyliss Preston and **Renée Charbit Hodary**.

The following is the letter mailed to Jews from Egypt by the London Committee on September 22nd. 2000:
"Dear Fellow Egyptians,

Following the recent visit of Professor Victor Sanua, we are contacting you with a view to organize similar events in London. As you may be aware, Victor is the Founder of the IAJE (International Association of Jews from Egypt) which aims to ensure that we retain those important links with our past. We envisage our organization primarily to be a forum for all of us who were born in Egypt and were either expelled or left before or as a result of the 1956 crisis. With this in mind, we are planning to meet once again to establish guidelines for this group. It is irrelevant whether you previously attended the meeting. We propose the following day and venue: Day:Wednesday, October 18, 2000, Time: 7.30PM, Venue: Minsky's Bar, Jarvis International Hotel, Lodge Road, St.John's Wood, NW8.

Please contact either of us to confirm you attendance. This group at an early state of formation will no doubt eventually find its own direction. We look forward to hearing from you and in the meantime wish you all the very best for the High Holidays."

GERARD DE BOTTON
"The Mapples"
11 Crescent Rd., London N8 8az

ESTHER DEE
15 Broadlands Lodge
Broadlands Road, London N6 4AW

An ad of the meeting was placed in the JEWISH CHRONICLE

Furthermore the group is arranging another meeting THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF EGYPT, History, slides, stories, personal reminiscences, food samplings. on Saturday 25th. November at 8 PM at the New North London Synagogue, Manor House, 80 East End Rd. Finchley, London N3 7SY, Contact is to be made with Mr. Alec Nacamuli (Home: 8343 4473, Office: 7202 5366)

Meetings in London of Jews from Egypt

Open house of the IAJE at Grosvenor House Hotel, July 18, 2000, **Elie Cohen** from Paris at center.

Meeting arranged by **Gerard De Botton** and **Esther Dee** at the Jarvis International Hotel, October 18, 2000.

From left to right, **L. Gaon**, **V. Sanua** and **G. de Botton**.

From left to right: **Renée Charbit Hodary**, **Suzi Sidi**, **Maude Smith** (seated) **Esther Dee** and **Gigi Reiss**.

News from around the World

Compte rendu de la Rencontre du 27 Septembre 1999 de L'Association des Juifs Originaires d'Egypte en France, durant la visite du Professeur Victor Sanua.

...Plus de 80 personnes se sont retrouvées à l'Espace Rachi pour écouter **le Professeur Sanua** et pour rencontrer l'équipe fondatrice de notre Association, grâce à l'amabilité de **M. Aslan Cohen-Sabban** qui nous en a ouvert les portes.

A group of Jews from Egypt at the l'espace Rachi in Paris

Le Professeur Sanua, qui réside aux Etats-Unis, anime et soutient une Association similaire à la nôtre et il envisage d'organiser des rencontres internationales de Juifs d'Egypte d'abord en France en 2000 et l'an prochain en Israël, et il a profité d'un passage à Paris pour nous exposer ses projets. Notre objectif commun est de rassembler un maximum de Juifs originaires d'Egypte autour d'un programme qui comprendrait d'une part des présentations qui seraient faites par des chercheurs et historiens pour rappeler l'histoire de notre communauté, sa contribution au développement de l'Egypt,e, et plus particulièrement au 19ème et au 20ème siècles, ainsi que l'histoire de son expulsion à grande échelle qui a débuté en 1956. Ces rencontres permettraient de recueillir également des témoignages des uns et des autres qui ont vécu cette période mouvementée (et souvent traumatisante) de leur existence, et finalement d'inviter des artistes originaires d'Egypte, pour compléter le programme de ces journées internationales.

L'organisation de ces rencontres internationales dépend de la résolution de nombreuses questions d'ordre logistique et matériel qui sont loin d'avoir été réglées et donc si ce projet a été écouté avec attention, il reste à trouver les personnes qui voudront s'y impliquer et qui sauront trouver les moyens nécessaires pour le mener à bien dans les mois à venir...

J. Diday, President
D. Harari, Secretaire

■ **Round table honored the late Dr. Jacques Hassoun, Paris, France.**

Le Centre Culturel d'Egypte à Paris a organizé une table ronde en hommage au Dr. Jacques Hassoun le 8 Mars 2000. Paul Balta, Patrick Guyomard, Robert Sole, Claude Spielman et Ahmed Youssef ont participé à cette table ronde. Dans le Numero 2 de notre bulletin de l'IAJE, nous avons inclu une presentation du Dr. Jacques Hassoun exhortant les Juifs d'Egypte de be pas abandonner leur patrimoine.

■ **Column on Jews from Egypt in the Wall Street Journal, New York, U.S.A.**

The Wall Street Journal includes a report by **Stephen J. Gain** with the headline **"What's to become of Musty Judaica in Egypt's Temples**?" He writes, in part, "The second Jewish Exodus from Egypt began a half century ago, the result of decades of Arab-Israeli strife. But a dispute over its legacy - and it is not the cry of 'Let my people go.' It is the lament of a few dozen Jews who have remained in Egypt, declaring, 'Let our Torahs stay.' Moses parted the sea when he left the first time: this dispute is dividing Jews oceans apart."

Readers are invited to comment on the above article.

■ **Creating a chair at Tel Aviv University to study Jews from Egypt**

Dr. Arie Shlossberg informs us that he has established an Israeli Center for Studies of the Heritage of Jews from Egypt. The purpose is to create a Chair or Institute at Tel Aviv University. He has received approval and encouragement from the University President and Vice-President.

■ **The following review by Elie Cohen appeared in the L'ARCHE of Mars 2000.**

Les synagogues d'Égypte

"C'est un Arabe, un Égyptien, un musulman, **El Nabaoui Gabre Sérag**, directeur général des Monuments

historiques hébraïques d'Égypte, qui, dans un livre de 150 pages, a répertorié tous les temples juifs d'Égypte (Le Caire, Alexandrie, Héliopolis, Abbasiah, etc.).

Dans les cinq chapitres de son livre, écrit en arabe et édité au Caire, M. El Nabaoui, un historien minutieux, a recensé les synagogues sépharades rabbiniques, sépharades, karaïtes et ashkénazes. Il les décrit avec maints détails: histoire, descriptions architecturales et dimensions, matériaux et étoffes, sculptures, ornements et inscriptions, etc."

Faute de fidèles Juifs

Dans le cinquième chapitre, l'auteur évoque le cimetière juif du Vieux Caire, la concession de la riche famille Mosseri et la Guénézah II qui y a été retrouvée enfouie. Il montre par qui et comment ces synagogues étaient gérées, ainsi que leur rôle dans la vie quotidienne des Juifs de l'époque. Il n'oublie pas non plus de rappeler que ces Juifs participaient activement à tous les domaines de la vie du pays: commerce, sciences arts et lettres.

Grâce à l'ouvrage complet et excellent de M. El Nabaoui, plusieurs synagogues ont été classées monuments historiques et, faute de fidèles juifs, elles sont visitées par de nombreux touristes.

Elie Cohen, Paris.

Search for Friends and Family Members

The following letter was received from a member in Geneva of the well-known **Cicurel** family, who owned the largest department store in Egypt. He submitted a genealogical tree of his family and enquired about relatives in the USA.

"J'ai vraiment été comblé à la réception de votre lettre du 24 Janvier 2000 ainsi que de ses annexes, soit le magazine mensuel "IMAGE," ainsi que votre bulletin d'information, que j'ai lu à grand intêret. Un grand MERCI pour cette documentation... Avec tout mes encouragements pour la tâche ardue que vous avez eu le courage d'entreprendre et votre participation entière au Bulletin de l'I.A.J.E."

Claude Cicurel, Geneva, Switzerland.

The Cicurel family comes from Kassaba, Turkey, a town which is about 70 kilometers from Izmir (Smyrna). Some members of the family went to Egypt and another branch went to the USA at the turn of the century. I.A.J.E. was able to bring together these two branches of the family who had lost contact with each other.

Another letter was received from **Mrs Sara Mires (Lidgi)** as follows:

"Je suis très heureuse de joindre IAJE. J'ai un cousin qui habite l'Afrique du Sud, il n'est pas né en Egypte, mais je pense que son père l'était. Il s'appelle comme vous **Victor R. Sanua**. Je suis curieuse de savoir si vous êtes apparantés."

Sara Mires, Dallas, Texas.

"The above mentioned, Victor R. Sanua, is my first cousin and I am certainly delighted to make contact with him now, since I was unable to locate his whereabouts after I left Egypt. Furthermore, I have discovered another relative, his son, **Alain Sanua**, who is a physician in Johannesburg, South Africa." **Victor D. Sanua, New York.**

The IAJE has been very instrumental in locating relatives and friends of our members. This reinforces our desire to pursue the continuation of the International Association of Jews from Egypt despite many difficulties, primarily financial.

Publications Received

For the past few months, we have received a number of published and unpublished works written by Jews from Egypt, many relating to their experiences in Egypt and their country of adoption. We have asked some of these authors to provide us with a summary of their work which is added as an addendum.

a) **SECOND EXODUS**, an autobiography by **Mayer Harari**, former classmate at the College des Frères, Bab el Louk, Cairo and now living in Australia.

b) **LANDLOCKED ISLANDS. Two Alien Lives in Egypt** by Prof. **Pierre Cachia.** He writes on his experiences and those of his mother living in small towns in Upper Egypt which provides a different kind of life than that in big metropolitan cities like Cairo and Alexandria. Dr. Cachia was a classmate of the Editor at the American University of Cairo. He is now professor of Modern Arabic Literature at Columbia University in New York.

c) **PORT-SAID REVISITED** by **Sylvia Modelski** is the first book-length publication in English of Port-Said, Egypt. It has at its core her memoirs of the city in the 1930s.

d) **ALEXANDRIE SUR SEINE** by **Frederick Galimidi.** He reports on his experiences on leaving Alexandria and adapting to life in France since he was not a French citizen.

Other Material Received

a) **Changing Representation of Jews in Egyptian Cinema** by **Leah Harris.**

b) **Rethinking the Decline of Egyptian Jewry" 1936-1967**. by **Leah Harris.**

c) **A House Like Any Other** is a play by **Jack Feldstein** in connection with the difficult adaptation of his Egyptian-born father in Australia. It is hoped that this play will be the subject of a movie.

d) **Egypt** a handwritten report by **Mrs. Tania Pardo** recalling the difficult times before leaving Egypt.

e) **Ben Ezra Synagogue** by **Elie Cohen** of Paris. Mr. Cohen visited Cairo for a period of 5 weeks. He wrote another report describing his contacts with Egyptians of different ages. Both of these reports are available upon request.

f) **WHEN THE WINDS BLOW** by **Vivian Borg,** a biography which includes the difficulties she encountered in leaving Port-Said at the time of the Suez war. She now lives in London, England.

REMINDER: Be a part of this important endeavor to preserve our precious heritage. Send in your subscriptions and donations - do it today, do not delay!

Salon Lectures in 2000 Arranged by IAJE

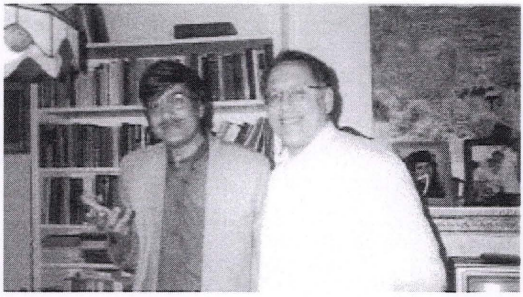
1. On February 6, 2000, **DR. ABRAHAM DAVID** of the National and University Library of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem gave a lecture to the membership in Manhattan on **"The Jews of Egypt and their Ties with the Land of Israel."** In the Jewish sources the existence of the ties between the Jews of Egypt and the land of Israel are indicated in various ways. Israel was ruled by emirs and governors with varying degrees of authority appointed by the central government in Cairo. The sources such as memoirs of immigrants and pilgrims from Europe to Israel via Egypt and documents found in the Cairo Genizah, etc. lead to the conclusion that Jews of Egypt maintained firm ties with the Jewish communities in the land of Israel. These ties found factual expression in the massive and continuous support that the Jews of Egypt provided for the welfare of the Jews in the Land of Israel, both the community and individual Jews. The lecture was followed by a buffet which included Middle East food.

2. On Sunday April 2, 2000, IAJE arranged for a lecture by **Mr. Victor Cohen,** attorney in Montreal, on **Rabbi Haim Nahum Effendi (1872-1960)** who was Chief Rabbi of the Ottoman Empire, 1909-1920 and Chief Rabbi of Egypt, 1925-1960. The lecture was given at the Congregation Beth Torah synagogue. Participants in the arrangements included **Dr. Rabbi Elie Abadi** and **Mr. David Shasha.** Mr. Cohen eloquently discussed the contributions **Rabbi Haim Nahum Effendi** made to both Turkey and Egypt and his personal dedication to maintain the balance between the welfare of his constituents and the edicts that were enacted which made life of Jews from Egypt very difficult. There was some question about his devotion towards Zionism. He was certainly placed in an very awkward position during the Middle East wars.

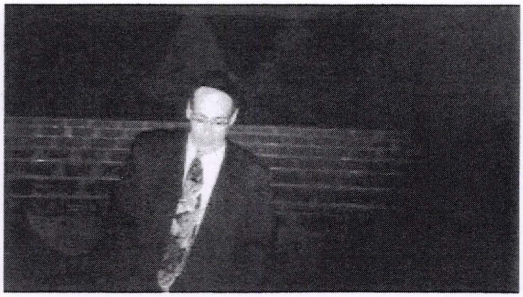
3. On February 2, 2000, **Dr. Zvi Zohar** gave a talk in our home on **"A Perspective From Within Middle Eastern Sephardic Rabbinic Tradition."** Dr. Zvi Zohar is currently head of the Shalom Hartman Institute's Center for Contemporary Halacha and is a professor of the Graduate Studies Program of Contemporary Jewry at Bar Ilan University. He presented an array of texts and opinions from the writings of Sephardic Middle-Eastern hahamim (rabbis) of modern times. He argues that the Sephardic community had the ability to accept the multivocal character of Sephardic Jewishness without creating internal schism and hatred.

Salon in Manhattan, (l to r), **A. Barsano**, **S. Sanua**, **Prof. P. Cachia**, **S. Malak**, **Dr. A. David (Speaker)**, **I. Reich**, **O. Benjamin (Hostess)**, **Ina Stone**, **E. Fleishman**, **Dr. & Mrs. R. David**

At Beth Torah Synagogue, at left, **Victor Cohen** (Speaker), at center, **Dr. Victor Sanua** and **Dr. Elie Abadi**, second from right.



Salon in Dr. Sanua's home. At left, **Dr. Zvi Zohar** (Speaker) and **B. Matsas**, Publisher, IMAGE Magazine



David Shasha making introductory remarks before presentation made by Victor Cohen on Rabbi Haim Nahum Effendi

Correspondence re: Mr. Jack Feldstein's Play

"I am the son of Ashkenazi French-speaking Jews from Egypt born and raised in Australia.

Last year, in June, my father died. He was a Jew from Cairo, proud to be one, but to me, born in Australia, my father was a person from another universe. He was, for me, almost impossible to comprehend. A man forever foreign and at sea in an Anglo-Saxon world.

It is now, only after his death, that I am beginning to piece together the puzzle of his life. And the enormity fleeing Egypt meant for him. I believe he never recovered, and perhaps his life from the age of 25, was a search to recapture a sweet époque in Cairo that no longer existed but for in his memory, My father was not a happy man out of Egypt. And now when I look at old photos of him,and my mother laughing on Vespas in Alexandria, I am amazed to see him so joyful. Because he was, I believe, never at ease in Australia.

I have written a play about my father. A HOUSE LIKE ANY OTHER.

In looking through his desk and papers, I found your newsletter. I imagine it made my father happy to be in contact with others who recall the life they were forced to leave. I wonder if it is the same for all of you? Perhaps none of you can ever truly leave that Egypt, forever lost, behind.

I send you my play, "A HOUSE LIKE ANY OTHER." As the son of those who fled Egypt, it is my attempt to find peace with that traumatic event. A peace my father never found.

Except, perhaps now, in death where I figure he is back in 'l'Egypte,' the place where he belongs."

Jack Feldstein
Sidney, Australia

"The response from my writing the letter to you has been overwhelming. I am so appreciative and delighted by contacts from my father's co-patriots who left Egypt and are now around the world. I thank you for forwarding my letter to them.

They have helped me look at things from many angles. And that is a gift. Also, Mr Mario Feninger, the classical pianist, wrote to me. I sent him my play. He told me the play brought a tear to his eyes. And he honoured me by calling me an artist 'who used what the world gives him to create an aesthetic'. The aesthetic I created includes quite a dose of an Egypt which no longer exists. And I am compelled to describe it as best I know how through my parents because I was never there.

A la fin, I believe that after Cairo was burnt in 1952, nothing was ever the same again. And even though each country to which the Jews of Egypt emigrated has its good points and bad, no place is, or ever can be, as Cairo was then. And that is a hard fact.

I have observed that most who had to flee Egypt miss it in one way or another, whether they admit it or not. But because life itself is not simple... neither is nostalgia. Not for my father. Not for myself.

I am happy you will publish my letter in your newsletter. Perhaps it might lead other sons and daughters of Egyptian Jews to delve into the riddle of 'the place their parents come from which is no more.'

I would be open for anyone who is interested to mount 'A HOUSE LIKE ANY OTHER' as a play. Please feel free to pass along the script to them. Or if you prefer they might contact me directly.

I believe the piece has a universality which transcends locale. My producer for the film, **Phaedon Vass**, agrees. (Interestingly his own Greek father had many friends who were Greeks from Egypt.) If those who have expressed interest would like more details about the film, they can contact: **Phaedon Vass**, Intrepid Films 23 Lawson St., Paddington New South Wales, 2021, Australia.
email: intrepid@infolearn.com.au

Once again, Dr Sanua, I thank you for your correspondence. I remain passionate that the story of the Jews from Egypt be told to the world. Before it is lost for good. And in doing so, I might finally know my father."

Jack Feldstein
Sidney, Australia

Letter received from Mr. Feininger, former classmate of the editor at the American University in Cairo, commenting on Jack Feldstein's letter.

"Quand à la lettre de Jack Feldstein, elle est certe émouvante, mais c'est difficile pour quelqu'un qui est stabilisé, et né dans un pays, de concevoir le déchirement d'avoir à se déraciner. Je souhaite que Jack Feldstein ne soit jamais deraciné de ses sources. Pour lui l'Egypte c'est l'Australie. En plus, il appartient à une autre génération, et peut-être une certaine partie de l'incomprehension qu'il avait de son père, venait aussi de cela. L'arrachement à été subi par son père et non lui. Il faudrait lui faire savoir que ce déchirement à été subi aussi par les non-juifs qui ont du quitter et qui regrettent après toutes les années cet endroit qui semblait édénique. Certains, très peu, ont vu arriver ces evénements et ont devancé l'échéance et la coupure à été peut-être moins traumatique. La perte d'un pays, d'un groupe d'amis peut-être 'devastating.' C'est tout un style de vie qui doit être changé du jour au lendemain. Ce n'est pas facile."

Mario Feininger
Concert pianist, Hollywood, CA

Re: Feature Film Project: A HOUSE LIKE ANY OTHER

"I understand that my colleague Jack Feldstein has contacted you about a stageplay he has written entitled A HOUSE LIKE ANY OTHER. As you may already be aware, the play enjoyed a successful season in Sydney and at the time garnered positive coverage. It is very much a personal piece for Jack and has a great warmth, charm and humour. Jack is an accomplished and respected writer in his own right and I was fortunate enough to come into contact with

his play recently. I loved it. Shortly afterwards we optioned the work to adopt into a screenplay as a feature film.

It is a work that I engaged with immediately and I have great hopes for as a film. Jack suggested that you may share this view. Australia, like the United States, is a nation of immigrants. Their stories are very much the stories of this nation. Properly realised, I believe it will speak to audiences everywhere, not only in our country, but also internationally. Although it is a personal journey of a somewhat eccentric Jewish emigrant family from Egypt, their plight represents those millions who traversed the globe to start a new life for their families.

A key element of Jack's story is its historical context. The Stotland family fled Egypt during the days of Nasser and the Suez Crisis. To my knowledge this is fresh ground unexplored by filmmakers.

The plight of this family, as Jews from Egypt, is a large and important element of the project and is critical to the storytelling. To leave the comfortable cosmopolitan life of urban Egypt to travel across the other side of the world to a provincial, predominantly Anglo-Celtic culture is wonderful dramatic grist for the mill. We believe that we can realise its full potential as a film.

I would like to request that you consider assisting us in the development of this important project in bringing it to the screen. Jack suggested that there may be the possibility of sourcing a patron, that is, a development investor who might be interested. Our requirements are relatively modest by American standards and we would ensure that you enjoy all the entitlements of a commercial development investor. By this I mean a significant premium on their original investment to work the stageplay into a compelling screenplay. Additionally, we would be prepared to offer a profit for participation and an appropriate recognition in the proposed film's credits commensurate with the level of development funding.

Australia has a vibrant and successful film industry that enjoys a particular strength in the production of personal, quirky films that can reach international audiences. 'A House Like Any Other' has this potential.

We very much look forward to your response and please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information. Our cv's are attached for your review."

Phaedon Vass
Sidney, Australia

Mail From Around The World

■ "My name is Aaron Kiviat and I am a Jewish student from Seattle, Washington. I was given your name by Joyce Zonana and Carmen Weinstein. Last year I spent 10 months studying at the American University in, Cairo where I volunteered much of my free time with the Jewish community there. I was amazed to discover the wealth of Jewish history and the unbelievable beauty of the Jewish sites of Cairo.

I was also shocked to discover the dilapidated state into which most of these sites have fallen. Many important sites commemorating this priceless chapter of Jewish history are increasingly deteriorating. The threat of squatters, theft, encroaching development and hundreds of years of wear currently pose an imminent danger to these sites and will cause their disappearance if immediate steps are not taken to preserve them.

Upon my return to the United States, Carmen Weinstein of the board of the Jewish Community in Cairo asked that I help in saving these priceless heirlooms of Jewish history. I have begun a nonprofit organization, FRIENDS OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN CAIRO. We are an affiliate of the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle. Our mission is to organize and fund renovation and restoration projects for the Jewish community in Cairo.

...We are currently planning the Bassatine Mapping Project and the Archival Database Project, which are scheduled to begin this May 2000. Our goal is to create a comprehensive map of the Bassatine Cemetery, the world's second oldest Jewish cemetery, and commence a beautification project, which will hopefully attract future visitors. We will be taking 5 student volunteers with us this summer to Egypt.

We will also undertake the daunting task of transposing hundreds of years of life cycle records fron the Cairo Rabbinate onto a computer database.

...Dr Sanua, I was hoping that you would be able to support our project, knowing of your past involvement in such issues. We are looking for funding, but have only found only small contributions. Would you or anyone you know be interested in helping?

Please write or call me at your earliest convenience if you have any questions. I look forward to speaking with you."

Aaron Samuel Kiviat,
Director, Friends of the Jewish Community in Cairo

■ "Many thanks for sending me your newsletters. it reminded me of how little I know about my own family's departure from Cairo in 1957.

Joseph, my father, told me that he had been beaten by people in the streets of Cairo, and that he was not allowed to renew the license required to continue to operate his tobacco store. As political refugees, and since my mother had an Italian passport, we immigrated to Genoa, Italy. My mother worked, but my father was denied work since he lacked an Italian passport. We stayed one and half year, until relatives in NYC paid our passage on the USS Constitution. I was six years old when we arrived in 1959. My father disembarked with three dollars in his pocket, and he had great difficulty finding employment. He shined shoes, while my mother worked as sales lady at Whalen's Drug Store. She spoke five languages, including English, while my father spoke seven, but never learned to speak English very well. Through the auspices of a Jewish community group, and their agent, Mrs. Lightman, we got an apartment of our own on 9th. St. NW Washington. Mrs. Lightman also brought us donated clothing and I be-

lieve helped my father get a job, as a laborer, at District News Company.

My father never recovered from being displaced from Cairo. The USA culture and language remained foreign to him. He always ruminated about the park Esbekiah, and his tobacco business. He succumbed to paranoia when I was a senior in high school. He spent the last fourteen years of his life in deep anguish and depression. I attribute his condition largely to the twin evils of nationalism and racism which caused my parents, as well as millions of others throughout history to be displaced persons. I am sending you the membership fee to join the IAJE."

Maurice Levy, Chicago

■ "I have received a letter with your foot-note from the IAJE together with the first Newsletter of the Association for both of which I thank you. Rest assured that I shall, at the earliest attempt to gather reminiscences of and material on my childhood and adolescence in Egypt as I can conjure, and forward them to you. You may find some interest in them. I wish the Association much success in its worthy attempts at recording the annals of that effervescent and now vanished world of Egyptian Jewry."

Dr. Maurice J. Cohen
London, England

■ "Congratulations on your ambitious plans to start an International Association of Jews from Egypt. I was intrigued with the biographical articles published in "Image" this year and how important it is for all Sephardim to take pride and to support your scholarly endeavors. I shall follow with interest your progress and offer what advice and help the American Sephardi Federation can give you."

Leon Levy, New York, NY

■ "First allow me to say what a pleasure and privilege it was to have met you last week. You certainly awoke the hearts of many countrymen/women who had in some large ways lost their path. Mazel tov. Here is my $100 contribution to help you in your mission. Let us stay in touch over the months to come. Yours is certainly a very worthwhile endeavor."

Larry Behar
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

■ "Je vous remercie infiniment pour le bel hommage que vous faites à mon defunt mari, Jacques Hassoun. Cela me touche beaucoup. C'est inouï que nous perdons avec lui un homme érudit qui se sentait profondément en dette par rapport de ses racines, et que grâce a lui et bien sur votre vitalité les membres éparpillés de la communauté se retrouve. Je vous envoie l'annonce d'une soirée d'hommage en son honneur organisée par le Centre Culturel d'Egypte à Paris - à l'initiative de l'ambassade elle même. (L'Egypte commenserait elle a reconnaître ses enfants Juifs!) **Nahar Misraim** fera un numéro special avec les textes de mon mari. Je vous le ferai parvenir."

Pasquale Hassoun
Paris, France

Editor's Note: On October 18, 2000 a workshop arranged by the Après-Coup Psychoanalytical Association was held in New York to give homage to Jacques Hassoun. He was a psychoanalyst, writer, political activist, and a key figure in the practice and transmission of psychoanalytical discourse. He was a major force in the development of the Après-Coup organization and is fondly remembered by many as a colleague, teacher, and friend. The workshop was dedicated in appreciation of his life's work.

The group which he headed, Association Pour La Sauvegarde du Patrimoine Culturel des Juifs d'Egypte, has published a volume of his writings, "Alexandrie et Autres Récits de Jacques Hassoun." The book can be obtained by writing to André Cohen, Secretary General of ASPCJE, 8 Rue des Tanneries, 75013, Paris.The cost is 150F.

■ "Thank you very much for your letter, and the newsletter which I found of great interest. I note that in one of the series of lectures made by your Association, Mr. Elie Malka addressed the Assembly on the Jews of Sudan. As you rightly mention, most of the Jews of Sudan emigrated from Egypt, or north Africa, or Syria and Iraq. Today the Sudanese Jewish community is practically non-existent and the remnant still there sold the Synagogue land and practically asssimilated with he local nationals.

I will be very happy to attend the next conference you will organize in Israel or Paris. As you know, there is an important Egyptian Jewish Community in France which is associated in the World Sephardi Federation through the French Branch of the Federation, and if you will organize the Conference in Paris, I will be happy to meet the French members to whom I promised to pay them a visit in Paris.

The work you are doing is very gratifying and deserves support from all International Organizations. For my part, I would be happy to assist and put my organization, the World Sephardi Federation and its branches wordwide, in contact with all Egyptian Jews wherever they may be now living. With best regards and looking forward to hear from you."

Nessim D. Gaon
Geneva Switzerland

■ "Many thanks again for your continued publication and editing of the IAJE Newsletter. As usual, it is excellent and loaded with nuggets of information about Jews of Egypt. I feel honored that you mentioned my name twice. Once for my book review and the other for the article written about me and my interpreting work. I extend my grateful thanks to you and wish you all the best in your research and publication. I look forward to the Conference in Paris in the year 2000 followed by one in Israel in the year 2001. If I can be of any help, please let me know. Enclosed please find check for $100 and thank you again for helping to keep alive the story of the Jews of Egypt.

Blanche Sachs
Randallstown, MD

■ "J'ai lu avec intêrèt le Statement of Mission et me permets d'ajouter une proposition personnelle concernant le no.7 de ce document.

Du moment que le but essentiel de notre Association est de conserver le patrimoine de tous les Juifs ayant vécu en Egypte, la démarche la plus urgente serait de demander à tous les membres qui auraient un tant soit peu de talent littéraire, de relater leurs souvenirs d'Egypte, en les encourageant fortement à cela. J'entends des souvenirs de leur enfance, leur éducation, les écoles frequentées, leurs occupations professionnelles, leurs relations sociales, leurs loisirs, leurs souvenirs culinaires etc., tout ceci, émaillé d'anecdotes personnelles pour soutenir l'intérêt du lecteur. Des reproductions de photos relevant du sujet seraient aussi très bienvenues. Une fois recuelli un nombre suffisant de ces récits et après les avoir passés éventuellement au filtre d'écrivains professionnels pour effectuer les corrections nécessaires, on les ferait publier en un seul volume avec un titre adéquat.

Je joins le formulaire de mon adhésion à l'I.A.J.E. avec un chèque sur l'équivalent de trente dollars."

I. Chavet, Ph.D, Rehovot, Israel

Other letters received will be published in future issues.

Communiqué from former Pres. of Israel

I am grateful to you for your interesting letter of 24.4.00 with the picture depicting the delightful evening we shared in Miami.

I see from your letter that you have on your Executive Board and the Academic Committee a very respectable list of scholars. I wish you all success in your activities. I am sending you a short report, as suggested, on the activities of the National Authority for Ladino. Should you be interested in a longer report, please let me know.

Yitzhak Navon
Jerusalem, Israel

Poetry

The following poem, written originally in French by Vivian Borg of London, was included in newsletter No. 2. She has now sent us the English version for which we have received requests.

NOSTALGIA

*by **Vivian Borg**, London, England*

Once upon a time there was a blessed land,
The sky was azure blue and golden was the sand.
We swam in shiny waters, danced under the stars,
Walked along the shores to the sound of guitars.

Sun burning our skin, wind blowing our hair,
Bare feet touching the ground like floating on thin air,
We lived for today like there was no tomorrow,
Unaware of harms or forthcoming sorrow.

T'was a long time ago in our tender years,
When love and romance mingled laughter with tears.
When days were full of hope and life just a dream
Drifting swiftly away like water in a stream.

Land of our roots land where we were born,
From where by cruel fate we were suddenly torn,
Years have gone by and we're searching in vain
Those elusive moments of happiness and pain.

Ever precious memories of a distant past
That foolishly we thought forever would last.
A past when we were young, beautiful and carefree,
In a magical place called "Alexandrie"

UNDER MY FATHER'S TALLIS

*by **Vivian Silver**, Montreal, Canada*

Heliopolis, City of Sun...
"Shem el Nessim," festival of Spring
It is the time of orange blossoms.
Yom Kippur, nestled against my father,
Under his tallis,
I close my eyes,
The sound of the shofar
Transports me to faraway lands,
Connects me to my people.
I feel loved, I feel protected, I feel special.

The Mena House, Sunday afternoon tea,
The Pyramids and the Sphinx stand magnificently tall
Against the timeless blue horizon.

Ben Ezra Synagogue synagogue in old Cairo,
Passover ritual,slaughter of a lamb
To feed the poor

Alexandria, wonderful warm summers,
Bathing in the blue Mediterranean Sea...
Cleopatra, Stanley Bay, Sidi Bishr, Montazah,
Endless golden beaches.
The taste of freshly-lemoned sea urchins
Lingers on my tongue,
Warm, honey and cinnamon "loukoumades"
Stick to my eager fingers,
At dusk the scent of roasting corn and chestnuts
Fills the air,
Riding in the open horse and carriage, the "hantour"
Along the corniche,
Necklace and crown of fragrant jasmine,
Enfold me,
Complete the magic of the moments.

"Who's Who" Among the Jews from Egypt

One of our readers suggested that future issues of our newsletter include a column with the names and a biographical sketch of Jews from Egypt who have achieved exceptional status in the world of academia, finance, business, literature, the arts, etc. The intellectual impact of Jews from Egypt would be brought to light. Therefore, everyone is urged to submit names, along with biographical sketches, to the editor.

■ The problem with Middle Eastern Jews is that they are not interested in history (at least not with the same attachment as the Eskhenazi). They adapt to where they are and hardly worry about what they left. Same problem with the Halabis, although now and then they show curiosity, but it does not take long, especially when it needs money to feed it. But you should keep up your good work, because soon there will not be anyone to remember anything.

John Doe, USA

■ Thank you very much for sending me the IAJE newsletter which I avidly read from cove to cover. You are doing wonderful work and I hope that there will always be enough funds coming your way in order for your to support your valued efforts. There is no question in my mind and in my heart that it is incumbent upon our friends "tell our story" - we are the last generation of Egyptian Jews to bear witness to the "golden age" of Egyptian Jewry. You must therefore keep your vision and mission going.

Vivianne M. Silver
Montreal

■ Many thanks for kindly inviting me to attend the above meeting which I enjoyed. There was not much of chance for detailed discussion on IAJE initiatives but I thought I should raise a few points with you for consideration: 1.The development of a web page would facilitate communications and ease the issue of newsletters. It would also enable exchanges on reminiscenses from members. Access to certain documentation could be restricted to members who would be encouraged to subscribe. Other documents could be offered for sale to increase revenues. 2. I inquired about the next Conference and you indicated it would probably be held next year in Israel. Please let me have details in due course. 3.I wondered if we could follow up belatedly the initiative to produce an annual review of research being done on Egyptian Jewry in the period up to 1956. 4.Finally can one consider bridging the time gap by opening links with Cambridge University Cairo Geniza Unit headed by Prof Reif. These are a few suggestions which I hope you will find helpful. With best regards and thanks again for your hospitality.

Maurice Dwek
London, England

■ I am indebted to Danny Jaffe, son of Vicky Jaffe who recently brought from Paris, a photocopy of an anicle written by you on the inaugural meeting of the International Association of Jews from Egypt. As immediate past-President and founding member of the Sephardi Association of Victoria, I would be most interested in joining the International Association of Jews from Egypt.

Melbourne and Sydney, Australia, each have a small commnity of Jews from Egypt. In Melbourne we were the prime movers in establishing the Sephardi Association of Victoria, and 3 years ago we built a 400 seat new Synagogue. The only Sephardi Synagogue in Melbourne.

If you require regular news from Australia, please communicate with me via the E-mail. In Australia, the Sephardi Association or Victoria is a member of the Jewish Community Council of Victoria, the Zionist Federation of Australia, the Council of Orthodox Synagogues and the Sephardi Federation of Australia.

Joseph Mazza
Melbourne, Australia

■ J'ai lu avec intérêt le "Statement of Mission" et me permets d'ajouter une proposition personnelle concernant le no7 de ce document.

Du moment que le but essentiel de notre Association est de conserver le patrimoine de tous les juifs ayant vecu en Egypte, la démarche la plus urgente serait de demander à tous les membres qui auraient un tant soit peu de talent littéraire, de relater leurs souvenirs d'Ecela. J'entends des souvenirs de leur enfance, leur éducation, les écoles frequenttées, leurs occupations professionnelles, leurs relations sociales, leurs loîsirs, leurs souvenirs culinaires etc., tout ceci, émaille d'anecdotes personnelles pour soutenir l'intérêt du lecteur. Des reproductions de photos relevant du sujet seraient aussi très bienvenues. Une fois recuelli un nombre suffisant de ces recits et après les avon passés éventuellement au filtre &écrivains professionnels pour effectuer les corrections necessaires, on les ferait publier en un seul volume avec un titre adéquat.

Je joins le formulaire de mon adhésion à l'I.A.J.E. avec un chèque sur l'équivalent de trente dollars.

Chavet, Ph.D.
Rehovot, Israel

■ J'ai lu avec joie vos articles qui m'ont cause beaucoup de nostalgie. Je vous felicite pour vos efforts et surtout pour essayer de garder ce beau lien d'autrefois. Peut-etre, encore vivant? De ma part je garderai toujours de tres tendres souvenirs de mon enfance en Egypte, et surtout toutes les anneees etant membre au merveilleux Heliopolîs Sporting Club...

Une fois marriee en 1947, j'ai quitte avec mon mari pour l'Engleterre. J'ai aussi habite Singapore, Rhodesie, Nouvelle Zealand, Australie, puis a Santa Monica Ca. et me voila ici dans cette si belle ville Sarasota Florida ces dernieres 9 annees.

Inclus je vous envoie un vieux article dont j'avais ecrit sur The forgotten Jews of Arab counties, et la belle reponse recu par WOJAC. etc. etc.

Je serais ravie de recevoir vos Newsletters. Mes sinceres SALAAMS.

Janty Lindsey (nee Boshi)
Sarasota, Florida

■ My name is Samuel Pessah, I live in Los Angeles. I was born in Cairo, and I'm the process of writing a movie script, based of my mother's experiences during the burning of the Ashkenazi synagogue in 1945. Any in-

need from me, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I.A.J.E. NEWSLETTER

International Association of Jews from Egypt
Association Internationale des Juifs d'Egypte

4

EDITOR: Prof. Victor D. Sanua IAJE, 2416 Quentin Road, Brooklyn, NY 11229 2001 Volume 3 No.1

Editorial

This is the fourth issue of the IAJE newsletter, and we would like to express our appreciation and thank all the new members as well as those who renewed their membership or sent donations.

While most of the letters received were enthusiastic about what we were trying to do, we received two letters reflecting the lack of interest expressed by many Jews because of their negative experiences. However, these two correspondents still sent their regular subscriptions to the IAJE. Thus it would seem that Jews from Egypt tend to be divided among those who have deep nostalgia and deep historical interest of their past, while others show no interest whatsoever. We have added, in this issue, an addendum about nostalgia for Egypt by **Moïse Rahmani**, Editor of LOS MUESTROS, who skillfully reflected the odors, sounds,

continued on page 2

My Visit to Alexandria

By Victor D. Sanua Ph.D.
Editor of the IAJE Newsletter

On January 8, 2001, I received an e-mail from **Racheline Balassiano**, a 22 year old young lady from Alexandria, Egypt. This was unexpected since I had assumed that individuals still living in Egypt would be, in general, quite aged. **Dr. Paola Mieli**, whose parents were born in Alexandria, visited the rabbin-

continued on page 3

DO YOU KNOW WHERE THESE PEOPLE ARE?

Photograph taken at the Judeo-Egyptien (formerly the Judeo-Espagnol Club) during the News Year's eve of 1948. This is probably one of the last major pictures of festivities before the beginning of the dispersion after June 1948 because of the Arab-Israeli Wars. The people who we have been able to identify are: Roger Ammar, Sousou Hayon, Lucette Moché, Bondy Aboulker, Henri Cohen, Albert Hassid, Ivette Moché, Mony Cohen, Odette Sanua (Benjamin), Sami Chemtob, Molly Seidman, ? D'Elia, Victor Sanua! If any those who were present at this function and see the picture, please get in touch with the Editor. Of course, if readers are able to identify other people in the picture, they should also get in touch with the Editor. Photo sent by Mony Cohen, Paris.

and the visual scenes that have been imprinted on his young mind before his departure from Egypt. We hope that the readers will enjoy his report as much as we did.

The highlight of this issue is our one day visit to Alexandria, when we met Racheline Balassiano who e-mailed a letter to us some time ago. We had a most pleasant experience visiting her and her family. Besides making a quick visit of Alexandria, we had the opportunity to meet **Mr. Joseph Harari**,the current president of the Alexandria Jewish community which consists of four adult males. Please note pictures of our encounter in this issue of the newsletter. Our own report of this visit which was, in general, more pleasant than that of Dr. Paola Mieli's visit, (see attached report). Both of our reports are serious in their implication.

Included in this issue is a picture of a new year's party held at the Judeo Egyptien Club (Formerly Judeo-Espagnol) on the eve of 1948. This was probably the last enjoyable group event since a few months later, the general exodus started following the Arab-Israeli wars. Since we do not know where most of the people in the picture are now, we are asking our readers to identify themselves, or identify those they knew. We were able to identify a few individuals.

We are pleased to report that there are some activities by associations of Jews from Egypt. In the United Kingdom. (See picture and report). The group should be congratulated for their enthusiasm and variety of activities. **Mr. Andre Cohen** and his group in Paris are trying to reanimate L'ASSOCIATION POUR LA SAUVEGARDE DU PATRIMOINE DES JUIFS D'EGYPTE, which was founded by the late **Dr. Jacques Hassoun**. They have appointed **Mr. Andre Oudiz** as a liaison officer to keep in touch with Jews from Egypt who live outside of France.

We are sorry to report on the death of two staunch supporters of the IAJE, **Mr. Cesar Salama** and **Mr. Edwin Forti**, whose original contributions facilitated the arrangements of our International Conference at Columbia University. The Forti family has asked relatives and friends to send their contributions to IAJE in memory of their dear departed Edwin. Mr. Cesar Salama, was a neighbor of ours when we lived in Sharia Khedive Ismail in Cairo in the Sarpakis Building. This is further evidence that Jews from Egypt are aging and dying, and we wonder about who is going to take the baton after we are gone and pursue the need to document our history. Unfortunately, funds received have been limited, and financially, it will be necessary for us to reduce the number of issues and eliminate a large number of names from our mailing list of approximately 2000 families. It was hoped that with the publication of our story of the mapping of the **Bassatine cemetery** by **Mr. Aaron Kiviat**, a large number of correspondents would be interested in knowing if burial stones of their families still exist and in this process leading them to assist us in our work. Perhaps three individuals called requesting such information, which was provided.

On the other hand, we received a couple of phone calls from Jews of Egypt living in Brooklyn. Two photos evoked some distress. One caller commented that the volunteer should not, for religious reasons, have sat on the burial stone as shown in the picture in the previous issue of the Newsletter. The picture was that of a volunteer of the team trying to map the **Bassatine cemetery**. Another person called and stated that it is not allowed to take a picture on Saturday morning at the Synagogue referring to the picture (not taken by us) of the Shaar Hashamayim on Adly Pacha. **Mr. David Hirsch**, librarian of University of California in Los Angeles, who visited Egypt several times, informs us that four men out of the five shown in the picture had died while he believes that the fifth one became a Moslem. This certainly is a sad story reflecting the slow demise of the remaining Jews in Egypt.

We have received quite a number of interesting reports from our readers for publication, but they do not fulfill the immediate purpose of our newsletter, the documentation of our migrations. Hopefully some day, with adequate funding, it would be possible to publish a journal where we would include all types of news pertaining to the patrimony of Jews from Egypt.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to acknowlwdge donations from **David Abadi**, England, **Odette Benjamin**, New York, **Charles Chehebar**, New York, **Richard Elie**, Italy, **Jacques Matchbitz**, Florida, **Juliana Maio**, California and **John Shalam**, New York.

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Int'l Association of Jews from Egypt
2416 Quentin Road
Brooklyn, New York 11229, U.S.A.

My Visit to Alexandria

Continued from front page

ate in Alexandria. She provided Mr. Victor Balassiano, who worked in the rabbinate, with a copy of my newsletter which he showed to his daughter Racheline. A full report of Dr. Mieli's visit has been included as an addendum to this newsletter. In general, Racheline expressed interest in knowing how Jews from Egypt lived before their departure following the Arab-Israeli wars, and also was interested to report on the present status of Jews still remaining in the country. The e-mail reflected her sense of isolation, with the hope that some day she and her family would leave the country. (The text of her e-mail has also been included as an addendum).

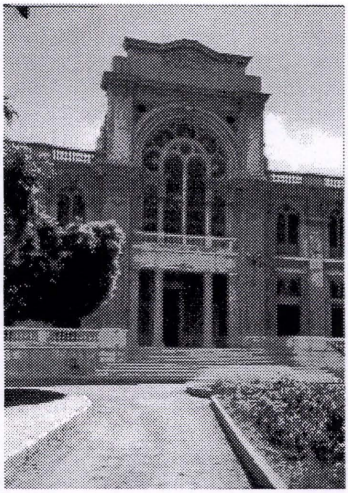
A few years ago, a documentary about Alexandria was shown on French and Canadian television. Interviews were conducted with **Mr. Joseph Harari,** as the president of the Alexandria Jewish Community. He was first interviewed in his haberdashery store, and it was indicated that he was the last Jewish business man in Alexandria. Later on, we see him in his office with his assistant Mrs. Lina Mattatia, both were advanced in age. The French interviewer asked Mr. Harari to invite as many Jews as possible for a Saturday morning service at the Bene Daniel synagogue. Only four men appeared including Mr. Harari. The others were too ill to attend. Since there was no minyan, they prayed separately. At the end of the prayers, one of the gentlemen who was interviewed, expressed his distress with tears about what would happen to the Synagogue after they die. About a year ago, I learned that Mr. Harari had been hospitalized and the feeling was expressed that he was too advanced in age to return to his duties as the President. Mrs. Lina Mattatia seemed to have taken the administrative responsibility for the rabbinate.

On June of 2001, I took a cruise on the SS Rotterdam which was making one stop in Alexandria, Friday June 29th. I was accompanied by my sister, **Mrs. Odette Benjamin**, and both of us, after 50 years, looked forward to revisiting Alexandria, which was the nicest and most opulent resort and entertainment center in the country. This was an opportunity to visit the rabbinate and become acquainted with Racheline. When I called her at home and spoke also with **Mr. Victor Balassiano**, he suggested that I should be at the Custom's gate No.10 of the port that Friday morning at 9 A.M.

On June 29th, 2001, after a long walk under a torrid sun, we reached gate No. 10, and we were pleased to meet Mr. Victor Balassiano and his family, Mrs. Balassiano, Racheline 22, and Esther 20, two attractive young ladies. They were waiting in their Fiat. They managed to borrow another car so that we were quite comfortable. I was of course very happy to meet Racheline. All of them spoke English, as well as French, so that there was no problem

Visiting the Rabbinate in Alexandria. July 9th, 2001. Mr. Joseph Harari (left), President of the Jewish Community and Dr. Victor D. Sanua.

Visiting the Balassiano Family in Alexandria. July 9th, 2001. (Left to right) Mr. Victor Balassiano, Racheline, Dr. Sanua, Mrs. Balassiano and Esther.



The B'nei Daniel Synagogue in Alexandria.

Eating "Foul Medames" and Falafel at the Beniamin Restaurant in Alexandria on July 9th, 2001 with the Balassiano family.

of communication. Racheline expressed her great joy to meet, for the first time, Jews who lived in Egypt a long time ago. She is presently at the University majoring in Arts.

Mr. Balassiano took us to the well-known "foul" (beans) restaurant, close to the Ramleh station, named originally BENIAMINI, under Jewish ownership and patronized by Europeans. Now, it is called the Pyramid of Alexandria, Mohammed Ahmed Restaurant, 17 Shakour St, Ramleh Station. Visitors can get in touch with the restaurant through the internet, www.alex-guid.com.foul-moh-ahmed, Tel.203 483-3576. For those who have some nostalgia, following is the description the different ways "foul" can be served: with Tehina or Humus, fried eggs, foul Eskandarani "Topped with finely chopped salad and Tehina," with corn or olive oil or butter, with fried garlic, with tomato sauce. Of course the usual falafel was included in the menu. As a desert, they had "Mahalabia pudding". Subsequently, we were thrilled to see the names of two establishments that brought pleasant memories of the past, Patisserie TRIANON and ATHINEOS, where we used to dance, were still in existence only in name. Names of well-known establisments, particularly department stores, have not been changed.

Subsequently, we were taken to an hotel at El Mamura, a beautiful resort beach close to El Montaza grounds, formerly a palace of King Farouk. After a long trip along the Corniche, we arrived at the Eliahou Hanabi synagogue on Bene Daniel Street, a very imposing building (see picture). There were a number of Jewish tourists visiting. When I told them I was born in Egypt, they started asking questions and then, I saw myself giving a lecture about life in Egypt half a century ago. Next Mr. Balassiano invited us to the Office of the Rabbinate and introduced us to **Mr. Joseph Harari**, who probably was recently discharged from the hospital. He looked a bit wan and emaciated. In a short conversation with him regarding the status of the Jewish community of Alexandria, he said that it was the "best and the richest in the world"! They derive their funding from rentals of Jewish buildings and sales of assets. For example, he spoke about the properties left by a rich Jew, Baron Menasce. When I asked him, where was Baron Menasce, his response was that he does not know whether he is dead or alive. He complained that 100,000 Egyptian pounds were stolen from him. When I asked about the archives, he had some problems understanding what I had in mind. He reacted appropriately when I asked him what I should do if I want to get the marriage date of my grandfather! He hit the table with both hands and in a very animated way stated that they should remain here. This brings to mind the effort made by Jews from Egypt living in Brooklyn who devoted a lot of effort and expense to arrange for the transfer of Sifrei Torahs out of the country and his refusal to release them. This reminds me also of a statement made by an official of the Rabbinate in Cairo who stated the Pyramids should remain in Egypt in spite of the fact that there are no Egyptians now!

In the course of the conversation, Mr.Harari stated that only an Egyptian like himself could be president of the Jewish community. **Mrs. Lina Mattatia** could not be president since she did not have the Egyptian citizenship. Birth in Egypt does not necessarily mean that you are a full citizen of the country. A large number of Jews never acquired Egyptian citizenship. Mr. Harari indicated that there are many Jewish women married to Moslems and

Christians and they do not seem to care about their Jewishness. Their children maintain the religion of their fathers. According to Mr. Balassiano, the finances of the rabbinate are handled by a former dentist, **Dr.Max Salama**, assisted by a local accountant.

He stated that there are only four adult Jewish males in Alexandria. I surmised that the other three Jews who were in the synagogue in the documentary mentioned earlier had probably passed away. My understanding is that while Mr. Balassiano is the youngest of the group, while working at the Rabbinate, he does not seem to have executive power of any significance. He showed me some archives in his office, and some more in an abandoned room. Mrs. Mattatia has also archives, but she does not show them. Unfortunately because of time, we could not stay much longer since we had to be on the ship at 5 P.M before its departure.

Mr. Balassiano drove us down the Corniche which is still beautiful, while the side streets were neglected. The beaches were crowded on that day because of Friday. Men were wearing shorts, and most women, in spite of the great heat, had their head covered with tight fitting scarves and wore long dresses mostly in dark colors. During that ride we were pleased to see the magnificent building of the Catholic School, St. Marc, as well as the Lycée Français, which were notable schools attended primarily by Europeans half a century ago. We also saw the wall of the new Alexandria library and the Qaitbay fort built 500 years ago on the spot of the Pharos Lighthouse destroyed by an earthquake. Stones and statuaries of this lighthouse have been discovered under the waters in the bay.

When we reached door No.10, Racheline begged the police, almost in tears, to allow them to take us to the ship by car since it was a long walk. For security reason, he refused. However, we were lucky to find a horse-drawn carriage (arabiah Khantour). The owner promised to take us to the ship. However, he was stopped at one point by the police but we asked them if he could take us further. They graciously accepted our request. He had to stop about 300 yards from the ship.

We left Alexandria with a great deal of reluctance, since we did not see enough of the city and because we had established a very warm relationship with the Balassanio family. We sensed their sincere sadness in seeing us leave. This was a unique experience in our lives. We expressed the hope that we shall meet again. We must admit that our stay in Alexandria was too short for us to evaluate fully the present situation of the rabbinate and the remnants of the Jewish community. Our conclusion is that there is very little in the way of strong and adequate leadership to handle the present financial and archival resources of what remains of this beautiful community which is on its last few gasps of breath.

We would appreciate hearing from our readers who have visited Alexandria or Cairo, and we would like them to share with us their experiences.

La Synagogue Shaar Hashamayim

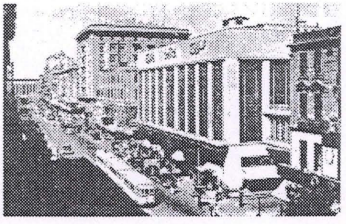
Temple Ismailia du Caire
By Elie Nissim Cohen, Paris

Elle est la plus belle et la plus grande de toutes les synagogues Juives Sépharades du Caire. Elle est située en plein centre de la capitale Egyptienne. (17 Rue Adly, ex-Maghrabi). Elle a été construite en 1905 par des familles riches pour les habitants aisés du quartier. La famille Mosseri, Nissim Bey Mosseri et surtout Vita Bey Mosseri ont largement contribué a son édification. C'est l'ingénieur Juif, Maurice Cattaui qui a tracé les plans de ce magnifique Temple - monument d'art de style éxotique.

La synagogue se compose de deux nivaux et battie sur un terrain carré de 10,000 m2. Elle possède plusieurs salles et une riche bibliothéque. Shaar Hashamayim, "La porte du ciel" a été complétement renovée en 1980 par des habiles ouvriers et artistes peintres Egyptiens. Les Juifs Sépharades de Genève ont largement financé, Nissim Gaon en particulier, et surveillé cette restauration.

Le gros de livres et archives qui se trouvait dans les divers temples et centres Juifs du Caire a été transféré et classé dans sa bibliothèque. Les Sifrei Torahs sont toujours dans le Heichal mais fermé à clés. La synagogue - gardée par deux policiers Egyptiens -ouvre ses portes de 10 H a 16 H, est visitées par les touristes Juifs et non-Juifs. Quelques cérémonies sont célébrées pendant les fêtes. En 2005, notre magnifique temple aura cent ans et sera classé, monument historique Egyptien.

Dr. Victor Sanua in 1982 at the door of the Shaar Hashamayim Synagogue on Adly Pacha Street talking with Mrs. Ninette Hazan. We heard that she subsequently died. A policeman guards the Synagogue.



Sharia Fouad 1st (now 16th of July Street) Cairo, Egypt. The big building is the Cicurel Department Store. Picture sent by Mr. Hasson, Marseille, France.

Mr. Edward Forti

Edwin Forti (1950-2000)

We are sorry to report on the early death of Mr. Edwin Forti on December 27th., 2000. Mr. Forti was a staunch supporter of our efforts and his contributions made it possible to hold our International Conference at Columbia University Middle East Institute. Mr. Edwin Forti was born on December 27th, 1950. He and his family left Egypt in 1967 sojourning in Paris for about a year and a half before moving to Brooklyn in 1968. Edwin came to America without a penny to his name and without speaking the language. Hard work earned him a Bachelor's degree at Brooklyn College. He also received an MBA degree from Pace University and an advance certificate in finance. Edwin worked for the Hebrew Publishing Company, the Federal Reserve Bank and Chemical Bank for 18 years. His last position was with the GE Capital's Aviation Services Group. Throughout his life he visited relatives who had immigrated from Egypt as far away as Switzerland and Brazil. He was very proud of his Egyptian Jewish heritage, and read much literature about Egyptian Jewry. He is survived by his family, Matthew, Eric and Stephanie and his mother Yvette. IAJE would like to express our deepest condolences to the family.

Claudia Roden

Expert on Middle East Cuisine

During our visit to London, a few months ago, we had the pleasure to become acquainted with **Mrs. Claudia Roden** at a meeting of Jews from Egypt which we had arranged. She is universally known for her books on Middle Eastern cuisine. Claudia Roden was born in Egypt and studied art in London. In 1956, her parents had to leave Egypt and joined her in London. Out of her own personal experience, and those of her mother and friends, they started collecting recipes of Middle Eastern cooking which evoked warm memories of their life in Egypt. With the recording of these old recipes, Mrs. Roden was able to publish her first book in 1972. In 2000, she published, **"The New Book Of Middle Eastern Food"** (Knopf, $35) which now includes 800 recipes.

She graciously gave us that book during her visit to our home in New York. Roden's book is not like any standard cook-book. It includes anthropological material of a scholarly nature, from the various countries whose cooking she describes.

She stated, "Food is just part of a culture." We are certainly pleased that she joined us in IAJE.

Mrs. Stella Sanua (left) and Mrs. Claudia Roden visiting us in New York on October 16, 2000

Les Juifs En Egypte

Depuis Les Origines Jusqu'à ce Jour

In 1938, **Maurice Fargeon** published the above book which in time has become a classic and is now out of print. The first part of the book deals with Jews of Egypt from the time of the Pharaoh to the reign of Fouad Ist. The second part of the volume includes a description of Jewish communal life from Cairo, to all small towns, Ismalia, Suez and Jews in the provinces and upper Egypt. It provides the names of the schools, charitable institutions, hospitals, names of various officers connected with these organizations and board members of the rabbinates. It gives short biographies of the life of those Jews from Egypt that are connected with the development of the community. The book is very valuable as an historical source of the life of Jews in Egypt until 1938.

THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JEWS FROM EGYPT would be interested in republishing this most

important book, and to distribute it to the membership. Anyone who would like to sponsor and finance this project, please contact the editor. The book will be dedicated to the donor or donors. In the meantime, we would be interested in hearing from the membership and friends if they are interested in purchasing such a book. The estimated cost would be about $20. It has 321 pages and includes a large number of pictures. The Editor would appreciate in receiving your reactions to this most important project.

Alexandrie et Autres Recits - by Jacques Hassoun

The book includes 34 articles by **Dr. Jacques Hassoun**, founder of **Association pour la Sauvegarde du Patrimoine Culturel des Juifs d'Egypte**, was primarily written in NAHAR MISRAIM (River of Egypt). The following are some of the titles;

Le deuxième éxode des Juifs d'Egypte.
De l'Egypte et de quelques Juifs Egyptiens.
Lumière sur les Juifs d'Egypte.
Le Français en Egypte.
Ecrivains juifs d'Egypte.
Les Caraïtes: un autre judaisme.
Rites de deuil chez les Juifs d'Egypte.
Engagement politique des Juifs d'Egypte.

The book can be obtained by writing to **Mr. André Cohen**, 8 rue des Tanneries 75013 Paris, France. Cost is FF 150 (including mailing)

Purpose of the newsletter of the International Association of Jews from Egypt

As you probably are aware, our newsletter is devoted primarily to documenting the good life we had in Egypt and emphasizing our pleasant memories. Some readers wrote that we do not refer to the long sufferings of our dispersion. I do not deny that many of us have been traumatized by the experience of leaving a comfortable life for an uncertain future.

The International Association of Jews from Egypt is devoted to emphasizing primarily the pleasant memories. As **Mrs. Liliane Dammond** wrote, "I left Egypt more than 50 years ago, but Egypt never left me." Many of us feel the same way. Other newsletters have probably included unpleasant aspects of our life but IAJE newsletter will not dwell on these unhappy events. In spite of all the difficulties, many of us have been able to reestablish ourselves, some at higher levels after leaving Egypt.

We must add here that we are primarily interested in the history of contemporary Egyptian Jewry, particularly starting from the time of the influx of Europeans to the country from abroad during the latter part of the 19th century. We leave to other well-established scholars to deal with the ancient history of Jews in Egypt and their survival under the Ottoman Empire.

IAJE is not equipped to deal with these fascinating aspects of Jewry in the Middle East.

Memories of Egypt

Liliane Dammond, New York

Mrs. Liliane Dammond from New York, who for years has been collecting oral histories on Jews from Egypt, in a short description of life in Egypt, provides in her conclusion the following:

"We left Egypt in 1950 and came to New York where my son was born. In my personal experience, the Egyptian part of my life gave me a life of comfort and enchanted memories, where the imminent presence of the Nile, the desert and the sun brought a physical day-to-day ease; where the access to cultural experiences such as Italian operas at the Cairo Opera house and Shakespearean plays as well as other performances by the Comédie Française allowed me to lead a life of extreme richness. But above all, memories treasure the exceptional human characteristics of the Egyptians, embodying a warmth of feeling, an accommodating temper, a sense of humor and an unfailing hospitality which I still practice today as I host family and friends, serving molokhia and stuffed vegetables while laughing at the Gioha stories in our fluent french. **I left Egypt more than 50 years ago, but Egypt never left me.**"

From the AMERCIAN SEPHARDI FEDERATION NEWSLETTER.

Visiting Jewish Cemeteries in Egypt

The following report was received from **David Hirsch**, Middle East Bibliographer of the University Record Library UCLA, after visiting Egypt.

"**Maurice Fargeon's** book, ***Les juifs en Egypte*** was my bible for discovering Jewish Egypt. Every weekend, I would visit another town in the Delta that was listed in his book.

One weekend I went to Ismailia after having read that chapter and went looking for the Jewish cemetery which was part of the "foreign cemetery." I got to the main gate and there was a ghafeer there. I told him I was looking for my relatives. (I just had the names of the people buried there from the Fargeon book. He asked me: "Inta Inglizi?," I told him La! He said? "Faransi?" Bardu la'a... Tilyani? La ya sidi. Bitdawwar ala meen? I told him Goldenberg. He said: Aaahhh! Inta min iyyaaahum! Ta' ala ma' aya...

I went with him to the far corner of the cemetery, passing the finely manicured British and French sections to the overgrown "forgotten corner." Unlike the cemetery in Cairo which was largely destroyed, the tombstones in Ismailia were largely intact. As far as I know, this cemetery is still intact.

I also visited cemeteries, in Zifta, Mit Ghamr, and Port Said. The cemetery in Mansoura is no longer extant but I believe both synagogues are still there."

Note of the Editor:
Please read the short statement about Maurice Fargeon's book on page 6.

An inquiry about Jewish Slaves in Egypt

We received the following interesting e-mail from Mr. Joe Dweck: "In the old testament, the slaves in Egypt were spoken about us having to build using bricks of mortar and straw. The only structures in Egypt that I am aware of are all made of stone, with no mortar. Are there any such structures that are made with brick? If not, wouldn't they have survived (if even a linen covered mummy survives)? I am aware that the biblical slaves did not build the Pyramid's, but could you shed light on this? Thanks."

Note of the Editor: Anyone interested in responding to Mr. Joseph Dweck's inquiry, please contact the editor.

Center For Jewish History, New York

Dear Dr. Sanua

"It was a pleasure to meet you a few weeks ago, and we are most grateful that you came in to see us.

I have discussed your collections with Vivienne Roumani - Denn, Director of library and archives for the American Sephardi Federation. She expressed great interest in your work, your published material and letters, your family history and in your efforts to reach Egyptian Jewry through your international newsletter.

I gave her the packet of materials provided by your daughter. Vivienne is actively collecting this type of material for the Sephardi federation and feels that the products of your life's work and efforts will make a valuable addition... The Center for Jewish History would be a perfect place for your collection, where it will be kept in an archival manner, and made accessible to researchers, historians, and genealogists, among others, for generations to come."

Lyn Slome, Associate Archivist,
American Jewish Historical Society,
Center for Jewish History
New York, NY

Activities of Associations of Jews From Egypt around the world

• UNITED KINGDOM •

Association of Jews From Egypt

Our friends in London have been very active under the leadership of **Gerard de Botton** ("The Maple," 11 Crescent Road, London, N8 8A1, UK) and **Esther Dee**. The following are some of the activities summarized from their recent report to us.

■ October, 18th, 2000 - Inaugural meeting at Jervis International Hotel.

■ November 25th, 2000 - Seminar at the new North London Synagogue. **Alec Nacamuli** gave us a wonderful insight into the origin of Egyptian Jews... Among the many books on display, one of the most fascinating was a 1956 Alexandria telephone directory where many of us were able to locate our listing.

■ February 7th, 2001 - A.J.E. meeting was held at the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, Lauderdale Road, W9. Topic was, "How has your leaving Egypt affected you and your family." After eating Egyptian Fayre, several people plucked up enough courage to reminisce about their personal Exodus into unknown terrain... A multitude of tales followed on the hardships encountered by some of the families who came to England, France, Italy, Switzerland, etc. Many of us, it seems, adapted well to our different cultural environments. It was felt overall that, despite the initial traumas of being wrenched from our birthplace, we were glad to have come to Europe."

■ March 29th. 2001 - Meeting held to establish a new Cultural Committee. Present were: **Arlette Gotkin, Maurice Malleh, Ted Nahmias** and **Suzi Sidi**.

■ March 6th., 2001 - Book Week. **Professor Ada Aharoni** (née Andrée Yedid) from Israel, talked about her books and work on the International Forum for the Culture of Peace which she founded.

• TEL-AVIV •

Israeli Center for Studies of the Heritage of Jews from Egypt

Under the leadership of **Dr. Arié Shlossberg**, the above association was established at the Tel Aviv University.

Meeting of the Association of Jews from Egypt in London. Mrs. Esther Dee is presiding. It was sent to us by Mr. Gerard de Botton.

Its aim is to perpetuate the spiritual, cultural and historical heritage of Jews from Egypt. Besides arranging for a series of lectures at Tel Aviv University, the Center is establishing a number of fellowships to enable graduate and post-graduate students to investigate some aspect of the contemporary life of Jews from Egypt. The group is participating in the preparation of a book on their community as a joint project of the Ministry of Education and the Ben Zvi Institute, Jerusalem. Another project is to collect oral histories. Students interested in investigating some aspect of Jewish life in Egypt should contact Dr. Arie Shlossberg, P.O.Box 65141, Tel-Aviv, Israel.

• PARIS •

Association Pour La Sauvegarde Du Patrimoine Culturel Juifs Des Egypte

We are pleased to report on the above organization which was founded in 1978 under the leadership of the late Dr. Jacques Hassoun who died about two years ago. We paid tribute to his work in issue No. 2 of our newsletter. A meeting of some members in 1999 decided to reinstitute the activities of the ASPCJE.

In 1980, they started producing a regular journal **Nahar Misraim** (River of Egypt), 34 issues were produced by 1989.

In 1984, the Association published **Les Juifs Du Nil**, Images et Textes, Edition Scribe (with a green cover) which has become a classic, unfortunately now it is out of print. It has about 200 major pictures about life in Egypt. A number of contributions by Dr. Jacques Hassoun has been compiled in a book, **Alexandrie et Autres Recits** (Read description of some of the articles and where to order the book on page 7).

The group recently started a newsletter. The last issue, No.7, includes the following articles:

1. **Le Brûleur de Graines** (El Maila) by **Albert Pardo** where he discusses the various social uses of seeds, leib, (pépins) pistachios, almonds, nuts, peanuts, chickpeas, etc. Story was extracted from his manuscript **L'Egypte que J'ai Connue**.

2. **Les Cafés** by **Albert Pardo** where he discusses the important role of the popular "cafés" in the Jewish life in Egypt.

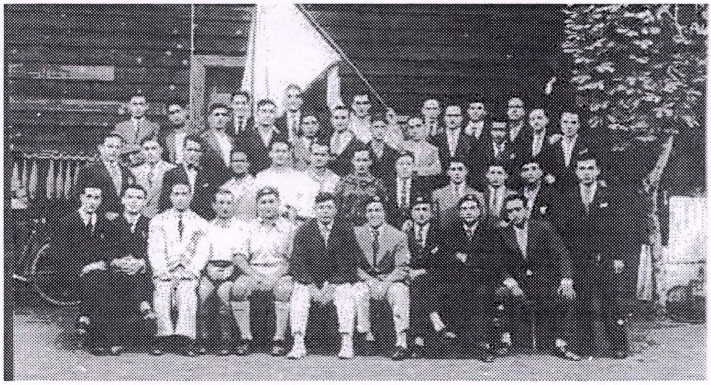
3. **L'Exode Des Juifs D'Allemagne vers Changhai via Port-Said -** Un episode peu connu de l'aide apportée par les Juifs d'Egypte - by **José Salmona**. Salmona writes about the ships (primarily from Lloyd Triestino Company) which stopped in Port-Said with German emigrants on their way to Shanghai.

He gives homage to all the women and men who arranged to meet the anxious travellers running away from terrible conditions to an uncertain future.

4. **La Maccabi de Daher (Duel Au Sommet)** by **Albert Oudiz** - He provides a description of the activities of the sports center and gives the names of well-known Jewish sportsmen, particularly the names of the 5 Harari brothers who formed a champion basket-ball team. Oudiz ends up his article by writing, "**Ah! Que La Vie Etait Belle Alors**!" ("Ah! life was beautiful, then")

Mr. Oudiz also provides a few popular proverbs and expressions in Arabic.

Three photos of Maccabi groups - circa 1930



Adults

Children

Teenagers

The negatives of the three pictures were lent to us by Mr. Elie Busnack of Tel Aviv when we interviewed him in Israel. We understand that he died. Please, let the Editor know if you can identify anyone.

5. **Michel Mazza** reviews a book **"Not In Vain: An Extraordinary Life"** by **Ada Aharoni** which is a saga of a German Jewish nurse **Thea Woolf** who was able to get out of Nazi Germany on time. **Thea Woolf** landed in Alexandria prior to World War II and worked in a Jewish hospital during the critical pre-war years and during the war. The book describes the anxious moments of the failed invasion of Egypt by Rommel, but reflects also the warm ambiance of Alexandria during those years.

Mr. Albert Oudiz has been appointed as the official of the ASPCJE to make contact with Jews from Egypt outside France.

• TEL-AVIV •

Association of Jews From Egypt

The Association was founded in the early fifties. During the first decades, an intense activity was deployed in order to help the new immigrants. When Jews left Egypt, they were in general equipped with considerable cultural economic and social luggage. Therefore they did not have many difficulties in their absorption in their new homes, whether in Israel or other countries.

After a long period of deep lethargy, a group of members under the leadership of **Dr. Abraham Matalon** (12 Havezelet Jerusalem, Israel) necessary steps were taken to resume and develop activities.

Other members of the new Committee include: **Itzhak Zaccai**, **Yacov Hayon**, **Abraham Hayon** and **Moshé Khalaf**. One of their tasks is to gather the many liturgical Jewish melodies compiled by the composer **Hemsi**. A special program has been broadcast on Israeli radio.

Books

■ **Esther Benbassa, "Haim Nahum, A Sephardic Chief Rabbi in Politics 1892-1923"** The University of Alabama Press, 1995. The book was originally written in French and now an English version is available. This book relates the history of Turkish Jewry during the last decades of the Ottoman Empire through the life and work of Haim Nahum from 1909 to 1920. After that date, he became the Chief Rabbi of Egypt. We hope that another writer will deal in the future with his contribution to Egyptian Jewish history.

■ **S.D. Goiten, "A Mediterranean Society"** An abridgment in one volume, revised and edited by **Jakob Lassner**, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1999. Jacob Lassner has abridged and edited Goiten's five books focussing on communal organization, family life, and interaction between the Jewish minority and the Muslim majority at all levels. The greatest value of this outstanding contribution is in making the vast GENIZA data accessible.

■ **Mario Modiano, "Modiano, The Genealogical Story of the Modiano Family From 1570 to Our Days"** Athens, 2000. Mario Modiano was born in Salonika and had the unpleasant experience to witness the German occupation of Greece. Communication in his home was in three languages, French, Ladino and Greek. He became a well known journalist and wrote for the Reuters News Agency. He also occasionally wrote for the New York Times and Time-Life. Some members of the Modiano family lived in Egypt.

■ **Ruth Porter, Editor, "Jews in Arab Lands Today - Photographs"** A lavish catalogue of 114 photographs published in conjunction with the exhibition at Beth Hatefutsoth, P.O.Box 39359, Tel Aviv 61392 Israel. The photographs present us with a touching visual documentation of the Jewish communities in Arab lands today as seen from personal views of the photographers, while expressing their various artistic and photographic approaches to documentary photography. The catalogue also contains an essay by Prof. Norman Stillman which surveys Jewish existence in Arab lands in contemporary times.

■ **Khalid Durán, "The Children of Abraham: An Introduction to Islam**

for Jews." Ktav Publishing House, New York. Nissim Rejwan of Israel reviews the book in MIDSTREAM. New York July/Aug. 2001 p.39. He entitles his review as ISLAM MADE EASY. According to Rejwan, Durán is the first Muslim scholar to undertake the difficult task of providing - for Jews as well as for the general public - a readable and easily accessible survey of Islam both as a religion and as a civilization.

■ **Walter Zenner, "A Global Community, The Jews from Aleppo, Syria."**
Wayne State University Press.

"The Jews from Aleppo, Syria and their descendants compose a remarkable but little known community that has spread throughout the world during the past two centuries ... the religious leadership of Aleppan Jews, unlike other Sephardim, is also noted for its militant conservatism." (Taken from the flyer of the book).

Many of the Jews from Syria emigrated to Egypt from the pre-war Ottoman empire, and after the events of 1948, joined their brethren in Brooklyn whose parents had come directly from Syria to the USA.

■ **Malka Hillel Shulewitz, Editor, "The Forgotten Million."**
Continuum International Publishing Group, New York.

The book gives an account of the untold story of how the once flourishing Jewish communities in the Arab Middle East have virtually disappeared.

■ **Collette Rossant, "Memories of A Lost Egypt, a memoir with recipes."**
Clarkson N. Potter, New York.

"Nostalgia for the Egypt of Rossant's childhood pervades this lightly edited but charming book," Paul Levy, reviewer in the **New York Times Book Review**.

■ **Norman A. Stillman, "The Jews of Arab Lands in Modern Times: A History and Source Book"**
The Jewish Publication Society.

Poetry Corner

"Le Kharabeau et le Homar"
(fable de **Mario Vicchi**, alias Marius d'Alexandrie)

Ostaz Kharabeau, perché sur un dattier,
Avait sur sa tête un tarbouche.
Un Homar pas si bête, par la couleur tenté,
Décida d'lui cirer les babouches.

« Yay, ostaz Kharabeau
Que vous êtes joli, que vous me semblez beau!
Vos babouches vont si bien avec votre tarbouche!
Vous êtes l'Omar Sharif de Glyménopoulo! »

A ces mots, Kharabeau ne se sent plus pisser;
Il frétille des fesses,
Il opine du bonnet ...
Et laisse tomber son fez.

Le Homar s'en saisit et dit:
Tout flatteur, par principe
Est cireur de babouches;
Cette leçon bien classique
Vaut sûrement un tarbouche! »

Kharabeau, ghalbane et confus,
Jura - basta trop tard -
Qu'il marcherait pieds nus...

From Amicale Alexandrie
Hier et aujord'hui
No. 14, June, 2000, p. 7

A Green Week
A week like fresh mint,
a green week spreading
its fragrance to the roots
of being

"Have a green week!
My father used to bless us
on Saturday nights in Cairo,
when he came back from the "Gates of Heaven"
the grand synagogue in Adli street

"Have a green year"
he beamed,
brandishing a fresh, fragrant mint branch
over our keen curly heads -
but don't keep just to yourselves,
give it back
to the world
fully blossoming.

Who will give me
a green week
now that he's gone?
Now that the Gates of Heaven
are shut?

Only peace,
Only a fragrant mint peace.

Prof. Ada Aharoni
Haifa, Israel

Colcassia
In memory and tribute to my mother
Flore (née Aghion) Cohen

Having cooked it
and hesitated a tad,
today I tasted colcassia
or rather retasted it
after a hiatus of forty four years.
A business acquaintance,
an Egyptian, Moustafa,
brought it for me packaged frozen.
Immediately upon arrival home,
I prepared it rapidly in the microwave.
The flavor from the past remained
unmistakable and unique.
Reviving in me memories
of my late mother's
chicken soup with colcassia
for Friday Shabbat dinner,
a satisfying, soothing, favored dish.
For me, associated with warmth and
family gathered at the table,
at our home in Cairo, Egypt.
Colcassia that elephantine, ancient,
primitive "potato"
reminding one of simpler,
kinder times
and my mother's
nourishing cooking,
a vegetable or a root
known affectionately by locals
as "the meat of the poor"
enhancing rhythms and
feelings of the heart.

Blanche Cohen Sachs
Randallstowm, Maryland

Buying a Kosher Frankfurter from an Egyptian Muslim in New York
The following story appeared in the newspaper - ***Forward*** - March 17, 2000

Egypt-born **Liliane Dammond**, who is working on an oral history of Egyptian Jews, told the following story: "My cousin **Yolande** from Rome was visiting New York and as we walked along Fifth Avenue she saw a sausage vendor and told me, 'I have to do like in the **Woody Allen film**.' As we asked for a kosher frankfurter, I recognized the vendor's Egyptian accent and I began talking to him in Arabic. A Muslim from Cairo who had immigrated to America, he was thrilled. As my cousin was about to pay, he refused saying 'No, No. This is from me to you because we are both from Cairo.' Who would ever believe that on Fifth Avenue, two Jewish women could buy a kosher frankfurter from an Egyptian Muslim who refused to take your money!"

The Judeo-Spanish Corner

In the second issue of the news bulletin, we included the **HATIKVAH** in Judeo-Spanish as remembered by **Victor Menasce**. **Dr. Aviva Ben-Ur**, who specializes in Sephardic studies, e-mailed another version which she was able to get from the American Sephardi Federation newsletter of January 1985:

Estaremos siempre con alegria
En la seuda de este dia
Biva, biva Palestina
Muestra tierra ke aresiva
Con sudor de Judios arufiada
De rosa y de flores asimbradas

Alsaremos las bandieras
Por amor de esta tierra
Ke los mas de los Judios sufrieron
A la fin salvasion ya tuvieron

May we always be happy
In the seuda of this day
Live, live, Palestine
Sprayed by the sweat of the Jews
The roses and flowers that
Were planted
Let's raise the flags
Let's raise the flags
For the love of this land
The majority of Jews suffered
Finally salvation was theirs

The National Authority for Ladino and it's Culture is based on a law specially enacted by the Keneset in 17/3/1996, which also initiated a similar organization for the study of Yiddish. The Israeli Ministry of Education, appointed a council of 21 members. Seven members were selected for an Executive Committee. The President is **Yitzhak Navon**, Vice-President, **Moshé Shaul**, editor of Aki Yerushalayim, **Alegra Amado Ben Yitshak**, **Mordehay Arbell**, **Yeoram Gaon**, **Avner Perez** and **Moshé Testa**. The general director of the Authority is **Aaron Cohen**.

Dr. David. M. Bunis of the Hebrew University has edited **"Voices from Jewish Salonika**," under the auspices of **The Center for Research and Study of Sephardi and Oriental Jewish Heritage.**

The book presents more than 120 selections from satirical columns, which appeared in the Ladino press. It catches a glimpse of the everyday life and culture of one of the most flourishing Jewish communities at its very last moment before the almost complete extermination by the Nazis in World War II. It can be regarded as a living memorial and a homage to that important community and its cultural heritage.

News About Jews From Other Muslim Countries

■ **Babylonian Jewish Center in Great Neck, NY:** The Iraqi Jews of Great Neck have embarked on an ambitious project to establish an Iraqi Jewish Center to serve the religious, educational and social needs of the Jewish community originating from Iraq and Iran. Sufficient funds were pledged to make possible the purchase of property which cost $800,000.

■ The Iraqi Jews in Israel have established **The Babylonian Jewry Heritage Center and Research Institute of Babylonian Jewry** in OrYehuda, Israel. They have already published a large number of books on Iraqi Jews, they have an annual publication., which includes news about Iraqi Jews around the world. The Iraqis in England have their own major and sizeable publication, THE SCRIBE.

■ **Yemenite Cultural Festival:** Yeshiva University, in cooperation with the Yemenite Jewish Federation of America Inc., sponsored the Eighth Annual Yemenite Cultural Festival. There was a scholarly presentation by Dr. Nitza Druyan of Hofstra University on Yemenites in Israel, Haim Zadol provided Yemenite Music. The festival included an Art Exhibit - Portraits of the last Jews in Yemen. Mr. Sampson Giat is President of the Yemenite Jewish Federation of America, Inc.

The Yemenite Federation was invited to join the new Center for Jewish History at 15 West 16th Street in New York City. The Center includes the American Sephardi Federation, the Yeshiva University Museum, the Leo Baeck Institute, YIVO and the American Jewish Historical Society.

Note: It seems that our correligionists from other Arab countries are doing well in recording their history.

■ We have received a copy of an attractive newsletter "MIDRASH BEN ISH, The Jewish Babylonian" from the Iraqi community of Great Neck, NY. The featured article is about the history of the Sassoon family and the rest of the newsletter is devoted to community activities.

Letters

"Je vous réitère mes remerciments, car grâce à vous et en votre qualité de fondateur du journal périodique (IAJE), lequel est très intéressant et peu souvent rendre service. J'ai eu l'occasion de retrouver un membre de ma famille avant la même origine que moi et par la suite, d'avoir une corresponcdence affectueuse et suivie, avec échange de

photos et d'articles de journeaux instructifs à l'appui."

Claude Cicurel,
Geneva, Switzerland

"Je tiens ici à vous remercier une fois de plus de votre action en faveur de notre patrimoine commun historique et culturel. Pour ma part, j'espère y avoir modestement contribué par mon livre."

Frederick M. Galimidi,
Paris France

"Je lis toujours avec beaucoup d'interets votre 'Newsletter.' J'ai trouvé avec plaisir bien de noms d'anciens amis, connaissances et même parents plus au moins proches. J'ai perdu contact avec tous ce monde depuis 1949 date à laquelle Victor, mon mari, et moi sommes installés en Israel. Je vous envoie ci-joint mon formulaire d'adhésion à votre Association avec un chèque pour ma cotisation d'inscription. Je vous souhaite du courage et de la santé afin de perséverer dans votre si belle oeuvre."

Merci pour vos efforts.

Becky (Bivas) Pardo,
Bat Yam, Israel

Paris, le 5 août 2001
Mr. Jack Feldstein
au bon soin de I.A.J.E.
2416 Quentin Road
Brooklyn, NY 11229 (USA)

Cher Monsieur,

Votre courrier paru sur le NEWSLETTER No.3 a retenu mon attention.

Vous évoquiez la mémoire de votre père profondément attaché à son Egypte natale. Combien je le comprends! Quel que soit le pays dans lequel nous nous sommes établis, nous ne pourrons jamais reproduire le contexte socio-climatique qui était le nôtre.

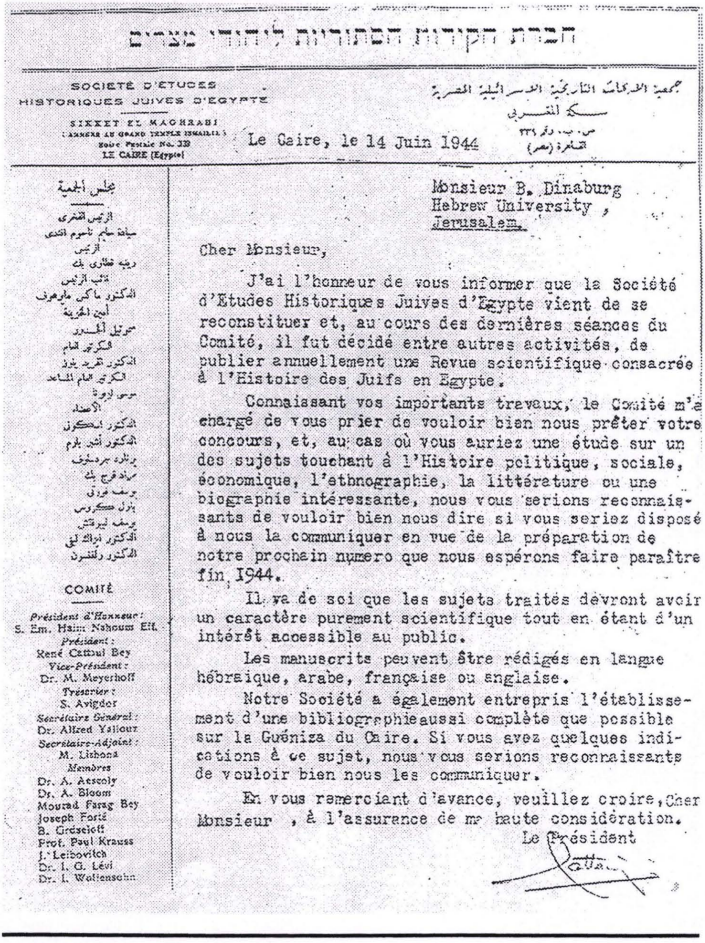
Je ne sais s'il s'agît de la même personne: j'ai connu au Caire un certain Marco Feldstein. En 1936/37, il était mon camarade de classe à l'école JABES. Nous nous sommes retrouvés en 1942/43 en classe de 7e au Lycée Français. Il habitait 1, Place Soliman Pacha et avait une soeur de grande beauté prénommée Esther, vedette éphémère de films publicitaires et de longs métrages égyptiens sous le pseudonyme de Mona Fouad, avant d'épouser un Américain et partir pour les Etats-Unis. Dans les années cinquante, je voyais Marco roulant en scooter. Nous avions un ami commun, Johnny Abbani qui avait été aussi notre camarade dans la même classe maternelle. Il avait épousé sa voisine d'enfance, Dorette Hazan avec laquelle il avait immigré en Australie. Voilà tout ce dont je me souviens.

J'espère que cela vous sera utile et vous prie de croire, cher Monsieur, à mes meilleurs sentiments.

Isaac Hazan
73, Bd. Richard-Lenoir, 75011 Paris

P.S. C'est avec plaisir que j'apprends vos contacts avec mon ami Mario Feininger, dont nos pères respectifs étaient collègues à la SHELL CO. Cet artiste talentueux,

Note of the Editor - The following letter was received from Mrs. Hadassah Assouline, (Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, Jerusalem, Israel) It was mailed to the Hebrew University by the **Committee of the Historical Society of Jews from Egypt**, on 14 June, 1944, and signed by René Cattaui Bey. The honorary President was Chief Rabbi Haim Nahoum Eff.



חברת חקירות היסטוריות יהודי מצרים

SOCIÉTÉ D'ETUDES HISTORIQUES JUIVES D'EGYPTE

SIXKET EL MAGHRABI (ANNEXE AU GRAND TEMPLE ISRAELITE) Boîte Postale No. 339 LE CAIRE (Egypte)

جمعية الدراسات التاريخية اليهودية المصرية
سكة المغربي
ص. ب. رقم ٣٣٩
القاهرة (مصر)

Le Caire, le 14 Juin 1944

مجلس الجمعية
الرئيس الشرفي
سيادة حاخام باشوم افندي
الرئيس
رينه قطاوي بك
نائب الرئيس
الدكتور ماكس مايرهوف
امين الخزينة
مرسيل اشكنازي
الدكتور اهام
الدكتور تشارلز بلوز
الدكتور ايلم المساعد
موسى لاروسة
الأعضاء
الدكتور اسكولي
الدكتور البرت بلوم
برناره برجسلوف
برناد فرج بك
يوسف فرنكي
يوئل مسكيروس
يوسف ليرنتش
الدكتور ابراك ليفي
الدكتور ولفنسون

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Monsieur B. Dinaburg
Hebrew University
Jerusalem.

Cher Monsieur,

J'ai l'honneur de vous informer que la Société d'Etudes Historiques Juives d'Egypte vient de se reconstituer et, au cours des dernières séances du Comité, il fut décidé entre autres activités, de publier annuellement une Revue scientifique consacrée à l'Histoire des Juifs en Egypte.

Connaissant vos importants travaux, le Comité m'a chargé de vous prier de vouloir bien nous prêter votre concours, et, au cas où vous auriez une étude sur un des sujets touchant à l'Histoire politique, sociale, économique, l'ethnographie, la littérature ou une biographie intéressante, nous vous serions reconnaissants de vouloir bien nous dire si vous seriez disposé à nous la communiquer en vue de la préparation de notre prochain numero que nous espérons faire paraître fin 1944.

Il va de soi que les sujets traités devront avoir un caractère purement scientifique tout en étant d'un intérêt accessible au public.

Les manuscrits peuvent être rédigés en langue hébraique, arabe, française ou anglaise.

Notre Société a également entrepris l'établissement d'une bibliographie aussi complète que possible sur la Guéniza du Caire. Si vous avez quelques indications à ce sujet, nous vous serions reconnaissants de vouloir bien nous les communiquer.

En vous remerciant d'avance, veuillez croire, Cher Monsieur, à l'assurance de ma haute considération.

Le Président

fidèle à la part juive de son identité, avait démarré une carrière internationale comme pianiste."

Note of the Editor:

We have confirmed that Mr. Marco Feldstein is a friend of Mr. Isaac Hazan.

Additional letters received from our readers appear in an addendum to this newsletter.

Request for Egyptian Postcards

We have received the following request from Diane Afoumado, Paris:

"... J'aimerai si cela est possible, passer une petit texte dans votre prochaine edition car jai commence une collection de cartes postales du Caire depuis (de la fin du 1 9eme siecle jusqu'aux annees 1960,) et j'espere trouver de quoi augmenter ma collection aupres de vos lecteurs."

The following articles written by **Prof.Victor D. Sanua** and which appeared in the **IMAGE MAGAZINE** are now available on the Internet, www.sefarad.org

1. The short history of the Exodus of Jews from Egypt.
2. The Contributions of Sephardic Jews to the Economic and Industrial Development of Egypt.
3. Haim Nahum Effendi (1872-1960) Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Egypt.
4. "Egypt for the Egyptians," The Story of Abu Naddara (James Sanua) 1839-1912, A Jewish Egyptian Patriot.
5. A Return to the Vanished World of Egyptian Jewry.

If you cannot acquire these articles through the Internet, you can request copies from the Editor.

New Members and 2001 Membership Renewals

We have received membership dues and donations from the following:

Abadi, David, Radlett, Herts, England
Abdela, Angelo M, New York, NY
Abikzir, Mino, Hallandale, Florida
Aharoni, Ada, Haifa, Israel
Bacigalupi, Guy, New York, NY
Benjamin, Odette, New York, NY
Bianco, H, Ramat Gan, Israel
Bijou, Joseph, Brooklyn, NY
Bishop, Rosette, Arlington, VA
Braunstein, Albert, VIC, Australia
Cadeau, Ralph H, Maidenhead, Berks England
Castro, Claude, New York, NY
Castro, Elie, Brooklyn, NY
Castro, Guido, Buckingham Shore, UK
Chalom, Joseph, Dudot, Paris
Chehebar, Charles, New York, NY
Cohen, Edwin, Springfield, NJ
Cohen, Elie, Haifa, Israel
Cwerner, Rachel, New York, NY
De Botton, Gerard, London, England
Dewdney, Micheline, Kingsford, Australia
Douek, Sarah, New York, NY
Dwek, Maurice G, London, England
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Green, Solomon, Los Angeles, CA
Hakim, Albert, Merrick, NY
Hakim, Esther, Asnieres, France
Hettena, Ran, New York, NY
Jabes, Gemma M, Washington, DC
Jampolsky, Charles, Hallandale, FL
Kane, Betty, Cherry Hill, NJ
Machbitz, Jack M, Clearwater, FL
Maio, Juliana, Beverly Hills, CA
Malak, Simone, New York, NY
Mazza, Michel, Paris, France
Malka, David S, Secaucus, NJ
Miele, Paola, New York, NY
Minionis, Roger V, Roslyn Heights, NY
Misrahi, Suzanne, Boulogne S, France
Modelski, Sylvia, Washington, DC
Modiano, Mario, Athens, Greece
Nahum, Elie, Milan, Italy
Nahmias, Leon, Bat Yam, Israel
Naim, Fortunée, Queens, New York
Pardo, Albert, Marseille, France
Pardo, Becky, Tel Aviv, Israel
Pardo, Tanya, Toronto, Canada
Rogol, Brian, Stamford, Connecticut
Romano, Chaya J, Brooklyn, NY
Romano, Dr. Victor & N, Teaneck, NJ
Roden, Claudia, London, England
Sachs, Blanche, Randallstown, MD
Sabban, Nessim C, Brooklyn, NY
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Schual, Roger, Wesport, CT
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Sion, Elie L, Geneva, Switzerland
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Spielman, Ruth, Los Angeles, CA
Sutton, Elie, Toronto, Canada
Viola, Lucien, Marakesh, Morocco
Wahba, Joseph, Brooklyn, NY
Zonana, Joyce, New Orleans, LA

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Yoram Meital, Ph.D., Ben Gurion University, Israel
Tobie Nathan, Ph.D., University of Paris, France
Shimon Shamir, Ph.D., Tel Aviv University, Israel
Sasson Somekh, Ph.D., Tel Aviv University, Israel

REMINDER:

Be a part of this important endeavor to preserve our precious heritage. Send your subscriptions and donations to the IAJE c/o Dr. Victor D. Sanua, 2416 Quentin Road, Brooklyn, NY 11229 USA - do it today, do not delay!

Au temps où one livre était une livre et un homme était un homme

J'ai la nostalgie de l'Egypte où il faisait si bon vivre lorsque j'étais enfant. J'ai la nostalgie de cette Egypte de mon enfance – je suis né en 1944 – où la vie juive battait son plein, où les relations entre gens de la rue semblaient, à mes yeux de bambin, cordiales et fraternelles où, comme le disait mon regretté père, une livre était un livre et un homme était un homme.

Mes souvenirs d'Egypte ? D'abord le bruit. Incantation du muezzin de la mosquée d'en face (il y a toujours une mosquée en face !) convoquant à la prière, appel du chiffonnier : *robabekia, robabekia* , vieilleries, vieilleries, cris des divers vendeurs, rétameurs, aiguiseurs de couteaux, glapissement assourdissant des voitures et taxis faisant jouer leur klaxon à qui mieux mieux, crissement des rails du tram dans une envolée d'étincelles. Confidences de ménagères se parlant par la fenêtre, hurlements des enfants jouant à la *kora*, à la balle dans les rues et dans les cours d'immeubles .

Ensuite les odeurs. Odeurs enivrantes des fruits saisonniers : mangues, oranges, figues, pommes, *goafas,* goyaves et *eshtas,* corassol divers. Des dattes, les rouges, un peu sures, les jaunes et les noires, dégoulinantes, fondantes, sirupeuses comme le miel. Des grenades écarlates, éclatantes de douceur, du *batikh,* de la pastèque regorgeant de fraîcheur dégustée fraîche avec du fromage blanc salé. Et des jus. Ah les jus. Jus de réglisse (vous souvenez-vous du tintement fait par le vendeur du *eer e souss* cognant son gobelet de fer blanc sur le cuivre de son récipient porté à la taille), jus épais de mangue, et jus de canne à sucre dégusté encore chaud tout droit coulant du pressoir.

Pour finir la lumière. Un peu crue, un peu trouble, un peu blanche : le soleil cogne fort. A cause de la chaleur, les immeubles, les voitures et les gens dansent au loin. Mirage sans cesse répété.

J'ai la nostalgie de nos synagogues. Nous fréquentions la *Abraham Betesh* d'Heliopolis. Je me souviens de sa cour intérieure durant les fêtes de Rosh Hashana. Les discussions allaient bon train. Après l'office, à grand congratulations de *Kol sana wenta tayeb,* l'échange de vœux de bonne année, nous allions au café. Les adultes en prenaient un *zibib* (ils nous en versaient quelques gouttes sur la soucoupe que nous dégustions en souhaitant grandir vite pour siroter à notre tour ces délicieux breuvages, les enfants une Spahi ou un Pepsi, le Coca, vendu en Israël, étant interdit. Les mézés couvraient la table, l'apéritif tournant en repas pantagruélique.

Rituel immuable, nous nous rendions, Papa et moi, ma menotte enserrée dans sa forte main toute de tendresse , le matin vers dix heures, chez Mansourah, manger notre *foul* dominical, entre hommes. Mais quel *foul !* Avec des œufs durs et de la salade. Et des *torchis* comme s'il en pleuvait. Papa prenait une bière et m'autorisait à tremper mes lèvres dans cette boisson de grande personne. Nous continuions avec un peu de *taamia* et quelques *baklawa et konafa.* Nous allions ensuite chercher les journaux parisiens hebdomadaires de mes parents : Ici-Paris et France-Dimanche. Ah ! que ne donnerais-je pour revivre un de ces dimanches.

1948. La vie bascule. Je me souviens du black-out et des sirènes assourdissantes. Nous devions mettre d'épaisses tentures bleues aux fenêtres et éteindre les lumières en cas d'alerte. Malheur si un rayon lumineux trouait la nuit : *tafi el nou, yahudi, ibn kalb,* éteins la lumière, Juifs, fils de chien !

Avril 1956 : une dernière halte chez Mansourah en chemin pour Almaza, l'aéroport du Caire (un décollage et un atterrissage toutes les trois minutes me dit Maman). Le soir est tombé depuis longtemps, il est neuf heures. Nous achetons un sandwich de foul et un de taamia. Ma mère me dit d'une voix sourde, les yeux perlés : « *Mange Moïsicco, nous ne savons pas quand nous pourrons en remanger encore* ». Notre avion décolle vers minuit pour le Congo, pour une nouvelle vie. Nous avons encore de la chance par rapport à notre famille, à nos amis qui restent: ils seront jetés dehors après Suez. Mais il reste une déchirure définitive, une plaie béante qui ne cicatrisera jamais entièrement.

2000. Les synagogues sont désertes. Mansourah vit à Brooklyn : sa cuisine a conquis les Américains. Le Caire est passé de deux millions d'habitants à près de quinze. On a éradiqué la mémoire juive ; elle ne subsiste encore que chez quelques vieux, de ci, de là. Le *har-t- el yahud* ne vit plus. De ces cinq oratoires, seul Beth Moshé, la maison du Rambam attend d'être restaurée depuis des années. Les Juifs d'Egypte, une poignée, agonisent. Une livre n'est plus une livre, un homme n'est plus un homme, l'Egypte d'aujourd'hui a extirpé ma mémoire, notre mémoire. Elle ne subsiste que chez quelques irréductibles mélancoliques.

Egypte, j'ai ta nostalgie. Celle de mon enfance et du bonheur. Celle du temps où une livre était une livre et un homme était un homme.

Moïse Rahmani
Editeur, Los Muesteos

Un déjeuner dans le désert pres des Pyramides de Giza, 1942

Une éxcursion en bateau sur le Nil au Caire, 1944

En vacance, plage de Stanley Bay, Alexandrie,1942

Bal masqué à l 'Université Americaine du Caire, 1943

"AH! QUE LA VIE ETAIT BELLE ALORS!" (A. Oudiz)

A Visit To The Eliyahu Hanaby Synagogue In Alexandria

For years I dreamed to visit Alexandria and research the archives of the Eliyahu Hanaby Synagogue, in Rue Nebi Daniel. I wanted to find out things about my own family: my great-grandparents, my grandparents, my father, my uncles and aunts, all of them either born or raised in Alexandria. At last, over the New Year's vacation, I had a chance to go. To alert the people in charge that I was coming, I telephoned, sent faxes and expressed mail messages. All of them remained unheeded. On January first, when I was already in Egypt, I managed to reach by phone Mrs. Mattatia who shares with Joseph Harari the task of supervising the archives. Mrs. Mattatia, who seemed unaware of the fact that I had been trying so hard to communicate with her, consented to a meeting. "Come at noon, on January 3rd," she said.

On January 3rd, at the scheduled time, having finally arrived in Alexandria, my entrance into the Hebrew enclave was blocked by armed soldiers. They asked me very rudely whether I was a Jew and demanded to see proves of identity. Evocative as it was of similar unpleasant circumstances, tension grew instantly. In the end I was told that Mrs. Mattatia had not come in that day, and that she had left no instruction to receive anyone.

I once again repeated that I had come all the way from New York for this specific purpose and requested to talk to anyone who might be around. I was thus introduced to Mr. Victor Balassiano, an assistant to Mrs. Mattatia and the only person available on the day of my arrival as well as the few others I spent there. He had not been told anything, but called Mrs. Mattatia on the phone. She was at home, too tired to come in, that day. After some hesitation, however, she authorized him to let me in.

Mr. Balassiano turned out to be very cooperative and tried to help me as much as he could. I take this opportunity to thank him again for his kindness. The question however remains: why was my request met with such neglect? No plausible explanation was offered. I learnt that the Director of the Center, Mr. Harari, had been in the hospital for quite some time and that Mrs. Mattatia was often "tired out", while Mr. Balassiano himself was not authorized to deal with the day to day business of the center nor was he allowed to act in lieu of the absent administrators. The Center, in other words, was virtually inoperative and not accessible to the public. Mrs. Mattatia continued to be "tired" for the entire duration of my stay.

Thanks to Mr. Balassiano I had access to the books. He, however, was unfamiliar with their contents and their order. That was Mrs. Mattatia's specific competence.

It didn't take much for me to realize the deplorable state in which these books are kept. There I was, with dozen of dusty books randomly shelved, some pages torn, damaged, in some case beyond repair, by mildew and parasites. Many volumes containing death and birth certificates were missing. Or let us say, that Mr. Balassiano and I couldn't find them anywhere, in the various rooms crowded with all sorts of junk.

A precious archive, a depository of information, not just for the Hebrew Community but for historians, geographers, sociologists, genealogist, geneticists and so on, was falling into ruin under my own eyes.

The members of the Hebrew Community in Alexandria can be counted on the fingers of two hands. They are for the most part all well advanced in age. The Synagogue, under partial restoration, is only open for great yearly celebrations and functions. The decay of the archives, however, remains unexplainable. Particularly, when you think that it is not a matter of money. This, I was told over and over again: the Hebrew Community owns a number of buildings in Alexandria, from which it derives substantial revenues. Donations are gladly accepted, although not necessary.

Why is it that precious historical documents are not properly kept? Why not employ a librarian, a book-restorer, people with sufficient knowledge and experience to preserve this patrimony? Why not finance the creation of a data base, of a web site from which the information stored in Alexandria could be accessed all over the world?

No answer to such queries I could extract from the evasive voice of Mrs. Mattatia, with whom I spoke again by phone before my departure, nor from the firm voice of Dr. Salama, whom I was also able to reach on the telephone, after I was informed that he will be the next director of the Center. Dr. Salama informed me that he did not know anything about the books: he himself, in fact, had never seen them.

A Community on the verge of extinction, their internecine struggles... these are not good enough reasons to abandon irreplaceable documents that are of interest to the entire Alexandria Jewish Community, no matter how scattered it may be at the present time. Time and again Jewish possessions have been vandalized by persecutors : it is preposterous to witness similar results brought about by Jews who have been charged with the task of protect their historical heritage.

Having consulted a very limited number of books, I'm not in a position to report exactly on the extend of the collection and of the relevance of each of the books in it. Just the same, I strongly believe it is our task to formulate a simple plane for the conservation of the archives, whose natural location is in Alexandria. First, the members of the Alexandria Community must be convinced that the documents in their hands are irreplaceable and that the rescuing operation must start immediately.

I take the liberty of proposing here that the archival conservation work be entrusted to experts willing to spend some time in Alexandria, to transcribe data and save the books themselves. I encourage all scholars and interested parties to express their opinions and send along technical suggestions as well. Consultation with a librarian, a book conservationist and a data base expert, ought to receive top priority, in order to arrive at a budget proposal. Perhaps such institutions as the Getty Conservation Institute in Los Angeles, The Center for Jewish History in New York and similar Research Centers - as well as individuals (myself included) - could be approached with the notion of raising funds to implement those that the Alexandria Community might make available for this project.

Paola Mieli , New York, June 2001

HILLEL

Dr Victor D Sanua
2416 Quentin Rd
Brooklyn NY 11229-2416

LETTERS RECEIVED FORM AROUND THE WORLD BY THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JEWS FROM EGYPT

c/o Prof. Victor Sanua, 2416 Quentin Road, Brooklyn, NY 11229
Tel./Fax 718-339-0337 e-mail sanuav@stjohns.edu

" I have returned from a trip to London where I was very excited to receive a copy of your IAJE newsletter from my sister Esther Dee, who was recently involved in the London reunion of Jews from Egypt. I very appreciate the work you are doing, and reading your newsletter meant a lot to me. In June, I made my first trip back to Egypt since 1952, and seeing my hometown of Heliopolis again was quite an experience. Please accept my gift and membership of $30 so I can be put on the mailing list and receive future issues of your newsletter." **RUTH SPIELMAN, Los Angeles, California**

" I have just received the latest IAJE newsletter and once again must congratulate you on the colossal and gigantic job you have undertaken since the foundation of IAJE many years ago. As I mentioned to you during your visit to Hallandale, I cannot visualize how single-handedly you are carrying the burden that IAJE entails. One of the ways to gratify you and thank you for the tremendous job you are accomplishing is to subscribe to the IAJE newsletter for which you will my check enclosed herewith" **MINO ABIKZIR, Hallandale, Florida**

" Thanks for sending the most recent issue of the IAJE newsletter. This one was very nicely done. I can identify all the people in the Adly Street synagogue in the photo on the front cover. All are dead except one possible exception that converted to Islam." **DAVID HIRSCH , Middle East Bibliographer, Los Angeles, California**

" Many Middle Eastern Jews are not interested in history (at least not with the same attachment as Ashkenazim). They adapt to where they are and hardly worry about what they left. Same problem with Halabis, although now and then they show curiosity, but it does not last long, especially when it needs money to feed it, but you should keep the good work because soon there will not be anyone to remember anything. **Name Withheld**

" With pleasure and anticipation I received the IAJE newsletter. As always, it is loaded with valuable information from all over the world, yet it is concise. The poetry is inclusive of all, be they Orthodox, Conservative, Reformed or Constructionists, Sephardi or Ashkenazi, etc... Just like the way we were in Egypt. One synagogue embraced all... The IAJE newsletter with your editorship at the helm represents an invaluable sharing of knowledge of our background so that we may preserve our history and not forget our background and our past; that we may visit the Bassatine Cemetery where our beloved departed are buried; and to pray in synagogues when we or others visit Egypt. "Hope springs eternal." Enclosed is my membership check for $100. With deep thanks and best wishes for a long and healthy life." **BLANCHE SACHS, Randallstown, Maryland**

" Thank you for the recent copy of your informative newsletter. I will share the material with the members of my congregation who are from Egypt. Hopefully, they will join with you. I certainly on my part will encourage them to do so." **Rabbi/Dr. M. MITCHELL SERELS, New Rochelle, New York**

" I enjoy reading your newsletter and revisiting my native country through the eyes of those who provide the articles within it. Please find enclosed our check and keep the light burning for all of us, Egyptian Jews." **BETTY KANE, Cherry Hill, New Jersey**

" I always enjoyed the mail you sent me for which I am most grateful. It made me proud to have been your Rabbi for you. Your family was and still is the pinnacle of practicing the art of being Jewish. I decided to really read to your mail and even though I knew of your activities, I was overwhelmed by the historic accomplishments and the selfless devotion to Egyptian Jewry and all Jewry." **Rabbi JOSHUA LINDBURG, Jerusalem, Israel**

"Congratulations on your activities on the framework of the IAJE, and thank you for the material you have sent us. Should we come across additional documentation of interest to you on Egyptian Jewry, we will surely send you copies. We, in turn, would be grateful if you could deposit with the Central Archives, documentary material you encounter, so that it may be preserved for posterity and may be made available to anyone else expressing an interest in the history of the Jews of Egypt." **HADASSAH ASSOULINE, Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, Jerusalem, Israel**

" Warm congratulations for a well-written and rich third issue of the IAJE newsletter. I really enjoyed reading it, and I am promptly sending my membership dues for 2001, as well as a small donation. The work you are doing is really blessed (avoda kdosha). I remember that in my last meeting over a tasty "molocheya" lunch with Jacques Hassoun in Paris, he said: "Victor Sanua, you Ada, and myself are the last "Trois Mohicans" trying to save our Egyptian Jewish Heritage. I am so glad to see by your recent newsletter that so many more have joined us, and it will surely help to continue save our history from disappearing." **ADA AHARONI, Haifa, Israel.**

" The contents of these publications were obviously found not only of particular interest, but also of nostalgic and emotional nature. It revived in me sweet and vivid recollections that no one of our generations, though already aged, could ever forget, especially the smooth, comfortable, enjoyable life in our country of origin." **YITZHAK AMIEL, Holon, Israel**

" Albert Pardo lance un cri d'alarme! Nous sommes, nous les derniers Juifs d'Egypte, une ESPECE EN VOIE DE DISPARITION! Tous les jours, l'un ou l'autre de nos amis est appelé par la Seigneur. Et chaque disparition EST une partie du précieux et UNIQUE patrimoine representé par notre vie LA-BAS! Il est de notre devoir sacré de laisser à nos descendants l'héritage que chacun de nous porte en lui, constitué d'expériences, de souvenirs, de traits de vie, communs à tous les Juifs d'Egypte et, en même temps, UNIQUE pour chacun d'eux. Joignez-vous à lui pour ne pas laisser disparaître cet heritage inestimable." "Pour plus de details, écrivez-lui à cette adresse: Albert Pardo – 50 Boulevard Banon – 13004 Marseille France." **E-mail from albpardo@club-internet.fr**

" Si je puis apporter contribution à votre activité Je suggère que l'IAJE patronne une équipe d'historiens pour établir de façon objective de l'histoire des juifs d'Egypte dans le monde ancien et dans le monde moderne. Je pense qu'un tel document s'il existe un jour fera reference auprès de toute l'humanité. Il serait naturellement souhaitable de mettre à contribution pour ce travail aussi bien des historiens étrangers que des historiens Egyptiens." **RAPHAEL MINIONI, Paris, France**

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR: WE INVITE READERS OF THE NEWSLETTER TO SEND THEIR COMMENTS ABOUT VARIOUS LETTERS WHICH WILL BE PASSED ON TO THEIR WRITERS.

I.A.J.E. NEWSLETTER

5

International Association of Jews from Egypt
Association Internationale des Juifs d'Egypte

EDITOR: Prof. Victor D. Sanua | IAJE, 2416 Quentin Road, Brooklyn, NY 11229 | 2002 Volume 4 No.1

Editorial

In this issue we have included the wedding picture of **Moise Sanua and Rose Klip,** which took place in 1936 at the Shaar Hashamaim Synagogue in Cairo. He had been working as a secretary of Chief **Rabbi Haim Nahum Eff.** Moise Sanua was very active in the Zionist movement and he founded the UNION UNIVERSELLE DE LA JEUNESSE JUIVE. The center was established at 6 Shariah Fouad El Awal, in Cairo. **Moise Sanua** died about 7 years ago and his widow allowed us to go through his papers. We found quite a number of interesting unpublished documents, for example an obituary of **Rabbi Haim Nahum Eff.** who died in 1960. We shall include, in future issues of the newsletters, more documentation which we found.

Rabbi Haim Nahum Eff., prior to his appointment as Chief Rabbi of Egypt, was chief Rabbi of Turkey in Istanbul. Esther Benbasa, a French intellectual, wrote a full biography of his life in Turkey. In spite of his great contribution to Jews from Egypt and to Egypt in general, there is no biography of the latter part of his career. We have added a short report of his life as an addendum to this newsletter.

As I indicated in the previous editorials the reaction of Jews from Egypt about their past seems to be divided. Some like **Albert Oudiz** of Paris, who in one of his reflections, entitles an article "PRIMA DELLA REVOLUZZIONE." He wrote **"Celui qui n'a pas vecu avant la revolution** (en 1948 dans ce pays) **n'a pas** (comme nous, les Juifs d'Egypte) **connu la douceur de vivre**. On the other hand we have strong negative expressions as can be found in the **Goshen**, HAIFA newsletter by Mr. **Maurice Cohen,** where he states "Comment peut-on parler du

continued on page 2

Wedding picture of **Moise Sanua** and **Rose Klip** in 1934. As Secretary to **Chief Rabbi Haim Nahum Eff.** since 1926, he was witness to many historical events of the Egyptian Jewish community. He died in 1993, and the editor was able to collect his papers. Can you identify any of the maidens of honor?

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Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge donations from:
Fernande Bayda, Florida, **Odette Benjamin**, New York, **Charles Chehebar**, New York, **Joseph Cohen**, New York, **Richard Elie**, Italy, **Andre Fetaya**, New York, **Edwin Forti**, New York, **Victor Lipkin**, France, **Juliana Maio**, California, **Elie Rofe**, New York, **Yitzhak Sanua**, Germany

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Immobilia Building used by the British Army during World War II at the corner of Kasr el Nil and Sherif Pacha streets. Across is the National Bank of Egypt.

Editorial continued from page 1

retameur et oublier les avanies que les Juifs ont subies avant, pendant et apres Nasser? Comment peut-on oublier les goulags des oasis, la prison des "etrangers," et les "sales juifs" qui, en Arabe, se traduisent par "O Juifs, O fils de chiens"? (see page 4). Mr. Avner Assael, the editor of the newsletter indicated in his response that we were all aware of the difficult times we had during those events, but we still have fond memories of our personal experiences with individual, native-born non-Jewish Egyptians. An anti-Egyptian sentiment was also expressed by Arturo Schwarz (Page 9).

Besides the above two groups, we could add a couple more. A third group expresses interest in their Egyptian background by sending a letter, and requesting us to send them the newsletter, although postage is relatively high when this request is made from a foreign country. We do not hear from this group. A fourth group made some inquires and it is time consuming to respond. Service is being asked for with no intention of sending a subscription. It would be of interest to conduct a survey of these four groups of Jews from Egypt, and analyze whether their different attitudes are in anyway related to their past experience. Of course research of this type would require funding which is not available to us. IAJE needs your support. IT CAN ONLY SURVIVE WITH YOUR SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS. They would enable us to make the newsletter more attractive, provide extra space to include more material which we are receiving, and publish it more frequently.

We are pleased to report that many university libraries have asked us to send them the newsletter. They are mostly research oriented, and we have decided to include, in our regular newsletter, information about conferences and meetings and the title of papers read by professors, and their affiliation. Thus any future researcher will have at his disposal, sources of documentation on Jews from Egypt. Naturally, readers can also write to the professors and request specific papers in which they are interested.

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All subscriptions should be made payable to the **International Association of Jews from Egypt (IAJE)**. For donors outside the USA, international money orders, your own currency or dollars could be sent.

All funds are to be mailed to:
Victor D. Sanua, Ph.D., Editor
Int'l Association of Jews from Egypt
2416 Quentin Road
Brooklyn, New York 11229, U.S.A.

Beth Hatefutsoth invites Jews of Egypt to send pictures to appear on the Internet site

Dear Prof. Sanua,
We were pleased to receive the IAJE

newsletter and see the reports on so many activities. As we are in a difficult financial situation and have not been able to locate a sponsor who could help us organize a big or even a small exhibition or just a one-day event on the Jews of Egypt, I would like to propose to you the following: Ask your members to send us photographs like the ones printed in your newsletter and we would then create with the photographs our "Community of the Month" feature on our website on the Jews of Cairo or Alexandria and their offsprings overseas. This would not involve direct expenses, but could give the subject and IAJE a lot of exposure, which could lead us to our next goal; finding a sponsor for an exhibition project on Egyptian Jewry in Beth Hatefutsoth on a later date.

Kindly note that our website is rather successful with over 500,000 hits per month. Looking forward to hearing from you and learning your reaction, thoughts and reflections, I remain, Yours truly,

Joël Cahen
Deputy Director-General, Chief Curator
Beth Hatefutsoth, Museum of the Jewish Diaspora

The Comfortable Life that Jews had in Egypt

In this issue is the wedding picture of **Moise Sanua,** with beautifully dressed maidens of honor and a picture sent by **Victor Stoloff,** of a class photograph taken in 1934 at the Ecole Francaise de Droit du Caire (see page 7). Mr. **Stoloff** was the first moviemaker in Egypt, he started in 1937. You will recall that in the previous issue #4 of our newsletter, we had included a picture of a group of young people dressed in their tuxedos celebrating New Years Eve. In Egypt we used to call the tuxedo surprisingly as "smoking" which is a French translation.

As indicated in the previous editorial, Jews and non-Jews have very little knowledge about living conditions of Jews in Egypt. There is no question that some Jews were poor, but the majority were middle class and enjoyed a standard of living equal to, if not superior to, European middle class. Egypt had about 10% of very rich Jews who contributed a great deal to the finances and the economy of the country. It is hoped that with the publication of such pictures, the general public will have a better appreciation of our life in Egypt. We recall that in a paper, which we sent to a Latin American Journal for publication, they included a man with a galabiah (native dress) almost in rags sitting on the ground, which was supposed to represent Egyptian Jewry! Needless to say we tried to correct the impression of the Latin American editor.

Two Different Views About Life in Egypt

The newsletter **GOSHEN, Bulletin des Juifs d'Egypte in Israel** (No. 18, Dec. 2001) carries two opposing views about the life of Jews in Egypt. One was written by Mr. **Maurice Cohen** of Paris, and the other by Mr. **Avner Assael,** editor of **Goshen**. "Messieurs,

The above picture was taken in Paris around 1960. I am sitting with an Egyptian Jew wearing a uniform of a guard for Air France. This gentleman was the chief cashier of a department store in Cairo and was forced to leave. Because of his advanced age, he could not find an appropriate job in Paris, and thus was forced to make his living as a night guard for Air France. I visited him at his dilapidated hotel. This gentlemen died a year after my visit, mostly broken hearted. Thus while many of us were successful in adapting to a new environment after leaving Egypt, many had a difficult time adjusting to these changes.

"Je viens d'Israel ou votre numero 17 m'est tombe sous les yeux par hazard et j'ai pense vous ecrire aussitot. J'avoue que la lecture de votre journal m'a rendu perplexe. Nombre de vos collaborateurs expriment d'une maniere ou d'une autre leur nostalgie d'Egypte. C'etait effarant.

Je suis moi-meme d'Egypte, ou, journaliste, j'ai poursuivi mon metier a Paris. Comment peut-ton parler du retameur et oublier les avanies que les Juifs ont subies avant, pendant et après Nasser? Comment peut-on oublier les goulags des oasis, la prison des "etrangers," et les "sales Juifs," qui en Arabe, se traduise par, "O Juifs, O fils de chiens. La legende de la "tolerance" Egyptienne n'a jamais ete qu'une legende dans un pays qui, pourtant doit une bonne partie de sa richesse aux Juifs, qu'il s'agisse du cotton ou de sucre de canne, sans compter le commerce jadis, florissant du Caire et d'Alexandrie. Je ne vais pas dresser l'acte d'accusation de l'Egypte, mais on peut la prolonger jusqu'aujourd'hui d'innombrables exemple de mauvaise foi pour ainsi dire mortels. Et vous avez le temps de parler du retameur?

Est-ce qu'Israel n'est pas un peu responsable de son amnesie?

Maurice Cohen, Paris

The following is in answer to Mr. **Maurice Cohen's** letter.
Cher Monsieur,
Votre lettre nous a surpris. C'est la premiere fois que nous sommes critiques au sujet de la nostalgie de notre jeunesse vecue en Egypte.Mettons les choses au clair. Nous n'avons pas la nostalgie ni de Nasser et son regime, ni des prisons et camps

Picture taken at the American Univ. in Cairo, 1947

Picture sent by **Dina (Rosenthal) Brakha**, Israel, of students at Ewart Memorial Hall, at the American University in Cairo. The tall gentleman on the right is **Prof. John Badeau**, who later became the USA Ambassador to Egypt.

Picture taken at the Barrages Gardens near Cairo, 1943

Suzanne (Sidicaro) Mizrahi, Paris, assisted in identifing the following: (d. for deceased). *Left to right*, David Gabay, Israel (d.), David Amarilio, England (d.), Victor Agami, France, Robin Mowat, England (d.), Berta Passweg, Israel (d.), Ivonne (Levy) Ambar, Israel, Mayer Harari, Australia, Suzanne (Sidicaro) Mizrahi, Raphael Bigio, Venezuela (d.) J. Dichi, Switzerland, Isaac Crespin, Israel, Victor Sanua, USA.
Can you identify the others?

---

d'internements desquels nous avons souffert personnellement. Vous parlez des gouvernements et de la mauvaise foi de certaines personalites officielles et des injures. Nous parlons de l'homme de la rue, l'homme du people, du portier, du domestique, du repasseur, du boulanger, du retameur, etc.avec qui nous avions d'excellentes relations et qui regrettent jusqu'aujourd'hui le depart des Juifs.

Nous avons la nostalgie des mets Egyptiens succulents, des gateaux chez "**Delice**" et chez **Groppi**, des bains de mer a **Stanley Bay**, des soirees dansantes chez "**Monseigneur**" et "**Athineos**," de la musique Arabe de **Abdel Wahab** et de **Om Kalsoum**, des danses du ventre, etc. J'espere que je me suis fait comprendre. En tous cas, la nostalgie est individuelle. On l'a ou on ne l'a pas.

Avner Assael, Haifa, Israel.

REMINDER:
Be a part of this important endeavor to preserve our precious heritage.
Send your subscriptions and donations to the IAJE c/o Dr. Victor D. Sanua, 2416 Quentin Road, Brooklyn, NY 11229 USA
Do it today, do not delay!

Activities of Associations of Jews From Egypt around the world

• England •

Association of Jews from Egypt (London) Words of Welcome by Ted Nahmias before an AJE Dinner 7/1/01

"Welcome to you all, ahlan wa sahlan. Please forgive the French, but it seems natural to express it all in Moliere's as we did back in the old country. I am sure those who do not parley will understand. I won't be too long I promise.

Mes amis, qu'est-ce qui nous arrive? moi, j'ai mal a la nostalgie. Il y a un sentiment commun qui semble grandir en nous, un desir de retrouver nos racines de nous retremper dans cette atmosphere de jadis. Ce feeling qui est en train d'arriver depuis pas si longtemps s'oppose au rejet total du debut, issu d'un J'EN AI MARRE APRES CE QU'ILS NOUS ONT FAIT. Le souci de rompre avec le passe afin de retrouver un bonheur nouveau, retablir de nouvelles racines basees sur une nouvelle culture, une nouvelle geographie. Avons nous reussi tout cela ? Ce n'est pas sur.. Indéniablement bon nombre d'entre nous essayent de recreer l'ambiance d'antan, memoire reconfortante d'une epoque revolue mais inoubliable. Moi, par exemple avec ma manie de toujours vouloir parler francais. Quel est le natif du Caire ou d'Alexandrie qui ne laisse echapper de temps en temps dans la conversation un mot d'arabe rien que pour donner le ton, ou se donner l'illusion d'etre encore au bord du Nil, chez Groppi, a, Héliopolis, ou alors a Stanley Bay ou a la Gare de Ramleh. D'un vocabulaire tres riche et tres image, il nous reste peut etre quelques mots: Quand nous voulons nous expliquer, nous commencons par: **Yanni**: Quand c'est fini on dit **khalass**. **Khazuk**: Grosse tuile qui nous tombe sur la tete. En vulgaire. Tu peux toujours courir, mon lapin: **bokra fil mishmish**, **Yalla**: Quand on veut indiquer qu'il faut passer a la chose suivante ou partir: Yalla Bina. **ALLA**: Indignation courante, invocation de Dieu. **Mabrouk et INCHALLAH**: Les souhaits les plus utilises Et quand ca suffit: **bass ba a**, **Ezzayak**: Comment vas tu? **Escot**: Tais toi, **Maalésh**: qui arrange tout quelle que soit la gravite. **Ekhs alek**: Va tu me degoutes.

• Israel •

The Centre for Studies of the Jewish Egyptian Heritage. Tel Aviv, Israel

We have received the English version of the newsletter of the ASJEH, which has been very active in arranging for lectures, films, and plays all pertaining to Jewish life in Egypt. The following excerpts have been selected:

Extracts from the Egyptian Press:
In his book, "**Jews, but still Egyptians**," which was published a year ago, the journalist **Suliman Elhakim** pays tribute to the contribution of Egyptian Jews to Egyptian culture. Among others, he mentions **Yaakov Tsanua,** "the father of the modern Egyptian theatre," the composer **Daoud Hosni, Togo Mizrahi,** pioneer of the Egyptian cinema, the singer **Laila Mourad** and her brother, the composer **Mounir Mourad.**

The weekly **Roza el Youssef** mentions that there are 60 Jews living in Egypt. **El Moussawar** points out that most of them are women over 70. **Akhbar el Yom** gives a summary of the history of the Jews in Egypt and describes how they were integrated in Egypt's political life. The economic weekly **Al-Abram Al Iktisadi** dwells in detail on the contribution of the Egyptian Jews to the country's economy. On 23/6/2000, Roza el Youssef reported that the synagogue **"Eliah Hazan"** in Sporting, Alexandria, was sold in 1997 to Coptic and Moslem buyers for 1 million Egyptian pounds. The synagogue was built in 1936 by a Jewish philanthropist of Belgian nationality who lived in Alexandria. According to the head of the community, Mr. **Joe Harari,** there was no point in keeping the building, where no one came to pray and which was in danger of collapsing.

There are two other synagogues in Alexandria, the Great Synagogue **Eliahu Hanavi** which houses the offices of the community and the **Menashe Synagogue**, in Manshia.

Publications:

■ **Twenty Years of Israeli Egyptian relations (1980-2000)** by **Ephraim Dowek** (Yediot Aharonot, 1999) (In English, - Frank Cass, London, 2001). **Ephraim Dowek,** born in Egypt, returned as Israel's ambassador to Cairo. In his book he claims that, although peace with Egypt is a "cold peace," it is a strategic asset that has to be fostered and preserved.

■ **Israel** - by **Dr. Hagar Hillel.** The book, which focuses on the Jewish Zionist newspaper **Israel**, published in Egypt in the years 1920-1939, in three languages, Arabic, Hebrew and French, deals with the social and political unrest of the Jews in Egypt. **Hagar Hillel** was awarded the Uriel Dan Prize for her work on her Ph.D. thesis

■ **A Study: The Jewish Press in Egypt**. Egyptian born **Ovadia Yerushalmi** deals with this subject in the MA thesis he wrote for the department of Hebrew and Jewish studies at the University of Paris. The thesis is about the last quarter of the 19th century up to the middle of the 20th century, when the State of Israel was founded and the Jews started leaving Egypt.

■ **A Study: The Zionist Movements in Egypt in 1917-1948**. **Ruth Kimchi** is currently writing her Ph.D. thesis on the Zionist Movements in Egypt.

The Center is offering a number of scholarships to students interested in conducting some research on Egyptian Jewry. Applicants should write to **Prof. Arie Schlosberg,** P.O.B. 65141, Tel Aviv 61651, Israel

• France •

From Exodus to Exodus

Mr. **Alec Nacamuli** of London gave a talk entitled "From Exodus to Exodus," last October 2001 in Paris, to the **Societe pour la Sauvegarde du Patrimoine Culturel des Juifs d'Egypte**. The lecture covers the history of Jews in Egypt from biblical times to their dispersion which started in 1948. We shall only refer to his statements pertaining to the fact that Egyptian Jews were surprisingly well integrated in Egypt's political life and particularly in its economy.

■ Active in Egyptian nationalist movements fighting for independence from the British, **Yaacov Sanua (Abu Naddara),** encouraged and took part in the revolt of Orabi Pacha.

■ **Felix Benzaken, Victor Sonsino,** and **David Hazan** (son of the Alexandria rabbi, condemned to death in absentia by the British) were early members of Wafd party of Saad Zaghloul Pacha fighting for independence after WWI.

■ **Leon de Castro**, itinerant ambassador of the Wafd across Europe.

■ **Joseph Aslan Cattaoui, Salvador Cicurel, Sir Victor Harari Pacha** were on the boards of the Misr Bank and Egyptian National Bank.

■ After independence in 1922, **Haim Nahum Effendi**, Grand Rabbi of Egypt and Senator, would write King Fouad's speeches.

Mr. **Alec Nacamuli** was born in Alexandria, his **grandfather Isaac Nacamuli,** was the honorary president of the Jewish community in Cairo.

Elie Amiel 1925-2001

Elie Amiel 1925-2001

Elie Amiel died in Israel after suffering from lung cancer for a long time. He became well known for his skill as a basketball player by the time he was 14 years old. He later became the basketball captain of the Maccabi Alexandria team. In time, he became a member of the Egyptian national basketball team, and participated in their national and international matches. His captain gave him the nickname, "Abul Hol, the invincible." When he went to Israel he trained its national team which represented the country quite

successfully.

Elie Amiel founded The AMICALE D'ALEXANDRIE in 1970. He arranged monthly meetings of Jews from Egypt at the UNION DES JUIFS D'EGYPTE at a Center on Pinkster Street in Tel Aviv. About 10 years ago Dr. Victor Sanua interviewed Elie Amiel for the purpose of collecting oral histories of Jews from Egypt who migrated to Israel.

During the interview, he provided detailed information about his experiences and leadership as a basketball player in Egypt and Israel. He pointed out that he had to leave the Egyptian national team because of certain demands by the Egyptian authorities which he could not accept. His friends in Israel will miss a remarkable person..

Note: Mr. Elie Amiel gave us, at the end of the interview, a list of idioms in Arabic with the textual translation in French to which we have added a translation in English. Mr. Amiel had a wonderful sense of humor.

Three "anciens" de l'ecole CATTAOUI, une amitie de 70 ans.
Au centre Samy Shemtov, a sa droite A. Oudiz, a sa gauche I. Levy.

Samy Shemtov 1922-2002

Le Dimanche 14 Avril, en Israël, s'éteignait Samy Shemtov. Amis depuis près de 70 ans, nous avions siégé sur les mêmes bancs de la fameuse école Moïse de Cattaoui Pacha au Caire. Adolescents nous avions également le culte des belles lettres, des beaux livres, des belles idées ... Jeunes gens épris d'idéal, nous nous étions passionnés par les grandes idées du moment et nous nous empoignions férocement pour défendre nos points de vue et tirer des plans sur la comète pour le triomphe du socialisme, lui en Israël et moi... en Egypte. Une indéfectible amitié nous unissait. Un jour de 1946, après nous avoir dit adieu au cours d'une réunion clandestine, il disparut. J'appris ainsi qu'il avait émigré en Palestine déguisé en soldat de l'Armée Britannique, et qu'avec des camarades du Hashomer Hatzair, il avait créé le premier Kibboutz d'« égyptiens ». Marcelle Fisher, dans son livre, « **Les Khamsins d'Antan** » décrivit de savoureuse façon cet épisode rocambolesque.

Des années plus tard il quitta le Kibboutz, avec, pour tout capital, une chemise, un short, un chapeau *kova'tembel,* accompagné de sa femme Rita et de ses deux enfants.

Il accomplit plusieurs missions pour l'Agence Juive en France, en Europe Centrale et surtout en Afrique du Nord où il prit une part prépondérante à la *'aliyah* de milliers de juifs du Maroc, Des années plus tard, la presse juive rendit un hommage solennel à cet épisode de l'émigration des juifs du Maghreb et à ses organisateurs.

Sioniste de la première heure, Samy n'avait jamais renié son affection pour sa terre natale, les lieux et les camarades de son enfance. Il chérissait et voulait à tout prix préserver cette « identité » de juif égyptien menacée à brève échéance de sombrer dans les ténèbres de l'oubli. Il anima et présida l'Association des Juifs d'Egypte d'Israël, à l'instar de ce que faisait à Paris, le Dr Jacques Hassoun dont il était l'ami. Il était en plus le correspondant en Israël de la revue de ce dernier, « **Nahar Mitzraim** », Au cours des années de chômage, Havait, affamé de savoir, fait des études d'archéologie, et noué des relations avec des archéologues connus comme Ben Zvi, etc. Une vie bien remplie en somme, si bien remplie, que la fatigue, l'usure du temps et de l'âge, jointes à la déception de voir les idéaux généreux des *kibboutzniks* de la première heure sacrifiés sur l'autel de la rentabilité et de la civilisation de l'argent, devrais-je dire du veau d'or ?, eurent raison de ses forces. Il s'éteignit lentement parmi les siens.

Homme de qualité, d'un humour très fin, esprit lucide et critique, il était un analyste compétent de la vie en Israël. D'un dévouement total et sans calcul à sa famille, ses camarades et son idéal, il était d'un autre temps que celui que nous vivons en ce moment. Sa discrétion et sa modestie, laissaient place souvent à une étonnante exubérance et un formidable éclat de rire et cela en faisait une personnalité attachante qui n'avait que des amis. Il s'en est allé laissant un vide énorme dans le coeur de ceux qui le connaissaient et qui, par conséquent l'aimaient. Ceuxci souhaitent entourer de leur affection, sa femme dévouée, Rita et ses enfants Guédéon et Yossi..

Repose en paix dans cette terre que tu as tant aimée, que tu as arrosée de ta sueur, Samy. Repose en paix, mon camarade, mon ami, mon frère, nous ne t'oublierons pas de si tôt.

Albert Oudiz, Paris

First year students attending the Ecole Francaise de Droit du Caire (1931). Picture sent by **Victor Stoloff**, first cineaste in Egypt, with the movie **"Siwa, Child of the Desert."** Would you be able to identify any of the above students?

Victor Stoloff, an IAJE member, is honored at the Turin Film Festival

In November 2001, **Victor Stoloff,** New York, was invited for six days to Italy to participate at the Turin Film Festival. He presented his docudrama "**Siwa, Child of the Desert**" included in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art. Many Egyptian filmmakers were present and he addressed them in Egyptian Arabic. At the closing, he thanked his Italian hosts in their own language explaining that he learned the language when he wrote, produced and directed full length American movies in Italy during the post war years, one of them is, "Being in Rome."

Books

Dr. **Ada Aharoni** has just released two new books.

■ A French edition of "**From the Nile to the Jordan**" (Edition Stavit, Paris, Nov. 2001), which can be obtained in all the good bookshops in France, as well as via her website (http://tx.technion.ac.il/~ada/home.html) and from amazon.com ISBN 2-911671-75-9. This book delineates the SECOND EXODUS of the Jews from Egypt.

■ **"Women Creating a World Beyond War"** (New Horizon, Haifa, September 2001).

■ **"The Forgotten Millions. The Modern Jewish Exodus from Arab Lands" Malka Millel Shulevitz**

"These essays by ten scholars of Middle Eastern history dealing with the exodus of Jews from Arab lands where they had lived, in some instances, for 2,500 years, should be required reading for those discussing the question of compensation or return of Palestinian refugees as part of a peace agreement with Arafat... This book provides an in-depth history and analysis with special focus on Jews... "**The Forgotten Millions**" is an important and timely volume, which focuses on people whose history we have almost forgotten, whose exodus, resettlement and restitution claims have been overshadowed by the Holocaust and by the most recent immigration from the Soviet Union and Ethiopia... This book corrects the distortions of Arab claims." - **Emunah Magazine**

This book can be obtained by writing to: Continuum International, P.O. Box 605, Herdon, VA 20172. You can order directly by calling toll-free: 800-561-7704. A paperback is also available.

La Bibliotheque moyen -orientale de Jacques Hassoun (1936-1999)

Collection sur l'*Egypte* de l'antiquité à la fin du XXême siècle

Livres d'histoire, de société, de politique, de religion, de litterature, de géographie, de philosophie, d'art et cinéma.

Jacques Hassoun, médecin, psychanalyste, écrivain, président de **l'Association pour la Sauvegarde du Patrimoine Culturel des Juifs d'Egypte**, a réuni de 1970 à sa mort (1999) un grand nombre (1000) de livres, revues, cartes postales et photos sur le Moyen-Orient.

Originaire d'Egypte, Jacques Hassoun appartenait à la communauté juive. Il parlait et lisait l'hébreu et l'arabe.

Il n'est pas excessif de dire que Jacques Hassoun avait une passion pour son pays d'origine dont il n'a cessé de faire entendre les richesses à tous les niveaux: celui de la langue: le parler des gens du Caire, d'Alexandrie, du delta, les blagues celui de ses écrivains, cinéastes, artistes, hommes de science; celui des récits de voyage celui de son histoire: depuis l'antiquité l'Egypte a connu et sédimenté des cultures multiples: pharaonique, ptolémaique, chrétienne, copte, juive, ottomane, musulmane, méditerranéenne. Son histoire moderne des XIXème et XXème siècles est le théâtre de bouleversements radicaux et sa situation géopolitique l'amène à être dans la proximité la plus grande avec les points de tension actuels.

C'est cette Egypte là, allant des histoires singulières à la grande Histoire, dont est porteuse la bibliothèque de Jacques Hassoun. On y retrouvera son érudition et la multiplicité de ses intérêts.

Ses enfants Judith et David Hassoun ont tenu à ce que la collection dans son

ensemble soit archivée et qu'elle puisse être connue du public le plus large.

On peut consulter les ouvrages *sur place* en prenant rendez-vous par téléphone au 01 45 88 42 03, par fax au 01 45 80 19 32, par email à phassoun@hotmail.com

On peut accéder à l'ensemble du répertoire par internet: **http://www.bibliohassoun.org/**

On peut acquérir le catalogue (78 pages) en envoyant un chèque de 10 euros ou 10 dollars U.S.(frais de port inclus) libellé au nom de Mme. Hassoun à l'adresse suivante: Mme. Hassoun, 64 rue Vergniaud, 75013 Paris, France.

Projected Autobiographical Writings by Members of I.A.M.

Blanche Cohen Sachs: writer, poet, artist is in the process of compiling an autobiographical memoir account of her life in Egypt. Interested publishers and agents may contact her at 8823 Stonehaven Road, Randallstown, MD 21133. Other members who are planning to write their memoirs include **Elie Nahum, Victor Sanua, Joyce Zonana, Dr. Yehuda Ozari** and **Ginette Sakkal Dayan.** If any of our readers have written or contemplated writing of their experiences about their dispersion from Egypt, please send information to the editor. It will thus be possible to have an inventory of these efforts, hoping that some day such material would be of interest to publishers.

Study of Jewish Communities in the Near East

We have received from the **Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Institute**, listings of all the books and documentations of Egyptian Jewry, which are available in their library. There are approximately 300 titles in Hebrew, and 85 titles in English. Thus anyone who is interested in receiving such documentation should write to: Mrs. **Laurie Singer**, Librarian of the Yad Ben-Zvi Institute, 12 Abrabanel St., P.O.B. 7660, Jerusalem 91076, Israel.

Frank Nissel (USA) returns to Cairo after 55 Years

"I returned to Cairo for the first time in 55 years just about the same time to spend a few days on business with my daughter Nancy (who is our Marketing Manager). We have a few good customers in Egypt who produce plastic packaging and disposables. One of them insisted on a personal visit to place a million dollar order and I accepted this challenge with great pleasure.

First of all, I must tell you that I have never seen such friendly hospitality before. This, not only on the part of business contacts, but on the part of everyone we met from taxi drivers to canal drivers. My well traveled daughter was completely taken by this friendliness.

While Cairo has increased tenfold in population, it's general character has not changed. I was able to find my way around without difficulty and even found places like Groppi little changed except for wear. We visited our old apartment building in Maadi which used to stand alone but is now surrounded by others. It looks relatively unchanged except that the iron garden pergola, which I used to climb, has almost collapsed.

We visited my various schools which are all still there. The Lycee Francais in Bab El Louk is still going strong as is the English school in Heliopolis where the Boab could not believe that I was a student in their first class in 1938. 1 was especially well received at the American University in Cairo where the Provost arranged for a lengthy tour. They now have 25,000 students and plan a new campus half way to Suez.

We went to see the spectacular Son et Lumiere at the pyramids and visited again in daylight the next day. The Cheops pyramid which we used to climb up to the top is now open only up to the lower entrances. I'm very relieved because I bravely made it up to that level. As a last act of unusual kindness, the owner of a small refreshment stand near the pyramids gave us two cokes for which he refused payment after I spoke Arabic with him and told him about my background.

P. S. I'm delighted to read a few familiar names in your journal. Ecole Jabez in Alexandria was a name I forgot. I went there for 3 months when I first arrived in Alex in 1933 at the age of 7 with only German as a language. I remember being taught French via sign language."

The Forgotten Exodus

The World Jewish Congress and the European Jewish Congress arranged for an International Symposium, Dec. 16, 2001 in Paris.

We shall only provide the titles of the presentations and authors of the major papers and possibly their affiliation.

Le Status de la dhimmitude: Un panorama
Bat Yeor, Ecrivain

L'hostilite croissante (1920-1967): le facteur palestinien et la fin des communautes juives dans le monde Arabe. **Prof. Haim Saddoun**, Professeur a l'Universite Ouverte, Tel-Aviv.

Expulsion et depossession: une typologie, **Prof. Yaakov Meron**, Ancien Conseiller Juridiqu eau Ministere de la Justice d'Israel.

Les camps de transit (mabaarot) et les efforts d'integration en Israel des refugies. **Yehuda Dominitz**, Ancien Directeur General du Departement d'Immigration et de l'Absorption de l'Agence Juive.

La reinsertion des refugies Juifs des pays arabes dans les pays de la Diaspora. **Claude Tapia**, Professeur de psychologie sociale a l'Universite de Tours.

La responsabilite des Pays Arabes et des Nations Unies dans la perpetuation du probleme des refugies palestiniens.
Dr. Avi Beker, Secretaire General du Congres Juif Mondial.

Un critere de comparaison: la solution des problemes des refugies après la deuxieme guerre mondiale.
Prof. Raphael Israeli, Professeur a l'Universite Hebraique de Jerusalem.

Letters to the Editor

"Thank you for your letter of 1.25.02. You cannot imagine the excitement expressed by the remnants of our small group, all born in Alexandria of the "Amicale d'Alexandrie." We do remember your visit to Tel Aviv and even

the funny speech made by you in our meeting with Elie Amiel as the organizer and appointed head of the group. Elie Amiel was the founder of the Amicale d'Alexandrie in 1970. To our regret, we have less participants for obvious reasons, sickness, problems of all sorts and also more and more are passing away (mostly of the group that immigrated in the fifties). The monthly meetings take place every first Sunday in the premises of the "UNION DES JUIFS D"EGYPTE" which was founded by Joe Masri (no longer active), but in our last meeting your last edition was the center of all discussions and we all wait impatiently for your promised publication of the profile of Elie Amiel. Thank you for your wonderful letter and hope that you will keep all of us in mind about your work."

Leon Nahmias
Tel-Aviv, Israel

"Many Middle Eastern Jews are not interested in history (at least not with the same attachment as Ashkenazim). They adapt to where they are and hardly worry about what they left. Same problem with Halabis, although now and then they show curiosity, but it does not last long, especially when it needs money to feed it, but you should keep up the good work because soon there will not be anyone to remember anything."

Name Withheld

"Tous vos correspondents parlent, avec nostalgie!!! des "bons vieux temps", et je me demande comment ils peuvent qualifier ainsi le temps ou (mais la situation n'a pas profondement change) les 90% de la population vivait dans la misere plus noire et etait atteint par au moins une maladie mortelle (Bilharziose) ou syphilis ou encore Trachome. Comment peuvent-ils oublier que, pour les Egyptiens, comme pour tous les Arabes, nous etions meprises et appeles "EBN EL KALB" OU "EBN EL CHARMOUT" ou encore "YAHOUD" avec un adjectif meprisant que j'ai oublie. Leur situation de "priviligie temporaire" leur ont fait perdre conscience du milieu social et historique. Quand a moi, ayant passe ma jeunesse entre la prison de Hadra et le camps d'internement d'Aboukir, je n'ai absolument AUCUNE-NOSTALGIE des "bons-vieux-temps"

Arturo Schwarz
Milan, Italy

"J'ai lu avec interet et enthusiasme les articles parus dans votre bulletin. A ce sujet, je me fais l'agreable devoir de vous féliciter pour l'initiative et les efforts que vous deployez pour l'execution de ce grand projet. En consequence, permettez-moi de vous offrir une donation de $100 que je vous envoie par cheque bancaire."

Elie J. Cohen
Haifa, Israel

"Merci pour votre newsletter No.3. Je me permets de vous féliciter pour les efforts faits pour renouer avec tous les Juifs d'Egypte, (les AJEWPTIANS) epars un peu partout dans le monde. Le mot "AJEWPTIANS" n'est pas de moi mais de l'attache commercial du Consulat Britannique a Sao Paulo (Bresil) que je rencontrais pour affaire en 1958. Il me raconta que durant l'annee 1957, un bon nombre d'emigres, venus d'Egypte et qui avaient travailles aupres de societes Anglaises (Shell, I.C.I., British Airways, et pour l'armee Anglaise durant le seconde guerre mondiale) s'etaient presentes au Consulat en quete d'un emploi aupres des filiales bresiliennes des susdites societes, declarant de prime abord: "I am a Jew from Egypt.", etc... Apres avoir recu une dizaine d'immigres qui repetaient la merne chose, l'attache commercial qui avait forge le mot, s'adressa aux suivants en leur disant: "So! You are also an AJEWPTIANS".

A propos de l'emigration des Juifs d'Egypte vers le Bresil, si la chose peut vous interesser (surtout des debuts), j'aurai pas mal de choses a vous raconter, faites-le moi savoir. A vous, ainsi qu'a vos collaborateurs de l'IAJE, j'adresse mes voeux de succes."

Elie Nahum
Milan, Italy

"Pour la tâche que tu entreprends, c'est vraiment admirable et selon ma modeste opinion, c'est comme le mythe de Sisyphe - ambitieux. Je ne dis pas ceci pour te décourager, mais pour produire un périodique quelconque de manière adequate, il faut des resources - financieres mais aussi en matière de competence. Or je ne sais pas sur quoi tu peux compter, et je crois que beaucoup de gens préféreraient vivre leur vie dans le present plutôt que de remuer les souvenirs du passé (tel est mon cas, par exemple)."

Name withheld

"On the whole, I can identify with many of the things you write or recount and I do not know how to respond. As my father who was a lawyer and journalist (by profession) used to say: any self respecting Jew must have at least two opinions on any one subject. Donc, je me permettrai dans ma prochaine lettre, de vous indiquer la ou mon opinion est plus nuancee que la votre car cela nous permettra d'aborder une discussion qui nous sera profitable (intellectuellement)."

Alain Albagli, Ph.D
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

"It is true that all of them (Jews of Egypt) assimilated to actual life and are almost not interested in keeping anything from the past. But it happens that if you encourage them they are ready to talk and bring back their seriousness. It is not as in other communities. I am sending $100 for the cause."

Isaac Sanua
Germany

Obituaries

Elie Amiel, Israel
Samy Chemtob, Israel
Felix Ben Said, Israel
Sami Dayan, Switzerland
Sara A. (Hazan) Hess, California
Albert Palacci, Belgium

Poetry Corner

La Cigale Et La Fourmi
Par Jean de la Fontaine

Kanett el cigale bil kerf
toul el seif
wa ma aarafatch taamel eh,
lamma el sheta gai.

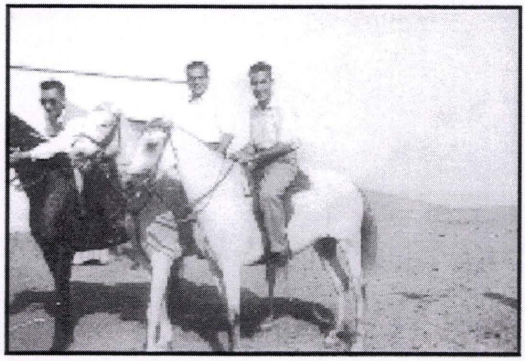
Rahet yom aand el fourmi
wa aletlaha: "Mon amie
wo heat eeneki el etnein
sallefini rialein."

Radett el namla el makkara
"Tehsibini ana homara?
Enti aaiza rialein,
laken fil seif koumti fein?"

"Tool el leil wal nahar,
kount fil Union bar,
neshrab whisky wa
cogniacatt.
We ne ghanni chansonatt.
Wa koul yom el had wel
khamis,
Nedghadda fil hotel
Semiramis."

"Eza kounti bit ghanni,
ya habibti
ebeedi aani
Rouhi fil Pavionne,
wa er-oussi Charlestone!"
Moralite: Vive Nabeleone!!!

Sent by Mr. M. Mazza, Paris
Another version is found in
the Cahier No.12, of AAHA,
Sandro Manzoni,
Switzerland



Riding Arabian horses near the Pyramids, 1945.

Simulating death is **Henry Cohen**, while the person in distress! is **David Jury** (both of Paris), Sakkarah, 1947.

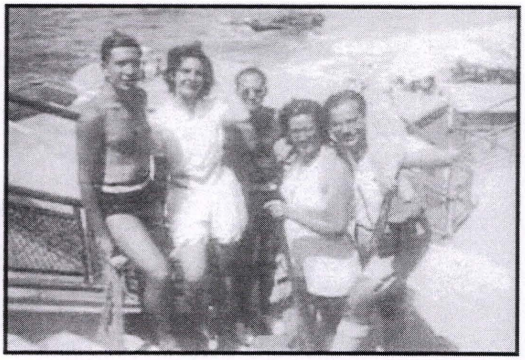
Cher Victor, Je te remercie pour ton coup de téléphone qui m'a fait énormément plaisir. Je m'em-presse de t'ecrire, comme tu me l'as demandé, l'histoire de: La Signorina Aux Beaux Yeux Noirs en Italo-franco-égyptien.

Trilingual Poem:
FI SH-SHARI' BI-TITMASHA, *la signorina* aux beaus yeux noirs,
Come una luna, la sua faccia ha chiarito tout le boulevard.
Volevo lui *parlarle,* SHATAMETNI,
Et *con la sua ombrella* DARABETNI
En réponse à mon bonsoir!
Perchè, signorina, TIDRABINI *quando* io *ti amo* KITIR?
Une seule parole de vous TIKAFFINI pour HAYYINI mon coeur toujours!

Traduction:
Dans la rue se promène la demoiselle aux beaux yeux noirs.
Comme une lune, son beau visage il éclaire tout le boulevard.
Voulant lui parler, elle m'a insulté
Et avec son ombrelle elle m'a frappe
En response a mon bonsoir!
Pourquoi mademoiselle me frappez-vous
Alors que moi je vous aime beaucoup?
Une seule parole de vous me suffit
Pour combler mon Coeur pour toujours!!!!

Albert Pardo, Marseille, France

An outing at the Barrage gardens, near Cairo, 1947.



Bathers leaving the Stanley Bay beach, Alexandria, 1946.

"AH! QUE LA VIE ETAIT BELLE ALORS!" (A. Oudiz)

Addendum to IJAE Newsletter #5

L'Adaptation Des Juifs D'Egypte Au Bresil Elie Nahum, Milan

A la page 14 (Newsletter No.4), sous la rubrique, "New members and membership renewals," Je constate qu'il y figure des members d'une dizaine de pays; ce qui me surprend c'est l'absence totale d'adhesions des Juifs dEgypte qui vivent au Bresil ou, a ma connaissance, ils sont nombreux et plus particuliere-ment a Sao Paulo.

Quelques uns d'entre eux, entreprenants et responsables, prirent l'initiative d'instituer, a l'instar des autres communautes presentes a Sao Paulo, celle des Juifs d'Egypte. Ils nommerent un rabin et si je me souviens bien firent venir un fameux circonciseur d'Egypte*. A ce qu'il me semble, tous les Juifs du monde sont tres attaches a la specifite de leur culte. Les causes de l'afflux d'emigrants d'Egypte et de la Hongrie, on le sait, furent la "crise de Suez" et l'insurrection populaire Hongroise en 1956 (Oct./Nov).

L'Ambassade du Bresil au Caire fut genereuse et delivra a tous les requerants des visas, grace aussi a la bienveillance du secretaire de l'Ambassade, M.F. Cardona que je connus personnellement en 1954 et qui venait d'etre transfére d'Afrique du Sud.

Si la sortie d'Egypte (deuxieme et derniere exode) fut relativement facile. l'acceuil des tout premiers emigrants, qui arriverent nombreux par bateaux en 1957, fut vraiment desagreable, bien qu'un petit groupe d'emigres installes au Bresil quelques annees avant les evenement de 1956, se mobilisa et sollicita, avec insistance, l'aide de la Federation des Communautes de Sao Paulo et de la HIAS. Faisaient partie de ce groupe: la famille Piccioto, Marcel Modiano, Gaby Cohen, Les freres Harari (Elie, Emile et Joe) et leur beau frere Setton, Joe Rossano, moi-meme et Marc Matalon venu apres moi. Tous maintenaient le contact avec parents et amis restes en Egypte, et fournirent informations, garanties, etc. a qui les demandait, aussi etions nous informes des dates d'arrivee des bateaux.

Je fus le seul a me rendre a Santos pour recevoir les premiers contingent d'emigrants qui furent ravis de trouver une personne amie, un delegue de la Federation leur offrit de leur faire transiter dans un "Centre d'acceuil " a Sao Paulo qui se revela tellement sale et repugnant que les émigres, affoles, preférerent passer la nuit dans la cour assis sur leurs valises. Tot le lendemain matin, il me telephonent pour que j'aille les sortir du dit "Centre" De mieux que je pus, je les aidai. Par la suite nombreux furent ceux qui viennent chez moi pour des informations, conseils, addresses de pensions, logements etc. Ils finirent par s'installer dans le quartier "d'Higrenopolis" ou residaient deja la plupart des premiers venus et moi-meme.

Nous fumes vraiment decus par l'attitude de la Federation des Communautes et de la HIAS qui traiterent nos freres comme des citoyens de troisieme categorie et qui donnerent la priorite aux Juifs Hongrois en leur prodigant soins, attention, subsides et probablement travail et emplois. Ce n'est que par la suite, et sur l'insistance surtout des émigrés venus d'Egypte, que la HIAS se decida a s'occuper d'eux. Ils recurent pour quelques mois, un subside. Quoiqu'il en soit, nos émigrés se debroullerent tout seuls et fort bien. Il serait interessant et utile, faire connaitre le NEWSLETTER a travers la Communaute de Sao Paulo. Je n'ai pas l'adresse, mais en cas de besoin, je pourrais te la procurer."

Nous pensons que son nom etait Semhon!

Jews from Egypt Migrating to Australia Hyams, Bernard (Dr):

"Surviving, A History of the Institutions and Organizations of Adelaide Jewry," Published by the Jewish Community Council of South Australia, Hyde Park Press, Adelaide, 1998:
Section of the book on Jews from Egypt migrating to Australia was received from **Richard Milosh**

"The European immigrants certainly made a strong impact on Adelaide Jewry, but another numerically significant group of Jewish immigrants were those who came from Egypt.

The first wave of refugees arrived in 1948, following the war between Arab nations and the newly formed State of Israel; further waves occurred in 1965 and 1967, as a direct result of the Middle East conflict and tension and the consequently deteriorating position of Jewish people in Egypt. Although a minority (about 20 percent) of them had been born in Egypt, most having come originally from Europe and other Middle East countries, the majority were either Sephardic or had adopted Sephardi traditions. One estimate is that 300 to 400 settled in Adelaide, and a list of families (noted in the AHC archives) tends to confirm this figure. However, some of the immigrants consider that the actual number was much higher than 400.

Certainly Adelaide was the principal Australian beneficiary of the Egyptian influx, and perhaps fortuitously so. Probably the first to come was Max Liberman some time in 1947. He was the contact for Victor Barouch who in 1948 sought to establish towel manufacturing in Adelaide and who in turn brought out several relatives before the end of the year. This process of chain migration provided a surge of arrivals from Egypt of relatives, friends and acquaintances of those already there. Victor Barouch recalled the sympathetic response by several Immigration Department officials who went out of their way, on humanitarian grounds, to assist with landing permits for the refugees. Especially for the 1956 wave of Egyptian arrivals, success in having them settle in Adelaide was also due to strenuous efforts by the SA Board of Deputies and the Australian Welfare Society; in mak-

ing representations to an initially reluctant Federal Government. In terms of community affairs, the newcomers from Egypt did not make an impact commensurate with their numbers. Of course the struggle for employment in a new land was for them a first priority. Many started with menial jobs (such as plucking chickens) although generally their Egyptian occupations had been largely as commercial employees; a few had their own businesses, mostly in a small way. Evidence of difficult times faced by a number of them is found in the work of a local section of the Jewish Welfare Society. Over a 12-month period in 1958-9, and supported by a fundraising appeal within the community, the Society dealt with about 60 individual cases, consisting of a few Hungarian immigrants but mostly people originating from Egypt. These clerical backgrounds, but finding it exceedingly difficult to obtain jobs. In spite of obstacles a number eventually flourished in the Adelaide business environment, the most successful being the Ades, Barouch and Hassan families and Max Liberman. Only a very few were interested in community structures of this sort in Egypt. Their emphasis was on family hospitality and they maintained a degree of internal social solidarity due to the fact that a high proportion were concentrated in the western suburb of Plympton. Their Egyptian background had been characterized by a social club life, which was to be reflected in their initial support of the Maccabi Club in Adelaide..."

Jews from Port-Said and German Refugees en route to Shanghai. A little known historical episode of the assistance provided by the Jews of Egypt

When speaking of Jews from Egypt, most people relate to the largest communities of Cairo and Alexandria and very little is known about Port-Said. Although it numbered about 600 Jewish persons, it was witness to certain important events which occurred before and after World War II. Being at the entrance of the Suez Canal, thus connecting East and West, Port-Said played a certain role during this period which came to an end for its Jews with the SINAI CAMPAIGN in 1956.

I will relate an event, which is very little known nowadays except by historians and the few witnesses, who are still alive. This episode is connected with the flight of German Jews from Germany in 1938/39. As you may be aware, when the Third Reich established its racial laws in 1933, there were about 525,000 Jews in Germany. Of these, about 300,000 immigrated more or less safely during the years 1933-38.

With time running out and persecutions worsening, possibilities of obtaining entry visas, mainly for North and South America, became more and more difficult. The situation reached its climax with the events of November 9, 1938, known as "CRYSTAL NIGHT," and the remaining Jews were desperately trapped. The only place where they could emigrate to was Shanghai, a forlorn city in East Asia, where no visa was required. With no other choice, Jews decided for Shanghai. According to estimates, 20,000-25,000 Jews from Germany, Austria, and Baltic countries succeeded in finding a shelter in Shanghai. Some German and Austrian Jews chose to cross Italy in order to embark on ships sailing to the Far East. At the time, the "Lloyd Triestino", which was the largest Italian shipping company, had a regular line of steamers sailing to the Far East and its ships were renowned for their luxury and speed. Many may have heard of liners like the "Conte Rosso," the "Conte Verde' the "Conte de la Bianoamano" which were the most modern ships.

Quite a number of Jewish refugees were able to obtain passage tickets on these ships, whether by their own means or through Jewish-American organizations, thus buying their salvation. These liners had to cross the Suez Canal and usually stopped for a few hours in Port-Said for stevedoring. All passengers - tourists, businessmen and even the "refugees" were allowed to disembark. All the town shops, many Jewish-owned, sold clothes, cameras, jewels, etc., and remained open all night until the departure of ships in the early morning hours. Once it was known that an influx of immigrants were passing through Port-Said, an organization was set up to welcome them. A local female relief group called "Union Feminine Israelite", who used to care for the needy families, in association with other organizations from Cairo and Alexandria organized their reception. An apartment was rented near the harbour and a well stocked wardrobe was set up. The refugees were thus provided with clothes, light food, canned milk, indispensable toiletries, simple medicines and toys and sweets for the children.

This action lasted for a few months and during this period, a few hundred men, women and children enjoyed the help and warmth of the union ladies. Often these were helped by their husbands until the early hours of the morning. Among this group were some fluent in German, thus facilitating the approach. Although I would like to pay a tribute to all these women and men who were associated with this operation, I take the liberty of mentioning some of them: Mrs. Taube and Lisette Benderly, Rebecca Cohen, Rachel Costa, Sol Gattegno, Deborah Gourevitch, Mouchly, Berthe Rosenthal, Julia and Berthe Salmona, Eleonore Stepansky, Cecile Turkel, etc., the more so that they all have passed away now and their daughters and sons may be scattered around Israel, the U.S.A., Europe and Australia.

Jose Salmona, Paris France

Cinemas In Cairo

Blanche Cohen Sacks
Randallstown, MD

Saturday night I looked forward to going to the cinema, unless a dancing party was taking place at someone's house or in a club to which I was invited. The choice of movies featured was dazzling-an international smorgasbord-predominantly American, French, Italian and Egyptian. No television, no Blockbuster Video, no video stores, no public library so to speak existed for me. In our

milieu, we formed close friendships and occasionally someone would offer a party at their home. If no party, the movies beckoned and pulled me.

At first movie houses were simple, just presenting the featured movie. Gradually, and more likely, a brief summary of world news, sports, events, and cartoons were projected. Finally the much-anticipated movie of the week arrived. Later years and shortly before I left Egypt in 1953, the administration and owners, introduced an elegant live organ performance by Tommy Dando. The floor of the stage would open a hatch at the left side through which the seated performer at the organ would slowly ascend to the stage and begin enchanting the audience with his music. He played John Sousa's marches.Last on the program they projected the featured movie on the screen. Translated subheadings in French helped my reading speed and comprehension skills enhancing my schooling. Cinemas brought the world to me though in a fantasy way. For me it was time and money well spent, generally.

Cinemas en plein air (open air movie theaters), such as Kursal was also fun. The audience sat in theater seats not in cars and enjoyed the fresh air breeze. Favorite and famous actors and actresses passed through on the screens. Elizabeth Taylor, Jimmy Stewart, Rita Hayworth, Alan Ladd, Sofia Loren, Fernandel, Jimmy Durante, Louis Armstrong, Catherine Deneuve, Maurice Chevalier, Leslie Caron, and Red Skelton to name a few who acted on film.

At the entrance lobbies, you could sense the emanating aroma of the snack foods. Pop corn, Eskimo Ice Cream, Coca Cola, sandwiches, Lemon or Orangeade Gazeuse, leb wa Soudani (seeds with peels) chocolate candy, etc. were available for purchase. To my eyes, theaters loomed like palaces. My choice was to sit in the balcony so I can see everything on the screen and not miss a spot. Also, generally fewer people sat upstairs. After the movie the universe appeared different to me. I was ready to tackle my more serious matters, such as school and homework.

No wonder the folk singer Martha Schlemm chose as her signature song, "Everybody loves Saturday night" which she sang at the conclusion of her programs. Everyone applauded and enthusiastically participated in singing with her. The choice of cinemas was prolific. The Metro, Rivoli Kursal, Odeon, Rialto, Curcal (open air), Nasr, Cairo Palace, Opera, Le Miami~ La Potiniere, to name a few. One of the cinemas was likely to screen a movie to your liking, enjoyment and satisfaction. (The Editor has shortened the text)

Bricks in Ancient Egypt

In issue No.4 we included a letter received from Mr. **Joe Dweck** enquiring about the fact that there are no structures made of bricks in Egypt while the country has monuments of stone only. Bricks were made by slaves in those days, as reported in the Exodus. We received two responses, one from Paris, Mr. **Elie Cohen** and two from New York, **Prof. Pierre Cachia** of Columbia University. The following are the texts received:

Nous ne connaissons que 4 pyramides, une a Sakkarah et trois a Guizah. Mais des centaines de pyramides, plus petites et plus fragiles ont disparues. De quoi etaient-elles faites? Nous ne savons pas. Le texte biblique est certainement vrai. Environ 20,000 travailleurs (esclaves et non-esclaves) qui prenaient 20 a 30 ans pour construire une pyramide. Il fallait les nourir et les loger ces 20,000 esclaves et ouvriers. Pour les nourir, il y avait le Nil et sa vallee fertile. Pour les loger, il y avait cette sorte de brique faite avec la paille et la boue ou le limon du Nil.. Des centaines d'esclaves ecrasaient et melangaient pour faire ces briques avec leurs mains et leurs pieds, les laisser secher au soleil pour construire des petite maisons. Quelques branches de palmiers servaint comme toit. Ces demeures fragiles etaient balayees a chaque grande crue du Nil. Ce genre de construction continue jusqu'a ce jour. Les fellahs pauvres construisent leurs maisons de cette facon. Deux jours suflisent pour faire une piece de trois par trois metre sans aucune depense. Un peu de paille et la boue.

Elie Cohen
Paris

Mr. **Joseph Dweck** infers too much from the fact that the ancient Egyptian monuments that attract the attention of archeologists and tourists were made of stone. They would not still be standing after thousands of years if they were not. But these were all temples or tombs. Not a single habitation, not even a king's palace has survived. These were all made of less durable materials - an indication that in those days Egyptians cared more about the afterlife than about their short span in this vale of tears. But even some of the smaller pyramids that dot the countryside are made of mud and not important enough to become tourist attractions.

To this day, most of the peasants' hovels are made of mud bricks. These are easily manufactured by pouring mud into a wooden mold and letting it dry in the sun. This is called "toub nayy", raw brick. Adding straw to the mud helps it keep its shape and consistency. Fortunately for poor Egyptians, rain is too rare an event to cause quick erosion. In buildings intended to last longer, the raw bricks have to be fired in a kiln, whereupon they turn red and are called "toub ahmar," but the process adds considerably to the cost.

Here are two additions to my previous letter about Egyptian brickworks. One shows mud bricks being dried in the sun. The other is what is left of the Hawwara pyramid in the Fayoum province. It was built for Pharaoh Amenembat III. It once had a limestone "skin," but that is long gone, and what now shows is the bulky interior, made of mud bricks.

I understand the Antiquities Department has now taken charge of it, but in my childhood days it was totally unattended, and I used to run up and down it as I might have done on any small hill or mound.

Pierre Cachia, Ph.D. New York, NY

INTERVIEW DE MOISE SANUA REALISE PAR SHLOMO BARAD DE L'INSTITUT TABANKIN, TEL AVIV, LE 29.02.1984

Note: Le texte suivant a ete choisit d'un long interview en Hebreu (traduit en Francais) avec Moise Sanua, au sujet de son emploi par le Grand Rabin Haim. Nahum Eff.

A la fin de mes etudes, j'ai commence a travailler pour les "Freres Semala," des Juifs d'origine Tunisienne , et proprietaires d'un grand magasin au Caire. En 1926, un messager du grand rabin Haim Nahum, est venu me voir a mon travail et m'a invite a me rendre au domicile du Grand Rabin. Ce dernier cherchait un secretaire pour remplacer l'avocat Leon Berkman, diplorne et parlant et redigeant l'Arabe, le Francais, et l'Anglais. L'avocat Louzima m'avait recommende pour ce poste. Le rabin Haim Nahum m'a demande combien je gagnais chez les freres Semala. Je lui repondis que je gagnais 8 livres Egyptienne par mois. Il m'a alors propose de remplir les functions de secretaire du Grand Rabbinat pour 12 livres par mois....

S.B. Combien de temps avez-vous travaille pour le grand Rabin?

J'etais son secretaire de 1926 a 1944. Le rabin Nahum, ne a Izmir, etait arrive en Egypte debut 1924, venant de France, pour prendre le poste de Grand Rabin du Caire. A la meme époque s'etaient succedes a Alexandrie 3 rabin, Della Pergola, Prado, et le rabin Moshe Ventura.

S.B. Pour quelles raisons le Rabin Haim Nahum etait-it arrive en Egypte?

Les rabins Egyptiens s'etaient eriges contre la creation de l'ecole l'Alliance" qui se trouvait dans le quartier Arabe et non pas dans le quartier Juif, "Haret el Yehud", et contre la diffusion de l'enseignement laique moderne. Dans cette ecole etudiaient les enfants Juifs, de familles pauvres, ainsi que quelques enfants musulmans. Les Juifs arrives d'Europe dans les annees 1890-1910, commencaient a prendre part a la vie communautaire en 1910. A ce moment-latout s'ecrivait en Arabe, seuls les rabins et les professeurs de Pecole "Talmud Torah" connaisaient l'Hebreu. La sitation n'etait pas brillante.Les familles Juives reputees etaient les Menashe, Les Rolos, d'origine Anglaise et les Cattaoui qui etaient de nationalite Egyptienne depuis 1710. Le Grand Rabin du Caire, Hai Ben Simon, etait mort fin 1924... A sa mort, les habitants du quartier Juifs Refuserent a son fils comine successeur dans les functions de Grand Rabin. Un article elogieux sur le Rabin Haim Nahum, qui viviat en France, fut publie dans le Journal Parisien, "Le Matin." Les Juifs d'Egypte, et a leur tete Moise Cattaoui, ont alors propose Au rabin Nahum le poste de Grand Rabin. Des reunions publiques furent organisees aux sein de la communaute Juive qui acceptat le nomination du rabin at ce poste et le Roi Fouad avait accepte la decision de la communaute. Rabin Hahn Nahum Eff. fut nomme Grand Rabin du Caire le 2-3-25. Il s'installa au Caire et y remplit ses fonction jusqu'a sa mort le 14-11-1960.

Nous comptons inclure dans les prochains numeros de notre rubrique, d'autres faits historiques de la periode.

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EGYPTIAN IDIOMS

The following is the list of Arabic idioms with French translations that the late **Elie Amiel** gave us when we interviewed him about 10 years ago. We have added a translation of the idioms in English. The editor would be glad if readers who have interesting and appropriate expressions to mail them to him with textual translations.

walla' il-babur	Allume le bâteau	Kindle the steamboat
shams 'alek	Soleil sur toi	A sun upon you
'eni 'alek	Mon oeil sur toi	My eye on you
ya khti 'alek	Ma soeur sur toi	My sister on you
'eni barda 'alek	Mon oeil est froid sur toi	My eye is cold on you
talla' diní	Il a enlevé ma religion	He has extracted my religion
talla'din ummi	Il a enlevé la religion de ma mère	He has extracted my mother's religion
yibayyad bakhtak	Qu'Il blanchisse ta chance	May He whiten your luck
sa'ti wa 'fa	Ma montre est debout	My watch is standing
abu wishshen	Père de deux visages	Father of two faces
habbak burs	Qu'un lézard t'aime	May a lizard love you
'ahwa dayman	Café toujours	Coffee always
ishrab sigara	Bois une cigarette	Drink a cigarette
'I'ta' tazkara	Coupe un billet	Cut a ticket
eni' 'enak	Mon oeil, ton oeil	My eye, your eye
sha'it 'esh	Appartement de pain	An apartment of bread
sakin 'ala sharit it-tramway	Il habite sur le ruban du tramway	He lives on the ribbon of the tramway
ikhtishi 'ala dammak 'ala tulak	Aie honte sur ton sang et ta hauteur	Be ashamed on your blood and your height
nawwart	Tu as illuminé	You have illuminated
Allah yinawwar 'alek	Dieu t'illumine	God illuminate you
Ma'tu'	Coupé	cut Off
dámmak khafif / ta'il	Ton sang est léger / lourd	Your blood is light / heavy
dammak ba"	Ton sang est punaise	Your blood is a louse
khallik khafif	Sois léger	Be light
tislam idek	Tes mains soient sauves	Your hands be whole

el-erd f 'en ummu ghazal	Le singe dans l'oeil de sa mére est une gazelle	The monkey in its mother's eye is a gazelle
naharak abyad	Ta journée est blanche	Your day is white
mit foll	Cent jasmins	A hundred jasmines
shil hammak	Léve tes soucis	Carry your worry
ikhs 'alek	Vilain sur toi	Fie on you
yi'ta' 'umru	Qu'il coupe son age	May we cut his age
leltak beda	Ta nuit est blanche	Your night is white
amar ed-din	Lune de foi	Moon of faith
khad 'alena	Il a pris sur nous	He has taken on us
khad wishsh	Il a pris visage	He has taken a face
'ala 'eni w rasi	Sur mon oeil et sur ma tête	On my eye and my head
ir-ragil da malhus	Cet homme est léché	This man is licked
khalletha khall	Tu l'as faite vinaigre	You made it vinegar
tawwil balak	Allonge ton esprit	Lengthen your mind
alam 'ala widnu	Un crayon sur son visage	A pencil on his face
da" alam 'ala sursar widnu	Il a frappé un crayon sur le cafard de son oreille	He struck a pencil on the cockroach of his ear
ba'iyyit hayatak	Le restant de ta vie	The remainder of your life
shakhkh 'ala rohu	Il a pissé sur son âme	He pissed on his soul
irkab il-hawa	Monte le vent	Ride the wind
yin 'al din id-daya lli gabtak	Maudite soit la religion de la sage-femme qui t'a porté	Curse the faith of the midwife who brought you
hizz ya wizz	Bouge, l'oie	Shake, goose!
khafif, il-mashnu'	Léger, le pendu	He is light, the hanged one
khamsa 'alek	Cinq sur toi	Five on you
khud hawa	Prend du vent	Take wind
ya bn il-'eh	Fils de quoi	Son of what
khud nafas	Prends une bouffée	Take a breath

There are many ways of having fun with language. One is to look at expressions we use everyday and examine what they might convey if taken literally. Think for a moment how drastic it would be if you really cut a speaker short, or cut an old friend dead. One would not cut a fine figure if one behaved that way.

Arabic is a very rich language, full of tangy expressions. The idioms listed here all make good sense in a native context. It is when one transposes them word for word into another language that they become brain teasers.

I.A.J.E. NEWSLETTER

6

International Association of Jews from Egypt
Association Internationale des Juifs d'Egypte

EDITOR: Prof. Victor D. Sanua | IAJE, 2416 Quentin Road, Brooklyn, NY 11229 | 2002 Volume 4 No. 2

Editorial

In our preceding editorial in issue No. 5 Newsletter, we pointed out how *Jews from Egypt* are divided, those that have great nostalgia for the country they left behind and those who would like to forget about it, as one of our correspondents wrote, "El lefat, mate" (The past is dead). We must acknowledge that in previous issues of the newsletter, we were inclined to emphasize the good memories we have of the country despite that each one of us must have had unpleasant experiences. The Editor, during the critical period of 1948, was fired from his job, and had problems finding another one since he had an Italian passport. He was fortunate to find a position with a United Nations Office, which was exempted from the Company laws that caused the dismissal of many Jewish white-collar workers. Future issues of the newsletter will include both the pleasant and unpleasant memories of our members. In the case of the latter, we can offer the example of **Mr. Jacques Hasson** who feels bitter about his own experiences, as he was interned in 1956 in Notakal camp No.5. It is obvious that the conditions in 1956 were much worse than in 1948. In 1956, when Egypt expropriated the Suez Canal considered to be an international waterway, most British and French citizens were forcefully expelled from the country.

In this issue we are including long statements provided by some of our members. For example, we have included the reminiscences of **Mrs. Rachel Cwerner** and **Sarah Douek**, USA, where they expressed nostalgia, but also decry the fact that "they were peremptorily ordered to depart within a matter of days leaving behind everything including the possibility of even visiting again the graves of those we loved." They feel that the larger picture dwarfs

continued on page 2

A Wedding in the Shaar Ha'shamaim Synagogue, 1941

("Temple Ismaliah" on Adly Pasha, Cairo)

Professor Moshé Matalon sent us the picture appearing on this page. It was taken in the interior of the Synagogue at the wedding of his parents Ernest and Elise Matalon. It is a magnificent shot of the ceremony and the chandelier is of outstanding beauty reflecting the high standard of living that the Jews of Egypt had. Vita Bey Mosseri built it in1905, as a close replica of Solomon's Temple. The Editor, with his daughter, visited the Synagogue in 1982 and found six old men that Saturday morning. We had to wait for three more tourists to start the minyan. My daughter, the only woman, was asked by one of the congregants to sit on the other side of the aisle. Old traditions never die! We understand that the Synagogue is not open at the present time, in contrast to the Synagogue on Nebi Daniel in Alexandria, which can easily be visited.

Regarding the picture below, Mr. Matalon writes the following: "The names **Hamaoui** and **Titcheck**, are well familiar to me and I remember them well. We lived not too far from the Synagogue. I think it was in the center of the city near 'Passage Rivoli." I went to "Lycee du Caire" school until the end of 1956. Despite being a young boy, I remember vividly the dramatic experience of being in Cairo during the Sinai Campaign when we the "Yahuds" - were considered the "enemy" and we had to carefully obey the blackout in order not to give the authorities an excuse to blame us of treason. After the war, I was transferred to a Jewish school "La Goutte de Lait," for one year and finally ended at the "College des Freres a Bab-El

continued on page 3

Do you recognize anyone in this picture? In the background, the Hazan Hamaoui can be identified. Who is the person next to him?

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Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge with thanks donations from the following members since the last issue of the newsletter: **Charles Chehebar**, NY • **Michelle Dewdney** (Lindell), Australia • **Izi Elinsky**, NJ •**Albert Hassid**, Ca. • **Marco Matalon**, Brazil • **Jacques Politi**, OH • **Chaya Romano**, Brooklyn • **Blanche Sacks**, Maryland • **Victor Salama**, Brooklyn and **Elie Sion**, Switzerland, **Nelly Ades**, Brooklyn.

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The editor visiting Shaar Ha'Shamaim

Editorial continued from page 1

passing nostalgic thoughts. On the other hand, Mr. Albert Oudiz seems to emphasize the nostalgic part of his life in Egypt. He wrote an article on the beautiful days he spent at Aboukir during his childhood, but he describes his consternation and depth of sorrow when he recently visited Aboukir, which is now a desolate place.

We would like to bring to the attention of our readers the work conducted by **Mrs. Mathilde Tagger** of Tel-Aviv who obtained 190 names of prominent Jews appearing in the Who's Who in Egypt in 1943 each with a short biographical sketch. We are happy to report that she is willing to send those sketches to anyone inquiring about a relative or known person. In the present issue, we have included a short biography of **Mr. Jacques Maleh**, a well-known journalist, which was sent to us by his son **Maurice Maleh**, who is presently involved with the Association of Jews from Egypt in the United Kingdom. We have included in our newsletter an article, retrieved from our archives, that Mr. Jacques Maleh wrote in 1977 when he returned to Egypt. He reports on the sad state of what was left of the thriving Jewish community. Periodically we plan to include in our newsletter a story about an illustrious Jew who lived in Egypt. The last issue had a biographical sketch of Rabbi Haim Nahum Eff. Suggestions for names are welcome.

The front page picture of this issue shows a wedding at Shaar Ha'shamaim around 1941 (Temple Ismaliah). Dr. Moshé Matalon sent this to us. It is the picture of his parents' wedding. One should marvel at the beauty of the interior, particularly the chandelier. One of our non-Egyptian correspondents, in looking at the front page picture in the last issue of the newsletter, writes: "Such a photograph brings a new picture of what I might have envisioned years ago as "Egyptian Jews." She states that such a picture could be seen in the USA in 1926. One of the purposes of our newsletter in showing pictures of our life in Egypt is to dispel the stereotype of a certain degree of "primitiveness" that people have about people coming from an African country.

Unfortunately, our efforts to expand our objectives are limited by a certain lack of support and therefore we are only able to publish two issues a years. Efforts to approach Foundations for substantial support have been a failure. Members are invited to write to the Editor if they have any suggestions about such a support. We have been able to collect, in the course of the past forty-year's, archival material which should be published. A newsletter where we can only present extracts of the material received, will never be adequate for that purpose. What is needed is a regu-

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lar journal, and we hope that one of these days, we shall be provided with substantial financial support for such a venture. We shall say "Amen!' to that. Please write to the Editor if you have any comments. Thanks

Wedding continued from page 1

-Louk" until the end of 1959. We left Egypt in September 1959 when I was 10 years old. My father was convinced that after 1956, that there was no future in Egypt but since he was working for a Jewish firm who wanted to liquidate the business, he agreed to stay with them and help them out. But after three years, he realized that there was no point waiting any longer and we immigrated to Israel. I grew up in Israel and did my undergraduate studies at Tel-Aviv University, then came to the US for graduate work and ended up in Chicago. I understand that some Egyptians want to forget everything about Egypt while others live in the past and cannot get over it. Clearly neither one is "right" and one thing about your newsletter is that it allows both camps to express their feelings something that I personally find quite interesting." Dr. Moshe Matalon is Professor in Engineering Sciences and Applied Mathematics at Northwestern University.

The Editor had his Bar Mitzvah at Shaar Ha'Shamaim Synagogue while Rabbi Nahum Eff. was officiating. Weddings were very pleasant occasion, particularly for youngsters, since every guest was given a "bonbonniere" box filled with candy with almonds inside.

He lived close by on Sharia Malika Farida, the wife of King Farouk. When Farouk divorced Farida, we lost the regal name of our street and it was replaced by Abdel Khalig Saroit Pasha. In 1982 when we visited the building, we noted that the word "pasha" was dropped from the name. It seemed that all royal names of streets, names of European historical figures and streets with the names of the elite and their titles were changed following the 1952 Egyptian revolution.

New Members and Renewals of Membership 2002

ABADY, Raphael & Linda, Brooklyn, NY
ABDELA, Angelo, S., New York, NY
ATTIAS, Zaki, Paris, France
BALASSIANO, Nissim, New York, NY
BAYDA, Fernande, Hallandale, FL
BENJAMIN, Odette, New York, NY
BISHOP, Rosette, S., Arlington, VA
BRAUNSTEIN, Albert, flighett, Australia
CASSUTO, Maggie, Forest Hills, NY
CASTRO, Elie, Brooklyn, NY
CHEHEBAR, Charles, Brooklyn, NY
COHEN, Elie, Paris, France,
COHEN, Joseph, Brooklyn, NY
COHEN-SABBAN, Nessim, Brooklyn, NY
CWERNER, Rachel, New York, NY
DOUEK, Sarah, New York, NY
DAVID, Raphael, New York, NY
DEWDNEY, Michelle, NSW, Australia
DOUEK, Maurice, London, UK
ELLINSKY, Izi, Jersey City, NJ
ESKINAZI, Maurice, Ft. Lauderdale, Fl,
FETAYA, Andre, Rego Park, NY
GELFAND, Eve, M., Winston Salem, NC
ESTHER, Hakim, Paris, France
HARARI, Carmi, New City, NY
HASSID, Albert, Youset San Francisco, CA
HAYAT, David, Lake Success, NY
HILLEL, Hagar, Jerusalem, Israel
JABES, Gemma, M., Washington, D.C.
KUPER, Margie, Boca Raton, Fl,
LAGNADO, David, West Palm. Beach, Fl,
LEVI, Menasce, E., Los Angeles, CA
LIPKIN, Victor, Levallois Perret, France
LIPSITT, Lewis, P., Providence, RI
MAIO, Juliana, Beverly Hills, CA
MALAK, Simon, New York, NY
MALKA, Eli, S., White Plains, NY
MATALON, Marco, Sao Paulo, Brazil
MATALON, Moshe, Wilmette, IL
MEHREZ, Gisele & Henri, Belmont, MA
MIRES, Sara, Dallas, TX
MIZRAHI, Suzanne, Boulogne-Billancourt, France
MODELSKI, Sylvia, Washington, D.C.
MODIANO, Mario, Athens, Greece
NAHUM, Elie, Milan, Italy
NISSEL, Frank, R., Amber, PA
PARDO, Tania, Toronto, Ontario
VIDAL, Susan, Verviers, Belgium
POLITI, **Dr.** Jacques, Hubbard, OH
ROFE, Elie, Brooklyn, NY
ROSENFELD, Samuel, L., New York, NY
ROMANO, Chaya, Brooklyn, NY
ROMANO, **Dr. & Mrs. V** Pampton Planes, N.J.
SACHS, Blanche, Randallstown, MD
SACHS, Hersh, Woodmere, NY
SALAMA, Victor, Brooklyn, NY
SANUA, David, Brooklyn, NY
SANUA, Yitzhak, Monchenblabach, Germany
SCHEININ, Eliakim, Givatayim, Israel
SCHUAL, Lillian, Great Neck, NY
SCHWARZ, Arturo, Milan, Italy
SEIDMAN, Shoshanah, Skokie, IL
SEMHON, Elie & Odette, New York, NY
SHAMA, Isaac, Brooklyn, NY
SIEGEL, Ruth, Newman, Brooklyn, NY
SION, Elie, L., New York, NY
SUTTON, Jack, Brooklyn, NY
VAN DER SHOOT, Esther F., Greenwich, Ct
VIOLA, Lucien, Marakesh, Morocco
WYNBLATT, Paul, P., Pittsburgh, PA
WINSTON, Tina, J., Washington, D.C.

A Short history of the expulsion of the Jews from Egypt in the 50's and their adaptation to Israel and France

Victor D. Sanua Ph.D. Research Professor St. John's University, Queens, NY

This report is based on interviews, questionnaires and videotaped interviews with Jews from Egypt residing in Israel and France. Jews from Egypt have lived comfortably for decades and felt quite secure until the beginning of the conflicts between Jews and Arabs in Palestine. They became quite uneasy about their future when protests and riots erupted in Egypt against the Balfour declaration, which proclaimed the establishment of a Jewish and Muslim State in Palestine.

It is only when open warfare took place in Palestine that their position became quite precarious. A large group of young men in Cairo were interned in a school and later in Camp Huckstep, a former American air base near Cairo. In Alexandria, they were interned at Camp Aboukir. Women were interned in the

prison of foreigners. The justification for their internment was that they were active Zionists. A number of businesses were sequestered. The Company Law was enforced which meant that thousands of Jews lost their jobs because they had a foreign citizenship, in spite of the fact that several generations of their families had lived in the country. In a future paper, we shall explain why the Jews and non-Jews born in Egypt maintained the nationality of their parents. Muslim communists and members of the Muslim Brotherhood were also interned at Camp Huckstep. This was quite an uncomfortable situation because of enmity between the two groups.

In the course of the years after 1948, many Jews had to leave forcibly or on their own. Because of their foreign citizenship, it was very hard for them to find jobs. During the 1956 war when England, France and Israel attacked Egypt after the government took possession of the Suez Canal, most citizens of France and England were arrested, interned and deported. Families were destitute, and they left with their luggage closely examined at the Customs. International organizations were helping the deported go to Italy, France and England, etc.

In the initial stages of internment in 1948, the conditions were chaotic, but in time the Jews organized themselves. According to some of our interviewees, the internment had a positive influence on their intellectual development, since anyone with particular skills, educational and professional, was involved in teaching They even observed the Shabbat. There was no evidence of cruelty or physical abuse during this period, contrary to the situation in 1956 when some Jews sustained serious hardships.

In 1948, a small group of Jews and Muslims was transferred to the Sinai desert village El Tor, which had been used as a former quarantine station. The living conditions were dismal due to the excessive heat and cold. The prisoners managed to send a letter (a copy to appear in a future issue) to the outside world about the horrible conditions under which they were interned. A large percentage of Jews from Egypt went to Israel and others went to European countries, the Americas, and Australia. Upon leaving the country, they appear to have had most unpleasant experiences at Gate No. 5 in Alexandria because of the arbitrariness of the customs officials. Our efforts in the International Association of Jews from Egypt are to connect these various groups around the world which are a dying breed.

Quite a number of Jews settled in Israel and had a difficult time adjust ing to the economic and social conditions after the establishment of the State of Israel. They had to learn a new language, Hebrew. In time, because of their knowledge of many languages, they were able to find jobs in banks, travel agencies, airlines and all types of white-collar positions. While they were not able to attend universities, their children were able to enter the regular professions. Jews in France seemed to have had a much easier time despite encountering some anti-Semitism. They had no problem with the French language since most of them attended French schools in Egypt.

In spite of the horrendous experiences incurred by Jews from Egypt subsequent to their departure, it is felt that most of them show little bitterness and many have become nostalgic about their life prior to 1948. Bitterness is possibly found among those who were interned.

The Second Exodus: The Jews from Egypt. A Presentation at the Sephardic Community Center

On November 12, 2002, the Sephardic Community Center in Brooklyn arranged for a special presentation and discussion with **Professor Victor Sanua** on the Jews from Egypt. He presented information about the exodus of Jews from Egypt in 1948, 1956, 1967, 1972 after the wars between Arab counties and Israel, He reported on his experiences visiting Alexandria and Cairo after an absence of about 40 years. He presented three short videos. The first one was a documentary on the remnants of the Jewish community of Alexandria. It was made by Canadian Television network and narrated in French. The main focus of the video is on **Mr. Joseph Harari**, an 81-year-old bachelor, the only Jew who was still in business around 1995. In the film, he is pictured in his haberdashery measuring cloth and speaking Arabic with his clients. He tells the interviewer that he is selling her merchandise at 50% discount. We see him closing the store with the assistance of Arab children.

Later, Mr. Joseph Harari is shown in the empty offices of the Alexandria Rabbinate accompanied by **Mrs. Lina Mattatia,** who was the treasurer. Mr. Harari is given the opportunity to reminisce about the Jewish community in Alexandria. He indicated that there are three cemeteries in Alexandria which are in better shape than the Bassatin cemetery in Cairo. The filmmaker asked Mr. Harari to invite all the Jews of Alexandria to attend the Shabbat services, but only 4 men appeared. Since there was no minyan each man prayed separately. Two of the men were interviewed, and one of them had tears in his eyes when he spoke about what would happen to the Synagogue after they were gone.

In 2001, the Editor videotaped a trip to Alexandria when he was on a cruise. The video includes a long interview with Mr. Harari sitting in the Rabbinate Office which basically was a discussion about the present condition of the Jewish community in Alexandria. Their source of income is the selling and renting of buildings left by rich Jews. Apparently, not all of Jewish property has been expropriated. I discussed with him the question of the archives in the rabbinate. We had some problems making clear what we were talking about. Finally, I said that my grandfather was married in Alexandria, and that I would like to get a record. His response was that all records stayed "here!" He hit the table several times to emphasize his point. When we suggested that it would be possible for us to send someone from the USA and make copies of the archives, his reaction was that he had to ask his lawyer and repeated himself more than once. My assumption is that Mr. Harari does not want any outsiders

REMINDER:

to disturb the status quo.

The new president in the Rabbinate is a former dentist, **Dr. Salama**, who is more than 85 years old. Likewise he seems to be reluctant to let people copy the archives. This presents a serious problem since both Mr. Harari and Dr. Salama, do not seem to appreciate the significance of the request made of them.

The third video that was shown is "A RETURN TO CAIRO" that was produced in 1977 when Mr. Mosseri visited Cairo. Mr. Mosseri takes us to his old home, his school Sybille and the old rabbinate. He meets the same "bawab" (doorman) who recognized him. The most distressful part of the visit was the Bassatin cemetery, which is in a deplorable state. Many of the marble top burial stone names had been removed. We see people living in some mausoleums and chickens running around the burial stones. At one point, Mr. Mosseri cried because of the desolation.

The discussion during the presentation was continued with many individuals reporting on their own experiences in leaving the country.

Frank Nissel's Flight to Egypt

"My grandparents on my father's side were staunch Zionists in the early part of the 20th century. Their children, among them my father, Hans, and my uncle Werner were brought up in this environment and had intended to emigrate from Germany to Palestine when World War I intervened...

My uncle Werner, who was a doctor, emigrated to Jerusalem in 1923 and promptly founded the Magen David Adom (Red David's Star), the equivalent of the Red Cross there.

My father was an executive with the Berlin power company, Bewag, and had extensive international connections through his publications on power distribution costing...

When Hitler came to power in 1933, my parents immediately realized that this could not have a happy ending and decided to emigrate to Palestine. Even prior to Hitler's arrival anti-Semitism was so strong in Berlin that I had to attend a pri-

Sephardic House, the Cultural Division of the ASF presents

The Sephardic Experience Weekend
Celebrating the Jews from Egypt

March 28,29,30,2003

As in each previous *Sephardic Experience Weekend,* Sephardic House will offer participants immersion into Sephardic life in an individual county. This year, Sephardic House will explore *the life of Jews in Egypt* before the great immigration to Israel and to other countries in the 1950's - the largest exodus of Jews from that country since biblical times. Over 80,000 Jews of Egypt lived in peace and harmony within the mainstream culture during this era of good will and tolerance, an era and way of life that has been literally swept away. Sephardic House will explore this lost world through memories of members and descendents of this community, in the context of today's world.

Guest Speakers:

Speakers will address various historic, cultural and personal aspects of the lost world of The Jews from Egypt.

Friday Evening - **Rabbi Albert Gabbai**, born in Cairo, Egypt is the Rabbi of Mikve Israel of Philadelphia, the sister synagogue to Congregation Shearith Israel, the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in N.Y.C.. Rabbi Gabbai will discuss Jewish Religious Life, Customs' and Traditions of the Jews in Egypt.

Saturday Evening - **Professor Jean-Marc Oppenheim,** Visiting Associate Professor of History, Department of History, Marymount College of Fordham University who was born in Cairo and grew up in Alexandria. He will discuss, "The Jewish Egyptian Political Dynamic." He will provide a social and political overview of Egyptian Jewish life, and will discuss the contribution of Egyptian Jews to mainstream Egyptian society.

Sunday: 10-12:30 PM - Morning Round Table Discussion: "La Vie Juive" In Egypt focusing on aspects of everyday life for Egyptian Jews, including insights into growing up in Egypt. Panelists will include:

Dr. Victor Sanua, a Research Professor in Psychology at St. John's University and President and Editor of the *International Association of Jews From Egypt* newsletter, will discuss Jewish life in Cairo in both the recent past and present.

Dr. Pierre Cachia, Professor of Contemporary Arabic Literature at Columbia University, was born in Fayum, Egypt. He will talk about "The Foreign Communities in Provincial Egypt."

Mr. David Ribicoff, of Bukharian origin lived in both Cairo and Alexandria till the Suez Canal crisis 1956. He will share his remembrances of his life in both cities.

Sunday afternoon program 12:30-2:30 PM. A buffet luncheon of Egyptian food will be served.

Racheline and Esther Balassiano, two young women, twenty and twenty two years of age whose parents still live in Egypt, will talk about life today for the remaining Jews. They are students in Boston and will join us for the weekend.

Sunday afternoon program 3:00 PM. Screening of three short documentary films. They will include an interview with **Mr. Joseph Harari**, President of the Jewish community of Alexandria, by a Canadian TV interviewer. *Return to Cairo*, by **Mr. Mosseri** from Brooklyn. The third video is a travelogue of **Dr.Victor Sanua's** trip to Alexandria about a year ago when he interviewed Mr. Harari. Dr. Sanua will introduce the three videos.

Sephardic House Bookstore: Books, videos, musical cassettes and CD's will be on sale, Saturday evening and Sunday featuring subjects related to the weekend. Saturday night concert by violinist **Felix Mizrahi**. French music as a background.

vate grade school for the first year. This required my going clear across Berlin by subway and streetcar for an hour each way alone at the age of 6 years.

My father left his executive position and packed up to go to Haifa. Our boat, the Esperia of the Lloyd Triestino from Trieste stopped in Alexandria on the way. My father got off to visit some acquaintances at the local power company, the Societe Lebon. They offered him a job for a few months so we got off the boat and settled in at the Pension Guggenheim in Sidi Bishr.

Since it was the beginning of the school year and I was 7 years old, my parents sent me to a close by French School. I only spoke German, but I recall learning French in short order with the use of sign language.

After about 3 months, the project in Alexandria concluded and my father got himself a job with the Egyptian Public Works Ministry in Cairo. We were also able to join the fabulous Maadi Sporting Club where I picked up swimming. I later made the Egyptian National Swimming Team with co-member Ali Sabry, later pilot to King Farouk and subsequently prime minister.

In Maadi, I attended Miss Ray's English school where I learned my first English. Later, I attended the Lycee Francais in Bab El Louk and the English School in Heliopolis. I graduated from the latter with my High School Certificate from London University. That was in 1942 when the Germans were at the door of Egypt with the Alamein crises.

At the height of the Alamein crisis, the British authorities called my father at his office on the morning of July 2nd offering him and his family evacuation to a safer area. We were to be at Bab El Louk train station that same evening with one suitcase per person...

When we arrived at the train station, we were given a choice of two trains. One was to go to Suez where we would board a boat to Ethiopia. The other would go to Ismailia where we would cross the Suez Canal by ferry and be taken by train to Jerusalem. My parents opted for the latter because they had relatives there and they felt that if the Germans took Egypt, they would also capture Ethiopia and Palestine...

When the Germans were driven back and out of Africa, early in 1943, we were able to return to Egypt. I then attended the American University in Cairo where I made some very good contacts with the U.S. Army entertainment and education people who had set up shop there. I became the projectionist at the headquarters movie theatre in Garden City where we had quite a few star-studded premieres attended by movie stars. I also accompanied visiting stars such as Jack Benny to the local sights and the Muski to make certain that they did not get ripped off. I also arranged private movie showings for the Commanding General at his home when necessary.

These contacts got me an immigration visa to the U.S. and transport on a U.S. troop carrier, the NYU Victory on her last voyage prior to scrapping. I arrived in the U.S. on March 8, 1946.

Egyptian Expressions:

Blanche Cohen Sachs

Arabic - **English** - French

Sofra Dayman. **May your table be always that good**. Que votre table soit toujours aussi bonne. • *Naeeman*. **Pleasant bath or shower (When coming out of the bath or shower)**. Bon bain (Ca se dit apres un bain ou une douche). • *Rabenah Yechaleek*. **May G-d keep you (alive)**. Que le bon Dieu te garde. • *Teishe (mas) Teishi (fem)*. **May you live**. Que tu vives. • *Teishe oue tefrah (mas) Teishi oue tefrahi (fem)*. **May you live and be happy**. Que tu vives et que tu sois heureux. Que tu vives et que tu sois heureuse. • *Sabeh el kheir*. **Good morning (Lit., May you have plenty)**. Que le matin soit plein de bien. • *Sabah el eshta*. **Morning of cream**. Matinée de crème. • *Sabah el fole*. **Morning of fole (white flowers more fragrant than jasmin)**. Matinèe de fole (jasmin). • *Sibak (mas) Sibek (fem)*. **Let go. Don't bother**. Laisse aller. Ne t'en fais pas. • *Maa el salama*. **Go with peace**. Va en Paix. • *Rabena yestor*. **G-d protects**. Le bon Dieu protège. *Maalesh*. **It's alright**. Ca ni fait rien.

Jacques Maleh (1906-1989)

"My late father was born at no 13 rue Sebil el Khazindar, Albassia, Cairo on 13 January 1906, the eldest son of Joseph and Alice. His grandfather Joseph Levy was a successful merchant, known as 'Abou El Dohab' (gold maker) and was born in Manchester, England, where his own father had emigrated from Aleppo in Syria. My father started writing poems in 1926 during his trip to Paris and published 'Chimeres' in 1927 (Editions Sequana, Paris). The newspaper 'La Liberte' published his poems. In 1935 he wrote his novel 'Deux Coeurs et Dieux' (Editions Palombo, Cairo) following a love affair which ended very sadly. He was a member of the Cairo literary circle 'Les Essayistes' founded by his friend Elian J. Finbery who became a well-known novelist based in Paris. Other famous members included Raoul Parme, Robert Blum, and Albert Cassery.

L'Aurore was originally published in Constantinople in 1909. My father had met the owner (Lucien Scinto) at the 'Union Universelle de la Jeunesse Juive.' After working for Scinto he was offered the paper in 1932 when Scinto became too ill to continue. The paper was in financial trouble by that time but with the assistance of the Jewish Community its circulation eventually rose to a peak of 30,000 per week...

To jump to more recent times, my father was one of the very early ones to be expelled. In May 1953 his weekly newspaper 'la Menorah' (successor to his paper L'Aurore which folded in 1940 when

be joined the British Army) was closed down and its assets confiscated after the overthrow of Neguib (with whom he had a good relationship). He was arrested and imprisoned with 14 other Palestinian detainees accused of theft. My mother recalls these worrying times vividly because of the traumatic manner of his arrest as the security police knocked loudly on his door at 5 in the morning to arrest him without explanation. He was denied any legal representation and spent 40 days in awful conditions accused of being an enemy of the State. He was given the choice of either staying in prison or leaving the country. He left on a plane bound for Paris with just EL5 in his pocket... The expulsion made front-page news in the weekly Jewish Chronicle published in London. My father had been the JC's Middle East correspondent in Cairo for many years. His active correspondence to the JC as well as other overseas publishers probably made him an obvious target for the new regime. Deep down, I think he was probably quite glad to leave Egypt and start afresh despite the obvious difficulties that lay ahead...

The JC came to his rescue and offered him an editorial position spending two years in Paris running their Office. He then transferred to London as Editor of the JC's special news bulletin distributed worldwide among professional institutions. The whole family was reunited in London in 1956 when my mother left Egypt for good. We first lived in a deprived district of London but always an optimist, my father successfully rebuilt his life in England receiving some initial help from the Jewish Refugees Committee which helped us to move to a nice area... He continued to freelance for the JC and other newspapers focusing on the Middle East, his congenial manner and wide experience confirming his reputation in Europe. His retirement from the JC in 1972 was immediately followed by a new assignment in Paris at the invitation of Rabbi Grunwald, the owner of the weekly 'La Tribune Juive' headquartered and published in Strasbourg. My father jumped at the opportunity and set about enthusiastically working in Paris looking up old friends. Combining his position with a foreign correspondent's job once again for the JC, he stayed happily in Paris until 1979. He died peacefully in 1989 in London."

Reported by **Maurice Maleh**, London, October 2002

Long History of Egyptian Jewry Draws to a Close

By: **Jacques Maleh** (Jewish Chronicle - England, Nov. 16, 1977)

"Any Jew who once lived in Egypt can today obtain a visa and pay a return visit. During the past few months, at least a thousand now living in France, mainly Paris, have done so spending up to a month in the land of their birth and upbringing. In May 1948, when the State of Israel was established, there were some 64,500 Jews in Egypt. Today, there are perhaps 150, all of them elderly and many of them sick. I have just interviewed one of the returning visitors. He has lived in Paris for a long time, and his trip to Egypt was the first he made in nearly 22 years. When he left Egypt in 1956, Cairo had a population of some three million.

Today the Egyptian capital is suffocating under the weight of eight million inhabitants. Walking up and down the city's main streets, he saw the once internationally known stores and fashion boutiques, which had made the reputation of commercial Cairo, were still there. They still bore the names of their former Jewish owners, names once well known in Egypt - but that was the only Jewish thing about them. Today, their owners and staff are 100 percent Moslem or Copt.

The Shaar Ha'Shamayim Synagogue, the only one still functioning - after a fashion - in Cairo, was only a short distance from the hotel where the visitor was staying. In the old days, the late Chief Rabbi of Egypt, Rabbi Haim Nahum, had officiated there. On Holy days and festivals, every seat was occupied, and overflow services were organized in other buildings near by... Haret el-Yahoud, where once seven synagogues were always open. Not any more. All that remains of those seven houses of worship is the Rav Moshe Synagogue; closed, decrepit, decaying into ruins almost as one looks at it. The only sign of life was an elderly Nubian "caretaker"... Continuing his odyssey, our visitor traveled on to Alexandria, the great port city of his birth. Its beautiful Eliahu Hanavi Synagogue looked just as it had when he last visited it 25 years ago, spotless and carefully maintained. He went in search of the "rabbi?" an old man of 80 known as Haham Chemata Hadida. Yes, Haham Hadida told the visitor, occasional services were still held at Eliahu Hanavi - when a minyan could be scraped together. There were only about 100 Jews left in Alexandria.

They were elderly - average age, 60, but there was one "young man" of 38, who was in charge for the aged at Moharrem Bey. Almost all the other remaining Jews in Alexandria lived there or in other homes. There bad not been a wedding in the synagogue for ten years. A couple of Jewish tourists happened to come along while our visitor was talking to Haham Hadida, and he asked them whether they would like to help make up a minyan so that he could hold a service. They did so, of course, and waited while the additional men needed were summoned to the synagogue.

Our visitor was moved to tears as he heard the ancient, time-honored prayers recited once again in the synagogue where he used to worship regularly with his parents. Eliahu Hanavi is the only survivor of the many synagogues which once graced Alexandria, together with a yeshiva, a bet hamidrash and numerous schools. Of all of them, no sign remains not even the names on the doors.

The final chapter in the long and often glorious history of Egyptian Jewry is drawing to its sad close. This history has yet to be written, and time is pressing. Many of the people who lived that history are no longer with us. Soon, the material evidence will also disappear; some of it sold to tourists and visitors by the antique and curio dealers of Cairo."

L'Egypte 2002... Souvenirs Et Nostalgie

"C'est avec un vif plaisir que je recois et

lis les divers bulletins publies par l'Association des Juifs d'originaires d'Egypte. C'est agreable et interessant, mais je ne partage pas ni l'enthousiasme, en parlant du bon vieux temps, ni la nostalgie de mes compatriotes. - Les Juifs d'Egypte. En effet, je crois necessaire de rappeler les points suivants qu'on a tendance a oublier:

-Des l'annonce de la decision de l'O N U en Novembre 1947 - du partage de la Palestine, un etat Juif - un etat Musulmam, l'attitude des Egyptiens envers les Juifs a change en notre defaveur. Nous avons ete taxes de Sionistes - "sahyouni"- Le Samedi 15 Mai 1948, tous les etats Arabes partent en guerre contre Isreal. Peut-on oublier la mise sous sequestre de certains biens Juifs et arrestations de Juifs dans la nuit du Vendredi 14 Mai 1948 pour etre internes au Caire (banlieue d'Heliopolis) et a Alexandrie (camp RAF d'Aboukir)? Dans la crainte et l'incertitute, nous assistons aux departs de familles Juives - des le debut de 1949. Destination: Israel, via Marseille ou Brindisi.

-Juillet 1956 - nationalisation du Canal de Suez par Nasser. Nouvelles craintes. Suite aux evenements de Suez de Novembre/Octobre 1956, nouvelles vagues d'arrestations de Juifs dans la nuit du Jeudi ler. Novembre 1956. Tous internes du Caire a l'Ecole Juive d'Abassieh dans des conditions tres dure pendant les premiers quinze jours. Simultanement, mîs sous sequeste de tous les biens Juifs et nombreuses assignations a residence.

Grace au cessez-le feu du 12 ou 15 Novembre 1956 - une catastrophe a ete evitee. Des la mi-Novembre 1956 - ce fut le debut des expulsions massives et definitives de tous les Juifs vivant en Egypte. Je dirai, aussi, un hold up de tous les biens des Juifs et braderie de nos appartement. Pour les internes, c'etait simple: renoncer a la nationalite Egyptienne et expulsion immediate avec un "laissez-passer" - aller sans retour,... Merci bikbachi Nasser. Comment parler du bon vieux temps, de nostalgie et oublier les avanies que les Juifs ont subies avant, pendant et après Nasser. Comment oublier: Yahoudi,... ebn el Kalb ou ebn charmouta,...

En Europe ou ailleurs, les premieres annees furent tres dures surtout pour les personnes agees et presque obligees de tendre la main. Grace a Dieu, nous avons tous, drolement, reussi notre insertion. Mieux, nous avons un standard de vie tres superieur a celui que nous aurions pu avoir en Egypte, proprietaire de notre logement, voire d'une residence secondaire, voitures, etudes superieures pour nos enfant, couverture sociale, retraite a 60 ans et voyages a travers le monde pour notre plaisir.

Resultats, gardons nos souvenirs de jeunesse enfouis dans notre coeur, sans besoin des les etaler regulierement. Quand a la nostalgie, il y a longtemps qu'elle s'est estompee après 45 ans de sejour en France. Adieu, definitivement l'Egypte.Je doute fort aussi que nos enfants nes en France ou ailleurs soient vraiment interesses par notre prope jeunesse en Egypte... "El lefath mate" - le passe est mort.

Cette reflexion est dediee a tous mes camarade du camp No. 5 -Notakal 5, Le Caire, Nov. 1956.

Jacques Hasson - Marseille 18/9/02

Aboukir

Editor's Note: The following story was sent to us by Mr. **Albert Oudiz** from Paris in which he reminisces about the wonderful vacations he had with his family at ABOUKIR beach. In view of the great length of his article, we are only including the first paragraph where he evokes pleasant memories, and the last paragraph, which describes ABOUKIR today. He profoundly expresses his deep dismay combined with sorrow regarding the present condition of the beach facilities, a fabulous place during his young years Mr. Oudiz is one of those who does not believe in"El lefat mate" (What is past is dead!)

"Il m'arrive de plus souvent de laisser mon esprit vagabonder, rechercher dans le passé les moments tragiques ou heureux qui ont marqué mon enfance, ma jeunesse. Souvent aussi d'ailleurs, ma mémoire sans demander de permission quelconque s'amuse à remonter dans le temps pour s'attarder sur certains épisodes de ma vie, ne retenant que les souvenirs agréables, que le temps, aura de surplus, embellis, oubliant les mécomptes et les désagréments, pour ne garder que tout ce qui m'aura fait sourire ou rendu heureux. Je revis, alors, avec bonheur ces instants privilégiés précieusement gardés au plus profond de moi. C'est ainsi que depuis quelque temps, me reviennent en mémoire les vacances de ma prime jeunesse à Aboukir, et un sourire attendri me vient aux lèvres, car elles me font remémorer des moments de joies simples et de douceur de vivre que j'ai rarement-retrouvés depuis...

A la fin du repas nous sommes allés nous promener sur la plage. Quelle désolation! Le village était en ruine, sur le bord de mer, le cadavre d'un chien crevé finissait de souiller le sable. Un nuage passa et couvrit le soleil. Aussitôt tout prit un aspect sinistre. Il n'y avait plus d'hôtel Schmoul, plus de baigneurs s'ébattant dans l'eau ou étendus sur le sable. Les bungalows couverts de poussière semblaient déserts et abandonnés. Le sol des rues en terre battue était défoncé et recouvert de part en part de mares d'eau croupissantes. L'angoisse nous prit à la gorge devant un tel spectacle. Le temps avait inexorablement accompli son travail destructeur et sur l'image nos anciennes vacances avait tiré un voile gris couleur de deuil, déchiré par endroits, à travers les lambeaux duquel je voyais apparaître avec une étonnante précision des scènes heureuses qui avaient enchanté mon enfance."

Albert OUDIZ, Paris

Book: The Jasmine Necklace

The following memoirs are extracts from the last chapter. by **Suzanne Vidal Pirotte** (Ave des Linaigretts No. 1, B 4801 Verviers, Belgium)

The Dream that Crumbled

"We were basking in the sun in Alexandria. It was July 26, 1956 when the announcement of the nationalization of the Suez Canal was made. As we did not meddle in politics, it came as a surprise but did not worry us. Life went on as usual. We made the most of our holiday,

"Sham El Nissim" Celebration 1937

The above picture was taken in 1937 at Hawandiah, a sugar refinery town about 35 kilometers from Cairo, during the celebration of Sham el Nissim, which is a national holiday in Egypt. The ceremony goes back to ancient Egyptian history when a maiden was thrown into the Nile to ingratiate the river, which is so important to the country. Today, a doll of mud is thrown into the Nile. The festival is celebrated by the eating of a very smelly fish called "Feseekh"! in Arabic. The Editor can still smell it after being in the USA for more than 50 years. More than half of the people in the picture are not with us anymore. Your editor is on the far left, first row. Hawandiah was a village made of villas for the European employees with beautiful gardens. My Uncle Nissim Sanua who was an engineer at the plant invited the family to celebrate Sham el Nissim.

living life to the fullest. When that blessed period was up, the return trip to Cairo was scheduled...

Back home, however, an insidious then gradually violent anti-Jewish campaign was launched in newspapers and on the radio. Group of people gathered around a reader in the streets or a radio pouring out a high-pitched rhetoric to eager believers. I did not understand what was being said because it was classical Arabic and I spoke everyday Arabic, but I kept hearing the word *Yehud,* Jews, and the hate-filled looks were clear...

Fear grew with the massive arrests of men and women. No one knew where the prisoners were taken. A short time later the families received notice that these dangerous criminals were to be expelled from the country but that as a measure of clemency, only the next-of-kin would be authorized to see them on their way to no one knew where. And see them they did. Carried away, chained one to another, their wrists in handcuffs, no words could be exchanged... History repeated itself. Jewish enterprises were confiscated, their assets frozen. Others were put on a "black list"... Jews who had an Egyptian nationality lost it and became stateless persons with no one to defend them... As for the French and British subjects, these were ordered to leave in twenty-four-hours, seven days at the least. My childhood friend Jacqueline and her family were in that "enemy group"...

Two weeks later I left on my own. I was spared the indignity of the usual physical search that more Jews leaving for good had undergone. My precious books that had passed through censorship were not torn to check for any illegal matter, nor were my shoe heels broken open or my seams cracked to check for money or dangerous weapons, as was the usual routine for Customs agents...

On my way to the plane, I raised my hand and waved my scarf hoping my father would see it and know that everything had gone well. It was the last farewell, the last adieu, the end of an era and a step into the unknown. We were to settle in Italy, the country of our passport of which we did not speak the language... Leaving our sunshine, our habits and customs behind, that scarf was the flag of defeat, of the unforeseeable and of deep heartache. It was the parting of the roads that were never to meet again... *I would never wear a jasmine necklace.*" Contact the author to purchase this book.

The Nebi Daniel Initiative

A Consulatiative Paper for the Preservation of the Jewish Heritage in Alexandria

"A group of us in Europe has tried to address the issue of the preservation of our heritage in Alexandria. We have reached a point where we need the broadest possible consensus among Jews from Alexandria or other cities in Egypt in support of our efforts. We are soliciting as well any practical help we can receive from interested parties. We are asking for your expression of support and for any comments you may wish to give. For those of you who can give practical help, we would also be most interested hearing from you."

Anyone interested in helping the Nebi Daniel Initiative should get in touch with Ted Nahmias: 22 Earls Terrace, London W8 6LP, UK - admin@nebidaniel.com

Biographies of Prominent Jews of Egypt

"According to Biographical appendices added to the 1942 and 1943 'Annuaire des Juifs d'Egypte et du Proche-Orient,' Published by 'Societe des Editions Historiques Juive d'Egypte." Compiled by **Mathilde Tagger**.

Remarks:

1. * Asterisk after a name indicates that the biography is found in both Annuals.
2. (P) after a name indicates that a portrait is joined to the biography.
3. For a copy of a biography, contact me at *tagger@actcom.il*
4. This list has been first published in the Journal of the Israel Genealogical Society *Sharsheret Hadorot,* vol. 13, No. 2-3,

1999.

Some Statistics for the 190 biographies: (1) 10 persons have no birth date (2) The oldest person was born in 1857 and the youngest in 1917. (3) Two thirds were born between 1880 and 1899. (4) More than 60% were born in Egypt. (5) 12% were born in Turkey. (6) 7.5% were born in Greece. (7) 7% were born in Eastern Europe (Ashkenazi Jews)

Index of countries: **Alg** = Algeria, **Byel** = Byelorus, **E-Y** = Erets Yisral, **Eg** = Egypt, **Ger** = Germany, **Gre** = Greece, **Ik** = Irak, **Ita** = Italia, **Lbn** = Lebanon, **Lyb** = Libya, **Pol** = Poland, **Rum** = Rumania, **Rus** = Russia, S. **Afr** = South Africa, **Slvn** = Slovenia, **Syr** = Syria, **Trk** = Turkey, **Tun** = Tunisia, **UK** = United Kingdom

Family and first name	Father	Birthtown	cty	date
Abecassis, Asian	Salomon	Mehalla el Kbir	Eg	1885
Acher Abramin	Samuel	Cairo	Eg	1875
Adda, Elie	Jacques	Cairo	Eg	1883
Adda, Joseph (P*)	Abram	Alexandria	Eg	1887
Adda,Rene	Cesar	Cairo	Eg	1879
Adda, Victor* (P*)	Abrahm	Nexandria	Eg	1885
Ades, Emile	Nessim	Egypt	Eg	XXX
Agami-Levy, Aslan	Moise Levy	Cairo	Eg	1882
Agami-Levy,Salomon*	David	Egypt	Eg	1906
Aghion, Gaston	Behor	Alexandria	Eg	1886
Aghion, Max	Cesar Behor	Cairo	Eg	1891
Alexander, Aron	xxx	South Africa	S.Afr	1888
Algagli, Victoil	Salavator	Alexandria	Eg	1911
Amber, Shaoul*	Ibrahim	Baghdad	Irk	1880
Amiel, Isaac	Elie	Khania (Crete)	Gre	1895
Aptekman, Alexandre	Elie	Dvinsky	Rus	1884
Arwas, Viclor*	Moise	Jerusalem	E-Y	1903
Avigdor, Samuel	Isaac Haim	Aidin	Trk	1870
Azoulai, Jacques	Mercado	Cairo	Eg	1889
Babani, Leon	xxx	Istanbul	Trk	1886
Baragan, Marc	xxx	Cairo	Eg	1893
Barcilon, Haim	Chemtov	Tantah	Eg	1900
Bassan, Leon	Albert	Aidin	Trk	1883
Benacher, Moise	Acher	Samdormierz	Pol	1900
Benghiat Joe	Ephraim	Aden	Yem	1903
Benveniste, Isaac	Vita	xxx	xxx	xxxx
Benyacar, Marco*	Behor	Salihli by Izmir	Trk	1905
Benzakein, Felix	xxx	Tantah	Eg	1895
Beressi, Victor*	Israel	Saloniki	Gre	1894
Berman, Michel (P*)	xxx	Odessa	Rus	1885
Bigio, Selim	Haim	Alexandria	Eg	1876
Bitchai, Jacob	Selig	Odessa	Rus	1894
Blattner, Henri	David	Jaffa	E-Y	1880
Bond!, Giuseppe A.	Abraham	Candia	Gre	1865
Campos, Benvenuto (P*)	xxx	Alexandria	Eg	1873
Castro, Leon	xxx	Izmir	Trk	1883
Cattan, Aslan* (P*)	xxx	Cairo	Eg	1909
Cattaui, Aslan Levy	Joseph	Alexandria	Eg	1890
Cattaui, Joseph	Asian	Cairo	Eg	1861
Cattaui, Rene (P*)	Joseph	Cairo	Eg	1896
Chalom, Rudolphe (P*)	Alfred	Cairo	Eg	1886
Chemla, Clement	Jacob	Tunis	Tun	1874
Chemla, Victor	Jacob	Tunis	Tun	1870
Chonchol, David*	xxx	Izmir	Trk	1893
Choueka,Jacques*	David	Aleppo	Syr	1895
Cicurel, David	Abraham	Izmir	Trk	1891
Cicurel, David*	Abraham	Izmir	Trk	1891
Cicurel, Salvator (P*)	Moreno	Cairo	Eg	1894
Cohen-Galatz, Isaac*	Sulim	Galatz:	Rum	1898
Cohen, Alfred N.	Isaac Haim	Tunis	Trk	1881
Cohen, Daniel	Ephraim	Alexandria	Eg	1895
Cohen, Elie	Aron	Alexandria	Eg	1899
Cohen, Rene	Elie	Cairo	Eg	1888
Cohenca, Monis	Giacomo	Alexandria	Eg	1885
Dichi, Moise	Elie	Cairo	Eg	1893
Dona, Clement	Isaac	Tantah	Eg	1895
Dorra, Haim (P*)	Isaac	Damascus	Syr	1888
Dorra, Jacques	Isaac	Damascus	Syr	1890
Douek, Raphael	Selim	Beyruth	Lbn	1892
Edrei, Max	xxx	Egypt	Eg	1888
Elia, Albert	Raphael	Alexandria	Eg	1893
Engel, Hermann	Gustave	Hamburg	Ger	1886
Errera, Isaac	Salomon	Alexandria	Eg	1882
Eskiya, Laure	Hayrn	Aidin	Trk	1914
Ezri, Abramino,	Nessim	Alexandria	Eg	1879
Ezron, Ailbert	Said	Jaffa	E-Y	1891
Farag, Mourad	Lichae	Cairo	Eg	1867
Fargeon, Maurice	Rahamim	Cairo	Eg	1906
Farhi, Joseph	Mourad	Damascus	Syr	1887
Forte, David*	Samuel	Cairo	Eg	xxx
Forte, Joseph	Leon	Cairo	Eg	1874
Franco, Moses L.	Leon	Cairo	Eg	1887
Frangi, Salomon	Nessim	Cairo	Eg	1879
Fresco, Jacques	Haim	Istanbul	Trk	1878
Fresco, Victor	Nessim	Cairo	Eg	1889
Gattegno, Maurice	Samuel	Alexandria	Eg	1877
Goar, Edwin (P*)	Joseph	Alexandria	Eg	1875
Goar, Jacques	xxx	Alexandria	Eg	1887
Goliger, Jacques*	Levi Isaac	Alexandria	Eg	1887
Gozlan, Albert*	Samuel	Tunis	Tun	1897
Green, Ralph	Salomon	Cairo	Eg	xxx
Haim, Henri	Gabriel	Izmir	Trk	1908
Hallac, Edouard*	Ibrahim	Beyruth	Lbn	1909
Hanan, Victor	Ibrahim	Cairo	Eg	1880
Hanoka, Leon	Samuel	Cavalla	Gre	1880
Harari, Clement	Ibrahim	Cairo	Eg	1891
Harad, Ernest	Ibrahim	Cairo	Eg	1889
Harari, Ralph	victor	Cairo	Cg	1892
Harari, Victor (P*)	Raphael	Cairo	Eg	1857
Haym, Albert* (P*)	Felix	Istanbul	Trk	1877
Hazen, Abramino	Eliyahou	Alexandria	Eg	1893
Hazan, Daoud	Eliyahou	Jerusalem	E-Y	1869
Hourvitz, Avinoam	Levi	Gedera	E-Y	1890
Iscaki, Salvator	xxx	Alexandria	Eg	1868
Jabes, Rachel	Abdela	Cairo	Eg	1904
Jassy, Sam	Chalorn	Galatz	Rum	1892
Jehiel, Maurice*	Leon	XXK	xxx	xxxx
Katz, Fritz	Leopold	Czaborze	Pol	1898
Kramer, Adolphe	Leon	Cairo	Eg	1893

Family and first name	Father	Birthtown	cty	date
Krichewsky, Henry*	Maurice	Cairo	Eg	1901
Kronberger, Abramino*	Maurice	Cairo	Eg	1896
Kronberger, Maurice	Abrahm	Bucarest	Rum	1871
Latis, Moise Rafaelle	Leone	Modena	Ita	1864
Leibovitz, Simon	xxx	Alexandria	Eg	1879
Levi-Babocitch, Tobia	Simha	Bakchi Saray	Rus	1882
Levi, Emilio	Vittorio	Venice	Ita	1883
Levi, Guide	JAcques	Cairo	Eg	xxxx
Levi, Isaac	Joseph	Istanbul	Trk	1878
Levi, Jacques	Moussa	Cairo	Eg	1873
Levi, Sedaka	Isaac	Mansura	Eg	1895
Levy de Benzion, Moise (P*)	Isaac	Alexandria	Eg	1873
Levy, Nellos A.	xxx	Vollos	Gre	1889
Liscovitch, Isaac	xxx	Gomel	Byel	1892
Luzzato, Pacifico	Abram	Split	Slvn	1877
Madjar, Vitali	David	Istanbul	Trk	1868
Mainzer, Fritz	Sall	Munich	Ger	1897
Maleh, Jacques	Joseph	Cairo	Eg	1905
Mani, Felix	Soliman	Mansura	Eg	1898
Mani, Simon ,	Soliman Meir	Mansura	Eg	1884
Mayerhoff, Max (P*)	Albert	Hildesheim	Ger	1874
Menasce, Baron Charles (P*)	Baron Alfred	Alexandria	Eg	1898
Menasce, Baron Felix (P*)	Behor	Aexandria	Eg	1865
Menasce, Baron George	xxx	Liverpool	UK	1891
Mizrahi, Emmanuel	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxxx
Mlzrahi, Salomon*	Salvatore	Cairo	Eg	1893
Mlzrahi, Togo	Jacques	Alexandria	Eg	1901
Modai, Raphael	xxx	Adalla	Trk	1885
Molco, Albert*	Leon	Salonild	Gre	1907
Moline, Roger	Fernand	Levallois Perret	Fr	1901
Morpurgo, Nelson*	Carlo	Cairo	Eg	1899
Mosserl, Felix N. (P*)	Nessim	Cairo	Eg	1893
Mosseri, Henri	Victor	Cairo	Eg	1906
Mosseri, Joseph V.	Vita	Cairo	Eg	1884
Mosseri, Maurice (P*)	Nessirn	Cairo	Eg	1886
Mouchili, Max	Albeit	Jaffa	E-Y	1876
Nacamuli, Albert	Isaac E.	Alexandria	Eg	1906
Nacamuli, Isaac (P*)	Emmanuel	Alexandria	Eg	1869
Nagger, Elie	Isaac	Cairo	Eg	1889
Nahman, Raphael	Victor	Alexandria	Eg	1890
Nahoum, Haim	Joseph	Manisa	Trk	1875
Nahum, Enrico Halfalla	Pinhas	Triporl	Lyb	1899
Nawas, Zald	Abdo	Tantah	Ell	1888
Neuman, Leon*	Isaac	Cairo	Eg	1910
Ohanna, Nessim	Massoud	Midian	Aig	1882
Orebi, Zaki	Vita	Cairo	Eg	1892
Padoa, Felix	Alexandre	Alexandria	Eg	1890
Palacci, Henry*	Menahern	Cairo	Eg	1917
Pappo,Joseph	Raphael	Aidin	Trk	1891
Picard, Hugo	Salomon	Constanz	Ger	1888
Pinto, Carlo	Isaac Oreste	Alexandria	Eg	1877
Polack, Edwin	xxx	Alexandria	Eg	1897
Politi, Elie	Elie	Cairo	Eg	1900
Rabin, Jacques	xxx	Petahrikva	E-Y	1912
Rodrigue, Ezra (P*)	Nessim	Aidin	Trk	1890
Rolo, Robert J. (P*)	Jacques	Alexandria	Eg	1876
Rolo, Robert S. (P*)	Simon	Cairo	Eg	xxxx
Rosenberg, Max	Albert	Berlin	Ger	1887
Rossano, Fernand	Felix Behor	Alexandria	Eg	1896
Rossano,Jacques	Felix Behor	Alexandria	Eg	1894
Sakkal, Raphael	Haim	Tantah	Eg	1899
Salama, Joseph	Moise	Ziftah	Eg	1884
Salama, Salvalor	Moise	Ziftah	Ell	1881
Salem, Ovadia	Mercado	Salonild	Gre	1888
Salinas, Lazare	Samuel	Istanbul	Trk	1895
Saltiel, Albert*	Jacob	Salonild	Gre	1899
Sanua, Moise	Isaac	Cairo	Eg	1902
Saporta, Daniel	Sheneor	Salonild	Gre	1869
Saporta, Jacques*	Raphael	Istanbul	Trk	1892
Schlezinger, Herman	xxx	Braila	Rum	1877
Scluto, Lucien	xxx	Salonild	Gre	1886
Shindler, Robert*	Adolphe	Istanbul	Trk	1899
Sonsino, Vita	xxx	Cairo	Eg	1895
Staraselski, Albert	xxx	Cairo	Eg	1903
Suares, Leon	Felix Behor	Cairo	Eg	1877
Tiano, Isidore	Samuel	Cairo	Eg	1900
Vaena, Isaac	Jacob	Izmir	Trk	1887
Ventura, Moise	xxx	Salihli by Izmir	Trk	1897
Vidon, Asian (P*)	xxx	Alexandria	Eg	1882
Vivante, Sabino	Dario	Alexandria	Eg	1892
Weissman, Jacob	Mordekhal	Jerusalem	E-Y	1886
Weinberg, Jean	xxx	xxx	xxx	1887
Weinstein, Benjamin*	Joseph	Cairo	Eg	1915
Weinstein, Joseph*	Simon	Cairo	Eg	1889
Weinstein, Moise B.*	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxxx
Yallouz, Alfred	Shabetai	Mansura	Eg	1898
Zarmati, Lionel*	Molse	Cairo	Eg	1917
Zarmati, Moise	Leon	Cairo	Eg	1885
Zilha, Abdallah*	Khedouri	Baghdad	Irk	1913
Zilha, Khedouri*	Aboudil	Baghdad	Irk	xxx
Zilha, Maurice	Khedouri	Baghdad	Irk	1917

Readers who are interested to receive short biographies of individuals included in the above list should make such a request to the Editor. He will send the entire requests to Mrs. Mathilde Tagger. Obtaining that information is complimentary.

We asked Mrs. Tagger to send us the biographical sketch of our cousin Moise Sanua. The following is the type of information which is available:

MOISE SANUA, Son of Isaac Sanua, Secretary of the Chief Rabbi of Egypt and the Cairo Rabbinate to this day, home address: 12, rue Zaki, Le Caire, Schooling: College Francais Baccalaureat (1916), Attached to the Department of Statistics (1917-1920) and Cooperative Mutuelle (1920-1923), business 1923-1928, Founder and President of the Union Universelle de la Jeunesse Juive (1923-1936), Secretary and Founder of the Societe des Etudes Historiques Juives d'Egypte founded in 1929, Secretary for the Welfare of the Jewish community from 1934, Secretary of the Ismailia Synagogue, Secretary and one of the founders of the Societe pour la Protection et la Dotation de Jeunes Filles Pauvres, since 1935, collaborated in many Jewish local and foreign newspapers.

Picture of the Judeo-Espaniol which appeared in Issue No. 4 of the IAJE Newsletter

In number 4 of our newsletter, we asked our readers to identify people who appeared in the picture of New Year's Eve celebration in 1947 in Cairo. **Sultana Vidal Pirotte** of Belgium was able to identify 8 members of her family, 6 of them already deceased. It seems that we are slowly a dying breed. In one or two decades, very few of us will be left to report our experiences. The following response was received from Suzanne Vidal Pirotte.

"From up right to down left (1) My mother Esther Souery (Died in Milano 1967). (2) My father Elie Vidal (Died in Milano 1969). (3) My aunt Jeanne Souery (Died in Los Angeles 1999). (4) My aunt Rita Souery, living in Montreal. (5) Her husband Elie Benattar, living in Montreal. (6) My aunt Judith Souery (Died in Tel Aviv 1990). (7) Her husband Marco Levy (Died in Tel Aviv 1985). (8) My uncle Leon Souery (Died in Haifa 1994)." **Do you know of any others?**

Rachel & Sarah comment on life in Egypt

"Ci-inclus, nos cheques annuels. Votre bulletin est toujours recu avec plaisir et on le lit avidement,... Encore une fois, mes eloges pour votre perseverance a vouloir regrouper des gens qui dans un passe lointain partageaient une destinee commune et qui maintenant, sont eparpilles un peu partout dans le monde et dont la majorite, sont completement indifférents.

If faut avouer que les souvenirs sont différents pour les uns et pour les autres. Pour certains, c'est la nostalgie d'une douceur de vie revolue, pour d'autres, la realite d'evenements tristes que dans une certaine mesure on desire oublier Plus de Bassatins... A ce propos,... Peut-etre, nous aurions du, aussi, par principe, forcer le gouvernement Egyptien a confronter sa responsabilite pour la devastation des Bassatins et les dommages psychologiques et autres infliges a la population Juive .... Mais savoir que la tombe de mes parents est a jamais detruite, sans pouvoir jamais etre retrouvee sans que les responables soient tenus 'accountable' eclipse tout souvenir d'une possible 'douceur de vivre.' Pour mettre les choses a point, je clarifie que tout ceci n'a rien a voir avec vous ou la tache louable que vous avez entreprise d'accomplir... C'est dit simplement en guise de bavardage, une expression de pensees et sentiments surgis soudain, provoques par le sujet 'Egypte'... Excessivement interessante votre analyse du 'Arab National Character and the Middle East Conflict," publiee dans le **Jerusalem Post** de 1970

Rachel Cwerner et Sarah Douek, USA.

Editor's note: We asked Mrs. Cwerner if we could publish her letter, she responded in English in a more forceful way about her feelings as follows:

"Thank you very much for taking the time to send us a copy of your comprehensive and illuminating study of the psychology of the 'fellahim' and its impact on their behavior on the battlefield and their daily life in general. It is very interesting and edifying. As to your wanting to publish some of my rambling comments in the next issue of your bulletin, this is o.k. The reason I was against it, when I wrote the letter, is that at that specific moment the 'nostalgia' of your readers triggered some mixed personal emotions that I did not want to share other than on a one-to-one basis.

What I want to say is that those who left Egypt of their own free will, on their own terms, can afford the luxury of being nostalgic. But for those of us who were peremptorily ordered to depart within a matter of days, leaving behind everything including the possibility of ever visiting again the graves of those we loved. The experience was too sad to allow for sweet nostalgic reminiscences. Having said that, there is room once in a while for a fleeting thought to those summer evenings in June, long ago, when as youngsters, we used to walk the extra mile to buy the delicious "fetira" with powdered sugar on top which we feasted on all the way back home. A passing nostalgic thought that gets dwarfed in he larger picture. Anyway, again bravo for your unswerving motivation." **Rachel Cwerner & Sarah Douek.**

Letters

C'est avec interet et plaisir que j'ai parcouru toute la brochure de l'International Association of Jews from Egypt. Ci-joint inclus la feuille du Prof. Uri Kupferschmidt qui fait un projet academique sur la famille Juive d'Egypte -proprietaire des Grands Magasins d'Orosdi-Back. J'espere que vous trouvez le sujet interessant pour le publier, dans votre prochain "newsletter" au nom du ***Prof. Kupferschmidt.*** *Merci!*

Diane Brakha,
nee Diane Rosenthal, Haifa

Thank you very much for your articles. I regret that my French is not good enough to grasp the articles in that language. However, your cause is good and it brings a new picture of what I might have envisioned years ago, as "Egyptian Jews." Those wedding pictures could have been USA 1926. Enclosed is a small donation for your work.

Ruth Siegel, Brooklyn, NY

Thank you for sending me the latest edition of the IAJE Newsletter. I enjoyed it very much and I congratulate you for the efforts that you are making and for the wonderful results. I am sending you a check for $80.00, which includes my membership and a small donation of $50.00. Please keep up the good work and may God bless your future achievements.

Nelly Ades, Brooklyn, NY

You are doing a tremendous job. We love to read your bulletin of the International Association of Jews from Egypt. Keep on the good word. God bless you.

Many Levi

Thank you for sending the newsletter of the International Association of Jews from Egypt. I particularly enjoyed the enclosed article "Arab National Character and the Middle East conflict" that you wrote in 1970. It is really bearing truth in today's world.

Prof. David F. Altabé, Miami, Florida

"Ya Khawaga (Sir) Victor. I was very surprised that you have not heard about the Yiddish Theater in Cairo. There was also Yiddish Theatre in Alexandria and even Port Said. My friend, 'qu'elle repose en paix,' Mme. Rose Weiss Klein Belahovsky was one of the actresses. Among other names that I remember from her were the two Peindrik sisters ... Sophie and Elise... I believe they moved to Cleveland but I am not sure if they are still living. There was also one Simon Bernard who moved to Canada. In Cairo the Theatre performed in the Royal Opera House. They performed such Yiddish plays as Got, Mentsh un Tayvl (God, man and devil), A Yiddishe King Lear (A Jewish King Lear) etc. I have seen theatre programs, which included adds in Yiddish for Johnny Walker Red and Elizabeth Arden Cosmetics. There was also Yiddish Radio and in the 1910's or 1920's there was also a Yiddish Newspaper.

I am sure you know there was a special synagogue for the Ashkenazim until the 1967 war when the Ashkenazi community merged with the Sephardic community. I believe the last president of that community was Adolphe Deutsch. When I lived in Cairo, there was still a Yiddish and Arabic speaking Shammash in the synagogue, Victor Lourie. There was a fairly large Aschkenazi community in Cairo. Some other names of businesses whose signs I remember were Davidson and Regenstreif (Opticians in Passage Continental), Salamander, Goliger, Kroiter (Language schools), and of course Imprimerie Weinstein.

My first contact with Aschkenazim. from Cairo was in my native Philadelphia. I went to high school with one Tanya Bromberg. She had arrived in the US via Brazil. Many years later, her Uncle, Victor Bromberg, was my dentist in Cairo!"

David Hirsch, Los Angeles, USA

Ahava Ve Ahba Congregation

The Ahava ve Ahba is the first Jewish Egyptian congregation in the United States. Established in 1963 on a rented space provided by the Magen David congregation on 2066 67th. Street, NY 11204. In 1975 the congregation moved to its new building 1801 Ocean Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11223. Mr. **Charles Chehebar,** a member of the IAJE, sings all the tunes of Haftaarot and Yamin Noraim according to Minhagey Misraim, also the tunes of Roch Hashanah and Yom Kippur which he learned in his youth in Egypt.

The Program for the study of Sephardic and Oriental Jewry

The Department of Religious Studies at Florida International University has established the above Program and named it after the former President **Yitzhak Navon.** On October 6, 2002, he received an Honorary Degree, Doctor of Laws (L.L.D.) from the University for his extraordinary work of the arts, and for his distinguished career in the Israeli government and politics. He graduated from the Hebrew University with a major in Islamic Studies; he served as Head of the Arab section of the Haganah in the critical years 1946-1948. He was in the diplomatic corps, and he had a long career in senior administrative posts in the office of Israel's first prime minister, David Ben Gurion. He won acclaim over the years for his writings, plays and television programs presenting and popularizing the life of the Sephardi communities in Spain and Israel.

The Department at the Florida International University provides academic training in Sephardic Studies, offers lectures and seminars presented by nationally and internationally renowned scholars.

Orosdi-Back Department Stores

What do you remember about the Orosdi-Back Department stores in Cairo, Alexandria, Beirut, Aleppo, Baghdad. Istanbul, Tunis etc? Did you shop there? Did you work there?

Information, anecdotes and material sought for an academic research project by:

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Bibliotheca Alexandrina Officially Opened

The following is an extract of an article written by Mr. Roger Bilboul in the Newsletter of the Association of Jews from Egypt, UK that appeared in the December issue 2002.

"...That despite the fact that Egyptian censorship laws have been specifically lifted in the case of the new library, there have been instances of bending to local sensitivities on religious and political mat-

ters. That the present collections of books and manuscripts are rather poor and a far cry of its rated capacity. One definite missing element in the present collection is anything Jewish. There is apparently one book in Hebrew and no specific evidence of the Jewish contribution to ancient Alexandria"

TALG

by **Suzy Vidal**

"The ice-peddler called out. He went through Malika Farida Street with his dripping cart full of ice chunks pulled by a tired-looking *homar*. We stuck our head out of the balcony and shouted in return: *talg*! No one was amazed at the shouts; one noise more or less did not make any difference. We mimicked the length of ice we wanted for the *talaga*. He then sliced a piece with his pick, loaded it on to his shoulder and trudged up through the service stairs to the fifth floor, leaving his mobile shop unattended. Sometimes when it was hot he was drenched in water from the melting ice. He was out of breath but did not complain. What became of him when we bought refrigerators? **Talg, Talg**!

A Fishy Wedding

The following is a story sent to us by **Ted Nahmias** from London. We hope that you will find the text as amusing as we did.

"The parents of the groom, Abou Galambo and Caboria, and the parents of the bride, Moussa and Om el Khouloul, cordially invite you to attend the wedding of their handsome son, Gambari, and the beautiful Fessikha. The wedding ceremony will take place at the Hotel El Bahr of Agami beach. The best man for the groom is Armout.

The bridesmaids are: Bassaria, Ballamita, Bakala, and Sepia. A reception will follow with a buffet catered by Chef Erch. The Barboni band with the talented singer Ritza, the comedians Arouss and Darfil, and the illusionist Okhtobut and his charming assistants Tuna, Barob-Tuna, Wahesh-Tuna, Anness-Tuna and Sharaf -Tuna will entertain. While we're on this fishy subject, I wonder if you're aware that Monday is **Sham el Nessim**. How many of you are into fiseekh?"

Salamat **HUBERT**

You have to watch your language when you are in a foreign country

On Oct. 15, 2002, **Mr. Nicholas D. Kristof**, a columnist for the New York Times wrote the following:

"The gulf of mutual suspicion and anger between Americans and overseas Muslims seems to have widened dangerously since 9/11, and it will grow more explosively in a war with and occupation of Iraq. This gulf reminds me of my very first conversation in Arabic, just after I'd moved to Cairo in 1983 to study the language. "**Ismak eh**?" asked a friendly looking neighbor in my building and I was thrilled that I recognized that he was asking my name. "**Ismi Nick**," I said beaming. He flinched, turned pallid and stepped back. In a barely audible voice, he croaked out the question again, "**Ismak eh**?"

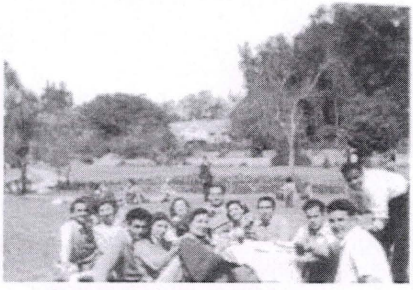
Unsure what had gone wrong, I stepped forward and thundered, **"Ismi Nick."** The man fled. My bewilderment and distress at that moment seem familiar this year, for once again Americans and foreign Muslims are unwittingly outraging each other. Sometimes the difference in our assumptions and world views yawns so wide that it is difficult even to have a meaningful conversation...

Oh, and the meaning of "**Nick**!' in Arabic? It is a verb meaning to have sex, but it is even more vulgar than its English *four-letter* equivalent. And **"Nick"** is the worst possible conjugation, the command form."

Stanley Bay Beach, Alexandria 1948

Sham el Nissim in Alexandria, 1948

Gezira Swimming Pool, Cairo 1948



Picnic at Barrage Gardens Judeo Club, 1948

"AH! QUE LA VIE ETAIT BELLE ALORS!" (A. Oudiz)

I.A.J.E. NEWSLETTER

International Association of Jews from Egypt
Association Internationale des Juifs d'Egypte

7

EDITOR: Prof. Victor D. Sanua | IAJE, 2416 Quentin Road, Brooklyn, NY 11229 | 2003 Volume 5 No. 1

Editorial

In the last issue of the newsletter (No.6) we invited readers to send us their pleasant and unpleasant reminiscences along with photos and documentation for possible publication in our newsletter. The material received was quite minimal. We are quite aware that Jews from Egypt had to bring their papers to the censorship for approval before leaving the country - a step which would involve considerable anxiety. It would seem that many did not carry documentation or pictures. However, the Editor took a chance and got hundreds of his pictures out of the country. This newsletter contains a number of them, particularly those pertaining to his schooling at the College des Freres (French), the Lincoln School (English) and the American University in Cairo. We went through our own archives for suitable material for the newsletter.

Within the past few months, we have received a number of books and reviews of books of interest. We wrote a short review of a recent book by Moise Rahmani, editor of **Los Muestros, L'EXODE OUBLIE**, Juifs des Pays Arabes, a topic of actual relevance. Mr. Rahmani was born in Egypt and therefore could report on his personal experience. We hope that other Jews from Egypt would write their own stories. We have also provided an overview of a book in Hebrew received from Mrs. Levana Zamir of Israel on the contributions of Jews from Egypt to the State of Israel.

We are reporting on three features, one written by young people (sisters 20 and 21 years of age) whose grandparents were born in Egypt. On their own, they decided to visit Cairo, the city where their grandmother had lived. They did so, carrying knapsacks as luggage and without knowing a word of Arabic.

Another written by a young man, a freshman, told of writing a term paper in which he parallels the story of the Haggadah (Exodus), with the experiences of his grandparents. The young man asked us if we had taught in a school in Cairo and he mentioned a name that we could not identify. After a while, we were able to connect the name he mentioned with that of our earliest teaching. We were quite surprised about his enquiry since it took place about 63 years ago. The school's name was **Keroub**, which was a private school for Jewish girls. When we asked him how he knew about our first teaching job, he said that he mentioned my name to his grandmother, and she remembered that I was her classroom teacher of English. We were certainly surprised that she could remember our name. Our hypothesis was, that probably our teaching was so terrible that she could not forget our name, or to be more charitable, she probably had a crush on me!

The initiation party of the freshman class at the American University in Cairo 1943.

The editor (circled) with his face painted with charcoal, is in the middle of the picture. The names of the students that we could remember are as follows: Aimee Setton (Paris), Andree de Picciotto (Paris), Barakat Mourad (Australia), Josette Tamches (Israel), Maurice Hodara (Paris), Sami Dayan (Switzerland, dec.), Colette Rousso (Switzerland), Phyllis Hatwell (London), Ralph Setton (France), Frank Nissel (USA), Halina Kroogly (USA), Anthony Economides (Greece), Mario Feininger (USA), Anna Patros (Greece), Mia Hart (France, dec), Lydia Dvoupoly (USA), Renee Cohen (Paris), Onnic Marashian (USA), Vahe Amirian (USA), Krigor Selian (USA), Solomon Braunstein (Australia), Richard Host (Italy, dec.), Yvette & Lydia Azar (Paris), Michael Cleoudis (Greece). Please contact the Editor if you can identify other students.

Another example is an e-mail received from Guatemala, where a young man and his future bride with grandparents originating from Egypt, wrote that they would like to have something Egyptian at their wedding. This reinforces Hansen's old theory that the first and second generation may not be interested in their background, but such interest may develop in the grand children, and this to the editor looks promising.

About a year ago, our daughter, Dr. Marianne Sanua, who is professor of Judaic Studies at Florida Atlantic University, mailed us a note sent to her by the head of the Department of Judaic studies at a well-known University and with whom she was in correspondence. He wrote, "Your Dad has kindly been send-

continued on page 2

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Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge with thanks donations from the following members since the last issue of the newsletter: **R. Bibace** (FL), **B. Kane** (NJ), **J. Bouskela** (France), **G. de Botton** (England), **R. Elie** (Italy), **A. Gabbai** (Pa.), **S. Leibowitz** (NY), **E. Nahum** (Italy), **D. Ribacoff** (NY), **E. Rofe** (NY), **Y. Sanua** (Germany), **J. Shalam** (NY), **E. Sion** (Switzerland).

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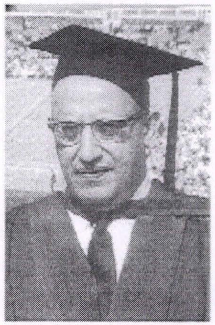
Editorial continued from page 1

ing me his Egypt material, which I read but cannot comment upon. I know nothing about the subject save what I learn from his newsletter!."

The conclusion that can be drawn from such a note is the fact that the history of the Jews coming from Arab countries is not known among Judaic scholars. As a result, we have decided to send a circular to approximately one hundred heads of departments of Judaic Studies in various universities in the United States informing them of the status of Jews coming from the Middle East. In this circular we added a couple of newsletters and three short articles written by the Editor pertaining to our life prior to 1948, the difficult times the Jews had when they were expelled or left on their own and a report on our return to Egypt about 20 years ago. The latter paper was entitled, "The Vanished World of Egyptian Jewry." It is giving us some satisfaction that some of this material will end up in the respective Judaic Studies libraries of their Universities. Such documentation could be available to future investigators interested in this obscure aspect of Jewish history.

As indicated in previous issues of the newsletters, the subscriptions received do not cover the full cost of the preparation, formatting, printing, and mailing of the newsletter. We are again urging our members to send us their subscriptions in order to enable us to continue with our efforts. We would also be very thankful if you could encourage your friends and relatives to subscribe to IAJE. It is a matter of survival. Thanks!

Menahem Mansoor (1911-2001)



We recently learned of the death of one of our correspondents, Prof. Menahem Mansoor, Egyptian-born, former chairman of the Department of Hebrew and Semitic Studies at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Dr. Mansoor was a brilliant scholar of Mideast diplomacy. He contributed articles to Encyclopedia Britannica and the American Oxford Encyclopedia. The following are extracts presented at the funeral of Dr. Mansoor by his daughter Yardena Mansoor with the title **HIS LIFE AND LEGACY**.

"How does one measure life? Is it years lived? If so, our Dad had a long, productive, and fulfilling life. Many were with us in June when we celebrated the family milestones that would fall in 2001, including Menahem's 90th birthday, and his and Claire's fiftieth wedding anniversary. (We are so fortunate that in June, we expressed to him our appreciation for the ways in which he enriched our lives!) Is it overcoming challenges he faced early in life? He was born in Port Said, Egypt, into a large family of modest means. As a young teenager, he was enraptured by a visit to Israel, then Palestine, that with the blessing of his rabbi, he left his family to attend high school in Israel...

Is it by educational achievements that we measure his life? If so, Menahem was a giant. He earned his Ph. D. in Biblical Studies and Semitic Language at Trinity College in Dublin. After 10 years in the British Diplomatic Service in Israel, he turned to teaching. A Fulbright award

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All funds are to be mailed to:
Victor D. Sanua, Ph.D., Editor
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2416 Quentin Road
Brooklyn, New York 11229, U.S.A.

brought him to Johns Hopkins University, from where he was invited to chair the University of Wisconsin's Department of Hebrew and Semitic Studies, newly established by the Wisconsin Society for Jewish Learning. He was among the first scholars associated with the Dead Sea scrolls and the translator of the "Thanksgiving Hymns." He published more that fourteen books, fifteen textbooks and fifty articles... If one's life is measured by the length of days, obstacles to overcome or accomplishments, Dad did, indeed, have a wonderful life. However, we would suggest that the true measure of life goes beyond these types of accomplishments. We would suggest that a true measure of a life is how a person lives and the values he communicates to his children and grandchildren... These values and the memories that will endure for the rest of our lives are the ultimate measure of Menahem's life: that he was sustained by the love of family, that he offered and received friendship freely, that he changes people's lives and therefore made his community and the world a better place, and that he had no regrets about the choices he made on his pathway through life."

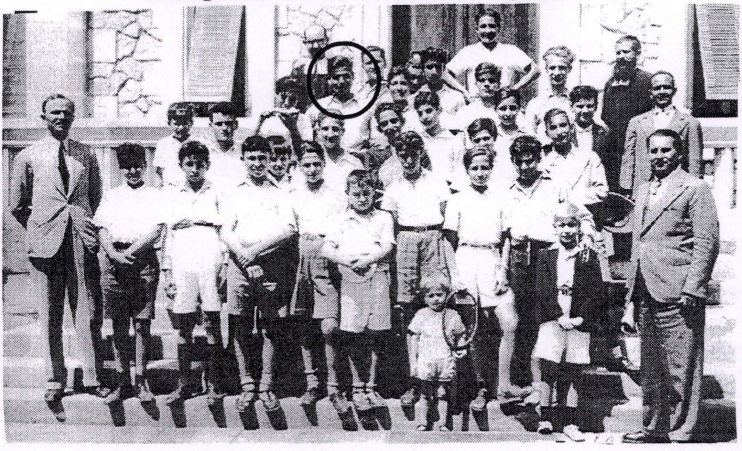
Lincoln School, American University in Cairo, 1939

Picture taken in 1939 of the high school graduates of Lincoln school. Nine students were allowed to take the London University Matriculation. We had to study a lot of Shakespeare! The school diploma was not considered to be an official diploma, which would allow pursuing studies outside the USA. The class was made up of one Copt, one Catholic, one Muslim and five Armenians. The latter group was planning to go on "Aliyah!" to Armenia. The second person standing from the left is Pierre Cachia, and on the far left in front on his knees is Victor Sanua. To see how we looked 64 years later, see the picture on page 7.

Graduating class at the front entrance of the American University in Cairo, 1945

The editor is on the extreme left (front row) and Anthony Economides is at the extreme right (front row) keeping guard of the co-eds of the class!

College des Freres of Bab el Louk, Cairo



Photograph taken in 1936 of an outing of the Junior High School students of the College des Freres of Bab el Louk, Cairo. The names we can recall are: Joseph Harari (Australia), Isaac Crespin (Israel), Zolmino, Fuchs, Mario Feininger (USA), Victor Cohen, Albert Chouchan (Israel, dec.), Rodolphe Goldstein (Israel, dec.), Andre Sanua (Israel), Albert Ades, Fernando Zetouni, Abraham Coronel (dec.), Roland Goldstein (Israel, dec.), Joseph Bension, Claude Alouche, Jean Tseppas (Greece, his father owned one of the best known pastry shops in Cairo). The Editor is circled next to the boy eating a pizza! Can you identify any of the other students?

The 8th Annual Sephardic Experience Weekend

Celebrating Jews From Egypt
March 28-30, 2003

In the latter part of 2002 **Dr. Janice Ovadia,** Director of Sephardic House, a cultural division of the American Sephardi Federation, approached the editor for the purpose of cosponsoring a three-day conference on Egyptian Jewry. We were certainly pleased to be in accord with this arrangement of said conference. Our function was to provide most of the speakers connected with **The International Association of Jews from Egypt.** The conference was held at the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in Manhattan.

It opened with a Shabbat (Friday evening) dinner, Egyptian style, with the participation of the Rabbis of the Congregation and their families. At the dinner, **Rabbi Marc Angel** of the Synagogue introduced Egyptian born **Rabbi Albert Gabbai** of Congregation Mikveh Israel of Philadelphia, the second oldest Synagogue in the US, who spoke on **"Religious Life, Customs and Traditions of the Jews in Egypt."** Rabbi Gabbai spent three years in an internment camp in Egypt. He later moved to France with his family, attended the Rabbi Yitzhak Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University, New York. In Israel he received his rabbinical ordination from the Sephardic Chief Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu.

After some introductory remarks by **Mrs. Isme Berg**, the new Director of Sephardic House, **Rabbi Gabbai** distributed a handout with a list of names of rabbis from 1492 to contemporary times. He spoke about "Purim Misrayim" when Jews were saved from annihilation in 1524. He mentioned that most of the Chief Rabbis of Egypt were born elsewhere, and many of them were buried in the Holy Land. Due to lack of time, the rabbis of the contemporary era were not discussed. He ended his talk with the words, **"A la prochaine, Insh'Allah, si D. veut."**

On Saturday March 29, 2002, after a Shabbat Lunch, **Jean-Marc Oppenheim, Ph.D.**, gave the following address, **"Political Overview: The Jewish Egyptian Political Dynamic."** Professor Jean Marc Oppenheim earned his B.A., M.A., M.Phil. and Ph.D. at Columbia University and is now a visiting Associate Professor of History at Marymount College of Fordham University. He was born in Cairo but grew up in Alexandria.

"Effect of Muslim Brotherhood and the Middle East Conflict"

Reviewing the role played by the Jewish community in Egypt's nationalist struggle, he underlined the political diversity of the community, which included nationalists, communists, Zionists, and even fascists in addition to a majority of essentially apolitical members. While Egypt's interwar Liberal Experiment allowed for such divergent views to be expressed, two indigenous factors pointed to the eventual demise of the country's Jewish community. The first was the formation of the Muslim Brotherhood (*Ikhwan Al Muslimin*) in 1928 and the second was the birth of the State of Israel in 1948. The *Ikhwan* and their impact of populist politics, laid to rest the idea of Egypt as a secular society, home to diverse faiths; indeed, the current Islamist political atmosphere under the Mubarak regime bears this out. The Arab defeat in 1948 spelled the doom of the Jewish communities in Egypt and throughout the Arab world. The ensuing modern global Diaspora, he said, surpasses in scope even the dispersion of the Jews of Iberia in 1492 that emigrated mostly to the Ottoman Empire and the Netherlands.

In the evening, there was a film presentation followed by music by **Felix Mizrahi & Ensemble** from Israel, who performed *Treasures of Classical Arabic Music.*

"Oral Histories"

On Sunday there were four presentations. The first one by **Pierre Cachia, Ph.D.** who spoke about, **"The Foreign Communities in Provincial Egypt."** Dr. Cachia lived in a succession of provincial towns where foreigners were few and associations with Egyptians were closer than they were in the larger cities of Cairo and Alexandria. After serving with the British army in North Africa and Europe during World War II, he found his way to the University of Edinburgh where he earned his Ph.D. and where, for a number of years, he was a member of the faculty. In 1975, he was appointed professor of Arabic Language and Literature at Columbia University. Cachia published 12 books.

In his talk, he drew on his memories as an adolescent growing up in Egyptian provincial towns in the 1930s. Unlike the foreign communities in big centers like Cairo and especially Alexandria, which were large enough to form their own social environment in almost total isolation from Egyptian life, the so-called "European" community in a provincial town may have numbered little more than thirty or forty families, Greeks, Italians, Maltese, and a scattering of others, including some Lebanese and Palestinians who were culturally Europeanized. He could remember only three individuals whom he knew to be Jewish, but there may have been more, since religious labels mattered little, and what bound the group together was a knowledge of French.

Of necessity, all these "Europeans" were thrown into closer contact with Egyptians than they would have been in the big cities. Egyptians supplied the professional services they needed. Yet there were barriers to social integration. The most evident were different standards in relations between the sexes. Entertainment consisted mostly of home visits, where entire "European" families mingled. Among Egyptians, men visited men and women visited women. When a club with mixed membership tried to organize a dance, tension was created when European men turned up with their wives but Egyptian men came alone. Intermarriages were extremely rare, and the children of such unions had severe problems of identity.

It has to be admitted, he said, that the

"Europeans" considered themselves superior, more so since Egyptians considered the adoption of Western dress and Western manners and the learning of European languages a mark of upward mobility. Instances of arrogance or confrontation were few, but the assumption must have left unpleasant memories among Egyptians. Dr. Cachia wrote his autobiography entitled "**Landlocked Islands: Two Alien Lives in Egypt,**" which was published by The American University Cairo Press in 1999. In this book, he includes his mother's reminiscences. This book can be obtained by calling or writing to the American University in Cairo, 420 Fifth Ave. New York, NY 10018, Tel. 212.730.8800.

The next paper was presented by Dr. Jean-Marc Oppenheim, on behalf of **Mrs. Liliane Dammond** who could not be present because of illness. Mrs. Dammond has spent much of her life immersed in the world of Egyptian Jewry, an interest she now seeks to preserve in a project entitled: "**The Lost World of Egyptian Jews**." For a number of years she has been interviewing Egyptian Jews so that their stories could be preserved for generations to come. She made the beautiful remark about her attachment to Egypt by saying, "**I left Egypt, but Egypt never left me**."

Mr. David Ribacoff was born in Bukhara, but his family moved to Egypt at an early age, and he spent his formative years in Alexandria and later lived in Cairo. He worked as a field engineer for Mobil Oil Company. In 1956, he moved to Brazil and worked for Exxon and later came to the US. He has always been closely involved in Jewish community affairs and currently serves as the President of his synagogue, Tiferet Israel of Queens. Mr. Ribacoff is now involved with the promotion of the American Sephardi Federation. The title of his presentation was "**Remembrances of Life in Alexandria**." He cherished the years he spent in Alexandria in the prime of his youth. As a teenager, he was happy to be a member of the choir of Temple Menasche. He enjoyed his studies at St. Andrews school and at the age of seventeen, he joined the Maccabi boxing team. He recalls the good times he spent at the beautiful beaches, the nightclubs and cafes. He vividly remembers rides on the double-decker tramways from Ramlah station, and the horse rides at Maamoura. Most of all, he remembers the backgammon games he used to play in sidewalk cafes on the Corniche. **Allah Yerham Charabi**! (I miss those days!)

The last speaker was your editor, **Victor D. Sanua Ph.D.**, whose talk was on "**Life in Cairo**." He came to America in 1950 and has been in academia ever since. He earned his M.A. in Experimental Psychology and a Ph.D. degree in Clinical Psychology and Anthropology from Michigan State University. He was on the faculty at Harvard University, Yeshiva University, and City College of NY (CUNY). He had a Fulbright Lectureship at the University of Paris (Sorbonne), and spent a sabbatical in Israel, 1973-1974 when the Yom Kippur war broke out. He was attached to the staff of the **Tel Hashomer Hospital** and lectured at Tel Aviv University. He is now a research professor in the Department of Psychology of St. John's University in Queens, New York. He is spending a great deal of his time researching, writing and lecturing on the Jews from Egypt, besides working in his field. The following is a summary of his remarks.

Dr. Sanua's presentation focussed on everyday life in Cairo during the thirties and forties. Cairo had all the amenities, which are available in any major European capital. The Royal Opera House had frequent visits from Italian Opera performers. Some of the regular visitors were Beniamini Gilli, Tito Gobbi of La Scala, and there were yearly plays by the Comedie Francaise, the London Old Vic and the Monte Carlo ballet. There were symphony orchestra performances at the Ewart Memorial Hall attached to the American University in Cairo. During one season, the Palestine Symphony Orchestra performed under the direction of **Arturo Toscanini.** During the World War II time period, the American and British forces arranged shows that civilians could attend. For the weekends, arrangements for outings were rather frequent to places such as Gezirah Island, which had a beautiful swimming pool, Meadi, Helwan gardens, Barrages, Fayoum, trips on the Nile River, also to the Pyramids or Sakkarah ruins, and the Zoo. In the desert one went riding on rented horses and camels. Heliopolis, a suburb of Cairo, had a horseracing track. You could also participate in competitions shooting pigeons. Cairo had numerous brasseries with tables on the sidewalks, and at times, classical and dancing music were available. Our personal entertainment was centered on Jewish clubs where we had plays, lectures, pingpong competitions and dances. The l4th of July and New Years Eve's were times for great celebrations. It was customary, after celebrating all night, to have breakfast of "ful medames" and falafel, on houseboats on the Nile River. During the summer months, we often boarded the "train de mer" (Train to the sea) to spend weekends in Alexandria.

Cairo had a very popular facility for entertainment, **Groppi,** which had a restaurant, a pastry shop and an orchestra for dancing. **It should be added that all these amenities were affordable to people of modest means.**

All this beautiful life came to an end in 1948. In the course of the years that followed, Jews from Egypt were leaving en masse because of inhospitable conditions. It is estimated that to day, all of Egypt may have about 40-50 aging individuals.

Mr. Joe Mosseri's contribution was "**The Jewish Egyptian Community in Brooklyn**." Brooklyn seems to have the highest concentration of Jews from Egypt and their activities center around an Egyptian synagogue **Ahaba Ve Ahva**.

"Videos Presented"

Subsequently, three documentary films with commentary were presented by Dr. Victor D. Sanua. The first documentary, which was produced by a professional TV company in Canada, dealt with the Jewish community of Alexandria. The president Mr. **Joseph Harari**, who was the last Jewish businessman in Alexandria, was interviewed in his haberdash-

ery store and in the office of the rabbinate with **Mrs. Lina Mattatia**, the treasurer.

The television interviewer asked Mr. Harari to invite all the Jewish males to a Saturday service. Only three men showed up with Mr. Harari. Since it was not possible to have a minyan, each one had to pray independently. A couple of gentlemen were interviewed and one of them cried when he stated, "What is going to happen to this synagogue when we die?"

About two years ago, Dr. Sanua visited Alexandria, and all these gentlemen had passed away except for Mr. Harari, who was still the president of the community. There were two additional males who were still alive, Mr. Victor Balassiano and Mr. Max Salama. Dr. Sanua was told during his visit that there was about a dozen Jewish females married to Muslims and Christians. During our visit we interviewed, at some length, Mr. Harari about the conditions of the Jewish community in Alexandria. At one point, we asked if it was possible to send a specialist from the United States to microfilm the archives. He was quite hesitant to provide a response, but later upon being urged, he said that he would "consult with his lawyer," an indication that he was unwilling to give us this opportunity. Subsequent to our visit Mr. Balassiano and his two daughters showed us around the Alexandria Corniche. In view of the fact that Mr. Ribacoff spoke about Alexandria, he asked us to show the video of the Corniche which today is still beautiful. We had lunch with the Balassianos at Beniamini Restaurant where we ate the standard "ful medames" and falafel. We visited Alexandria during a cruise around the Mediterranean and the ship stopped in the city for a few hours. A few months before our visit we received an e-mail from Racheline Balassiano to the effect that she read one of our newsletters and wanted to know more about our association. We contacted her before going to Alexandria and we arranged for her and her father, Victor Balassiano, to meet us outside the port. I am pleased to report that Racheline Balassiano and her sister Esther are presently students at Northeastern University in Boston, and are trying to remain permanently in the US. They were invited to our conference and at the right is our picture with them.

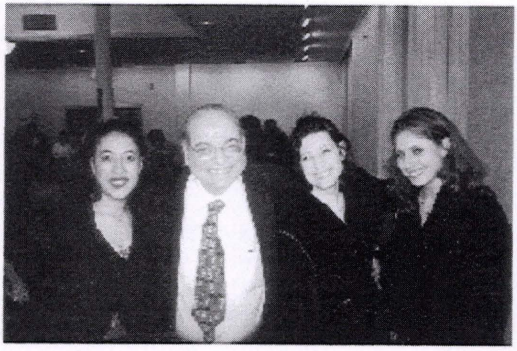
The last documentary was a video, "**Return to Cairo.**" It is a report of a visit to Egypt by **Mr. Maurice Mosseri,** of Brooklyn in 1979, at the time that Egypt and Israel were working on a peace treaty. It shows many sights of Cairo, with which Mr. Mosseri was familiar. He took us to the Bassatine cemetery, which was quite dilapidated, and he cried at the sight of the desolation that existed.

We had a very busy weekend discussing our past and reminiscing about our experiences when living in Egypt and the aftermath of our settlement in host countries.

We are very thankful to the **American Sephardi Federation** and to **Sephardic House** for making all the arrangements for the exiting weekend on "**Sephardic Experience Celebrating the Jews from Egypt**."

Members of the initial organizing committee. From l to r Prof. Victor D. Sanua, Mira Mizrahi, David Ribacoff, Dr. Janice Ovadia, Nicole Ini and Mrs. Lisa Ribacoff. Mrs. Liliane Dammond is not pictured here.

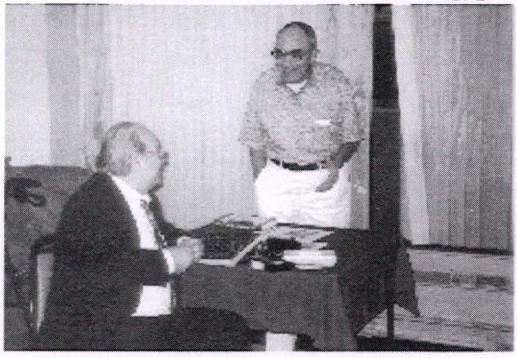
Mr. David Ribacoff presenting a gala robe (Joma) originating from Bukhara to H.E. Consul General of Egypt, Mahmoud Allam during the Sephardic Experience Weekend.



Racheline Balasiano and Esther Balasiano on either side of Prof. Victor D. Sanua. The young lady on the right is a classmate of the Balasianos.

Prof. Pierre Cachia (left) and Prof. Victor D. Sanua during the "Morning Round Table Discussion - Jewish Life in Egypt: What was it like?" They both graduated from the same high school in 1939 and the American University in Cairo. See the picture on page 3 as they looked 64 years ago.

Presentation and discussion on "The Second Exodus: The Jews from Egypt"



On November 12, 2002, Linda Eber of the Sephardic Community Center in Brooklyn arranged a seminar to be headed by Prof. Victor D. Sanua for the benefit of their Egyptian members.

After a short presentation by Prof. Sanua, the session was opened for the discussion of personal reminiscences of former Jews from Egypt. These memories and reflections were tape recorded and hopefully, at some future time, they will be transcribed. Prof. Sanua (seated) is discussing Mr. Jack Sutton's visit to Egypt.

REMINDER:

Be a part of this important endeavor to preserve our precious heritage. Send your subscriptions and donations to the IAJE c/o Dr. Victor D. Sanua, 2416 Quentin Road, Brooklyn, NY 11229 USA

Do it today, do not delay!

Books on Jews in the Muslim World

The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa in Modern Times
Edited by **Reeva S. Simon** et al.,
Columbia University Press, New York, 2003.
ISBN 0-231-10796-X (cloth) $50.;
ISBN 0-231-10797-8 (paperback) $25.
i-xvi, 549 pages, maps, appendix, index, and a CD featuring Sephardic liturgies and songs.

Look for a review of this book in our next newsletter.

In conjunction with the volume's publication, on Wednesday, May 14, 2003, the American Sephardi Federation hosted a public conversation with the editors and some of the authors. Over 200 people attended the event at the Center for Jewish History in New York City. The conversation was moderated by Gary Rosenblatt, publisher and editor of ***The Jewish Week***, and included topics covered in the book as well as a question and answer period. A book-signing event and a cocktail party at the Center followed the conversation. Among the panelists was **Jean-Marc Oppenheim** who wrote the chapter on the "**Jews of Egypt and the Sudan.**" Oppenheim's other publications of interest to our readers include "**The Gezira Sporting Club of Cairo**" in ***Peace Review*** 11:4, Winter 1999; "**Jewish History, Zionist Activism, and Israeli Imperatives: the Jewish Perspective on the Palestinian-Israeli Impasse**' in ***Planeta Urbano*** (Bueno Aires), September 1997; "**Le Sporting Club d'Alexandrie; Symbole et Enjeu Social**" in ***Alexandrie entre deux mondes***, Robert Libert, editor of the ***Revue de l'Occident Musulman et de la Mediterranee***, No. 46, 4eme trimestre, Aix-en-Provence, 1987; as well as a number of entries in **The Encyclopedia of the Modern Middle East**. (Macmillan Publishing Co., 1996) of which he was also the project editor. He is currently searching for a publisher for his completed manuscript on the sporting clubs of Egypt, 1860-1960.

L'EXODE OUBLIE: Juifs des Pays Arabes.
Moise Rahmani, 2003
Paris: editions Raphaël $22.00
Rue des Coutures St. Gervais 75003, Paris
Reviewed by Prof. Victor D. Sanua

Moise Rahmani, Editor of LOS MUESTROS, starts his book with the following poignant statement, "I am also a refugee. The world talks about Palestinian refugees and feels sorry for them. They are often confined to camps, and are subject to anger and vexations in their host countries, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt ad Jordan." The book has been published at an opportune time when the major stumbling block to peace between Israel and the Palestinians is the status of refugees, where there is an insistence on their right to return to their towns and villages now in Israel.

"Prison Camps"

After giving a general historical overview of the riots, expropriations and killings which led to the forced or voluntary departure of Jews from Arab countries, Rahmani provides some details of the physical and psychological pain, with sadistic features, incurred by Jews from Egypt in such internment camps and imprisonments in places such as El Tor, the Barrages, Tourah, Abou Zaabal, Huckstep, etc. and particularly following the Sinai Campaign of 1956.

"Jews of Iraq and other Countries"

Besides the chapter on Egypt, he includes shorter reports on the Exodus of Jews from Algeria, Aden, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen. The situation of Jews in Iraq was worse than in other Arab countries. Hundreds were killed followed by looting of Jewish assets.

On January 27, 1969, fourteen persons, who included 9 Jews, were hanged in public places in Baghdad. The reason given for their execution was that they were spies. Jewish organizations in the US, like the American Jewish Committee, have plenty of information in their archives. Rahmani has included short statements of Jews of Egypt where they recount their ill treatment. He includes published material on the statement made by Arab authorities to justify their attack on Jews. Rahmani provides an estimate of Jews living in Arab counties in 1948, about 940,800, but that in 2002, it declined to 4,260. Morocco and Tunisia are the only countries that still have sizeable Jewish communities. The other Arab countries have a combined number of approximately 300 aged Jews.

In spite of the numerous vicissitudes encountered, there is no expression of anger or hatred on the part of many victims. What they seem to regret is the fact that some were not able to take their pictures and stamp collections out. (The editor was able to get both of them out) Rahmani ends up his book with a dream in which he sees Israel and Arab countries closely associated with the ability to go from Morocco to Teheran, when it would be possible to invite Arab youth to dance the Hora with Jewish youth. However he wakes up from his dream and hears from the media about the continuous violence. He hopes that some day, the realization of such a dream would be possible. *Inch'Allah.*

One of the limitations of the book is that it was written in French which limits its readership. We hope that the book will be translated into English and thus make the information available around the world. Academic historians have published books on the dispersion of Jews from Egypt around the world, but the great value of the book is that it was written by Rahmani, himself a Jew from Egypt, who was forced to leave with his family in 1956.

Book on Egyptian Jewry In Israel

Levana Zamir, Succes et contributions des Juifs d'Egypte en Israel pendant 50 ans, 1948/1998, published in Hebrew (2002) by The Association of Jews in Israel, 56 Pinsker, Tel Aviv.

Mrs. Zamir refers to the early difficulties of Jews from Egypt living in Ma'abarot" without the usual amenities and many of those "children of Ma'abarot" have made large contribution to the State of Israel, and remember these early hardships with humor. As a final remark, delinquency of Jews from Egypt was Zero.

The book is the result of intensive research conducted by the author, which shows that the Egyptian *Aliya* not only succeeded, but excelled in its contribution to Israel.

The book provides a general overview of the life of Jews in Egypt over a period of 2500 years. In spite of their small number, they contributed greatly to the prosperity of Egypt until the 1950's when they were expelled or left on their own because of the hostility which developed after each Arab-Israeli war. Today, Egypt may have about 50 aged Jews. It is estimated that about 35,000 Jews from Egypt went to Israel. They reached a high level of achievement in every domain, except in politics.

The following are a selection of names and areas of competence by Jews from Egypt who made outstanding contributions to Israel.

Aeronautics

David Harari, invented the "pilotless plane," Ovadia Harari, directed the construction of the "Lavi" plane. Other High-Tech individuals are cited in the book.

Finance

Victor Medina, General Director of the "Hamizrahi Bank." Hundreds of high echelon directors are heading banks. During the 50's and 60's, one third of Israel's bank employees were born in Egypt.

The Israeli Defense Force

It is obvious that it is not possible at this time to provide names of officers. On the other hand, the book includes the exploits of individuals who worked as spies behind the lines, like Yollande Harmor De Botton, whose well-known son, Gilbert de-Botton produced a film on the contributions by his mother during the war of Independence.

It was a Jew from Egypt who was able to hear and understand the conversation between Nasser and the King of Jordan, Hussein, which helped Israel. The book also mentions Elie Cohen who operated as a spy in Syria until he was hanged in Damascus in 1965.

Nuclear Physics and Astronomy

Prof. Yuval Ne'eman and Prof. Isaac Shaveh (Shueka), an expert in atomic physics, is well known around the world; Dr. Nissim Vidal, the astronomer, founder of the National Telescope at "Mitzpe Ramon" in the Negev, was a pioneer in the discovery of "Black Holes."

Jurisprudence
Ruth Ben Israel (sister of Prof Yuval Ne'eman) received the Israeli prize for Justice in 2002. In the 1950's a number of immigrants who studied law in Egypt became well known lawyers in Israel. They are: Sa'ad Malki, Shlomo Cohen-Sidon, a member of the Knesset, Dr. Abraham Matalon, President of the Institute of the Hebrew Language in Israel and Toussia-Cohen. Several were appointed as judges. Moshe Taranto, worked for the recognition of the rights of Jewish prisoners in Egypt because of their "Zionism." Other judges include Meir Douwek (Naharya), Leon Nissim (Carmel) and Abraham Sasson.

Business and Hotel Management
Elie Papouchado built an international empire of hotels. Maurice Cassouto owns a chain of hotels in Jerusalem and the Dead Sea. Yossef Weizman, opened a chain of large stores for the sale of men's and women's clothing. Other names include Maurice Benine (real estate), Zaki Harari, (Crystals), David Amiel (construction in Hedera).

Industry, Airlines and Shipping
Yehezkiel Peron built the first factory for the vaccination of trees and telegraphic poles. Arieh Ohanna built a factory for meat products. Yossef Politi, was for a long time, an airline pilot for El Al. Others connected with aviation include: Yossef Boussi and Yossi Levy (later a Mayor of Eilat). In shipping, Shlomo Castel and Eliahu Brakha (involved with Mossad and stationed in a number of countries), who was director of the ZIM Line and later EL YAM line in Haifa.

Agriculture
Mordechai Revah, Head of Forestry, and Roni James, who produced some of Israel's best known wine.

Medicine
Dr. Eliezer Avie , Dr. Rodolphe Zacks, Dr. Willy Zachs, ophthalmologists. Heads of Medical departments. Prof Salama Rafael, (Orthopedist), Dr. Ron Levy (Gynecology), Dr. Maurice Mosseri (Cardiology), Dr. Bar-Ziv (Radiology), Dr. Arie Schlosberg (Psychiatry), Dr. Ron Levy (Psychology), Dr. Michael Sa'adi (Hypnosis), Prof. Albert Hefez (Psychiatry), Dr. Nathan Feldman (Dentistry), etc.

Diplomacy
Because of their knowledge of several languages, many Jews from Egypt served as ambassadors. These included Ephram Doubek, David Sultan, Emile Najar, Haim Harari, Isaac Ben Yaacov, Jacques Brakha, Asher Hakeni and Arieh Amir.

Sports
Elie Amiel, Head of the basketball team at the Helsinki Olympics. Other players, Marcel Hefetz, Freddy Cohen, Roudi Weinberg, Sami Hodara, Haim Gourmezano, Victor Sasson, Avraham Hemmo and in football, Avi Cohen.

Motion Pictures, TV and Radio
Moshe Mizrahi received an Oscar, Yossef Bar-El, Director of Israeli Televison and Radio and actress Lilit Naguar in Movies, TV and Theater.

Academia, Literature, Journalism and The Arts
Haim Aharoni (Technion), Rachel Levy and Jimmy Weinblatt (Ben Gurion), Isaac Levy (Hebrew University), Ada Aharoni, Ronit Matalon (writers), Samy Grinshpann, Ovadia Danon, Dr. Maurice Zaks (Journalism)

Politics
This is the only domain where the Jews from Egypt have not been very active. However, a number of them became Mayors of major towns.

The preface of the book was written by **Mr. Natann Vilnayi**, Minister of Culture, Sciences and Sports of Israel.

Un Monologue Egypto-Franco-Arabe

(très possible dans les années quarante jusqu'aux soixante) Ecoute ma chère, hier jeudi, c'était le jour de la (guassala), j'ai cuisiné la (mégadara et la chakchouka) et j'ai préparé une (saneya) de (batata helwa), j'ai envoyé Attayat, notre (méhabéla) de bonne chez le boulanger Grec Panayoti pour rôtir la batata à une 1/2 piastre. Aujourd'hui j'ai invité pour le dîner ma soeur Marie avec son mari Jacques (yakhti alé). J'ai demandé à ma fille de venir m'aider. Je lui ai dit "Montre moi ta (chatara) et prépare une bonne (taeléya) pour la (molokhéya)." Sa réponse: "Pour la (mélokhlokh) je suis bien prête à tout.Est-ce que mon cousin Daniel le (ghalabawi) sera aussi?" Je lui ai répondu Non, (mén ghér char ménnhou) il est invité chez la famille de sa femme Ginette, la Niçoise (asli) (Basse), ma fille a pris des ails et a commencé à les (faaasser). Elle a pris le (hon) et a bien (faaassé) les ails. Elle a allumé (le wabour el nafass) et pris la poêle, tu sais, (yaani) la (maala), elle a mis de l'huile, quand l'huile a chauffé, elle a ajouté les ails. Entretemps, moi j'ai (attafé) la mélokhya que j'ai bien hachée ensuite avec le (ouli maaya) tu sais avec quoi.

Quand l'eau a bouilli dans la grande casserole, nous avons ajouté la (taeléya) avec la Melokhya hachée ainsi que la viande préparée à l'avance. Tout en épluchant les oignons, on entendait Leila Mourad, (ya omri aléha) à la radio chanter (balach tébousni fi enéya ..), et les larmes coulaient en flots, je ne sais pas si c'est à cause de Leila ou des oignons. Juste au beau milieu on a tapé fort à la porte, j'ai sursauté, toute éffrayée (stour ya khouwati). C'était le fils de la voisine d!en haut, non pas la chélékhténéya, mais Gracia la spanyolélya. Pépo, (el afrit el azraa) qui vient demander de leur prêter un kilo de farine pour que sa mère prépare du (kaak). Je le lui ai donné, tout en étant sûre que je ne reverrai jamais cette farine...

Bien sûr que ce n'est pas (kéfaya) avec la mélokhya, il fallait aussi préparer le riz, cuisiner des pommes (sefrito) du poisson (charmoula). Yaani

un vrai dîner du Chabat. J'ai pris des raisins, je les ai bien (affassé) et voilà un bon vin pour le Kidouch. Ma fille, (smalla aléha), a mis de l'ordre dans la cuisine. Elle a rangé le tout dans la (namléya). Elle a (sayaé) la (fassaha). Moi j'ai préparé la table à la salle à manger. A midi mon mari est rentré du travail après le déjeuner il a pris son journal préféré "Le Miroir des Sports" de Paris, tout en fumant sa cigarette et sirotant son café (yéra'wé'rasso). Un grand vacarme l'a fait sursauter: "(Di mich Icha di) on ne peut pas avoir du calme dans cette maison." C'était les enfants du quartier qui dégringolaient les escaliers. Puis il s'adresse à moi: "Appelle le (bawab el méhabéb) dis lui d'éloigner ces enfants, (wé yetlahlah chéwaya)"

Le soir le repas était un vrai succès. Ma soeur Marie Ida dit:"Ça fait bien longtemps qu'on n'a pas mangé une si excellente mélokhéya, (yeslam idéki wé sofra dayman)" Je lui ai répondu: "(Damèt Hayatek) mais tous les honneurs c'est à ma fille." Ma soeur Marie: "(Khamsa aléha chatra)." Même le mari de ma soeur, un vrai (khawaga) (kanèt nafssou maftouha awi) a mangé, sans le mauvais oeil, 2 grands plats, mais vraiment 2 grandes assiettes de mélokhéya avec beaucoup, mais beaucoup, je n'éxagère pas, de riz, sans parler les deux gros poissons charmoula (sahéten ala albou), Pour terminer on a mangé du (khochaf) (la batata hélwa) et une bonne (ahwa mazbouta).

(Wé kol sana wentou tayébin).

Submitted by **Ted Nahmias**
London

Egyptian Idioms

We need to distinguish between two distinctively Arabic sounds:

> stands for a "glottal stop" - a kind of edge to the voice preceding a vowel, In English this is heard only when a sentence begins with a vowel, or in very emphatic speech: ">I >am >angry!"

< corresponds to no letter in the English alphabet, but can be approximated when one passes softly from a prolonged 'a' to a prolonged 'e' - aaaeee.

Character traits

Sometimes described as qualities of blood:

- *dammu barid* = his blood is cold = he is insensitive, shameless
- *dammu khafeef* = his blood is light = He is congenial (French "sympathique")
- *dammu ti>eel* = his blood is heavy = he is uncongenial ("antipathique")
- *dammu zayy il-ba>* = his blood is like [that of] a louse = he is uncongenial

In classical Arabic, congeniality and uncongeniality are strikingly expressed in terms of light or heavy shadow, as if even the shadow a person casts can be a burden!

On ineffectiveness:

- *<amil zayyi far>a<it loz = he* is as effective as the sound of an almond being cracked.
- *<addu l-bahri wi rigi<u <atshanin = they* crossed the river and came back thirsty.
- *tili< min il-moolid bila hummus* = he came out of the festival without chickpeas.
- *>eh illi fahhim il-himeer >akl il ganzabeel = how* were donkeys taught to eat ginger?
- *huwwa dayman shayil da>ni gheru* = he always wears someone else's beard.
- *taftaf-ha wi lahas-ha tani* = he spat it out then licked it back.
- *ga yikahhalha <amaha* = he came to paint [the eye] with kohl and blinded it.
- *bab in-naggar mikhalla< = the* carpenter's door is off the hinge (compare the Scottish saying: "The cobbler's bairns are down at heel")

On cowardice and overcautiousness:

- *huwwa ykhaf ma yikhtisheesh* = he knows fear but not shame.
- *min khofuh bi yimshi ganb il-het* = he is so fearful he walks close to the wall.
- *mahshi filoos wi ykhaf yikhra la ygoo<* = he is stuffed with money but is afraid even to shit in case he should go hungry

On greed:

- *zayy il-munshar tali< yakul nazil yakul* like a saw: he eats on the way up and eats on the way down.

Letters

"Cher ami, j'ai recu votre newsletter 6 a Geneve et j'ai eu le plaisir de la lire entierement sur l'avion de Geneve a New York. Les article que vous avez inclus sont tres interessants et nous ramenent aux heureux jours que nous avons connus, malgres les expulsions de 1956.

Continuez votre bon travail. Pour vous remercier, je vous envoie un cheque de $230.00 pour vous aider et remercier."

Elie Sion
Geneve, Suisse

For the benefit of those who may have forgotten French, we decided to translate it into English:

"Dear Friend, I received your newsletter No. 6 in Geneva and I had the pleasure to read it in its entirety on the plane from Geneva to New York. The articles, which you have included, are very interesting and bring us back to the happy days that we have known despite the expulsion of 1956.

Continue with your good work. To thank you, I am sending a check of $230.00 to help you and thank you."

Elie Sion
Geneva, Switzerland

Mr. Levana Zamir sent us a book in Hebrew on the contributions to Israel of Jews born in Egypt. We are presenting a shorter version of her French description of the content of her book with, a selected number of those outstanding Jews. The text is to be found on page 8.

"Je viens de recevoir votre lettre et bulletin No.6 de l'I.A.J.E. que je lis toujours avec interet et aussi avec nostalgie... malgre tout! Cette nostalgie qui ne nous fait pas du tout oublier les hostilites subies en Egypte, mais qui est la preuve de notre reconnaissance a cete belle Egypte que nous avons connue (qui n'existe plus), pour l'education et les qualites qu'elle nous a inculques et qui nous ont permis de reussir dans les pays ou nous nous sommes finalement installes. Je serai heureuse si vous trouverez utile de publier cette lettre et le resume, dans le site-internet de l'A.I.J.E. (http://www.iajegypt.org). Entretemps, je vous envoie toute mon appreciation pour votre assiduite dans le travail important que vous faites et bon succes pour l"Experience Weekend" du 28 Mars. Avec mon plus cordial shalom."

Levana Zamir
Tel Aviv, Israel

"Thank you very much for sending me the recent issue of the Newsletter. I found it very interesting and congratulate you on the results of your efforts.

It struck me that, while many of the correspondents are nostalgic about the Egypt that was; and though the end left so many harsh memories, there is very little bitterness. This is typically Jewish.

If you recall, I mentioned this in NY when I spoke about Jews in general: we pick ourselves up by our shoe strings, as it were, and start again. We have done it so many times in our history. And while this is a positive quality there is, as you Americans say, a flip side to the coin: we forgive our persecutors too quickly. In Jews from Arab countries, this is particularly salient. Yes, they have done a wonderful job of creating a new life for themselves either in Israel or Western countries - Kol Hakavod-but Judaism does not demand us to turn the other cheek.

The world should have been made more aware of what Jews went through - the pogroms and the racism, such as the 1947 amendment to the Companies Law in Egypt that deprived so many Egyptian Jews of their employment because only 15% had Egyptian citizenship. Had we faced the past truthfully, all of us, maybe we would not have been prey to so many illusions about the future and for which we are now paying dearly."

Malka Hillel
Israel

"I was thrilled and impressed at the receipt of your prodigious newsletter, prepared with so much care and attention. Congratulations on a tremendous effort."

Larry Behar
Florida

"I am very grateful for the 6 issues of the newsletter you sent us together with the articles. It is very important that the history of the Jews from Egypt should be represented here... If I was informed of the publication of the Newsletter, I would have contacted you sooner,... Anyway, we have found each other, and I will be looking forward to receiving future issues. Thank you again!"

Batya Malik
Central Library
Bar Ilan University, Israel

"Thank you for your e-mail... I will arrange a day or evening to meet with you... I am very much interested to let the world know what the Egyptian Jews had to go through... Specially in today's environment whereby we are the Jews being criticized by the world... We were submitted to more suffering than the Palestinians living in Egypt during Nasser... the details will speak by themselves... All the best to you Victor and we will be getting together hopefully soon."

Albert Hefez
New York

"Thank you for remembering to send the Newsletter. I am perusing, the paper and I can only hear all the "douceur de vivre" that most of the Egyptian Jews from previous generations left behind. As for me, I have to agree with Mr. Maurice Cohen from Paris, that Egypt was not as kind to some of us from my generation. I was born in 1934 and was a young girl when Egypt knew all the upheavals and turmoils of the Revolution with Nasser. Jews were not respected or even tolerated as in my father's times. I never had a passport, was often insulted and humiliated and called "dirty-Jew" or "Ibn el Kalb." Just before my leaving Egypt in 1956/57, I remember the trucks filled with Egyptian soldiers with their bayonettes aiming toward the balconies of our Egyptian apartment, asking our "Super" whether there were Jews living in this building.

I don't carry the bitterness that Mr. Cohen expresses in his letter, because I believe that Jews were truly happy and respected and sought after during my father's times and my grandfather's days. That is what politics are: same country, different leaders, different values, and pouf.. things are 180 degrees different. For myself, I remember some good things about Egypt that have nothing to do with people. It has to do with nature, the sea, the sand, the smell of the salt water on my skin, the sunsets, the exotic flowers, and the kind of generous Egyptian "Bawab" by the name of Erkabi, who saved our lives and never pointed to us when the soldiers were asking questions... Thank you again for waking me up to what I consider a great endeavor on your part."

Debbie Bank
New York

"Thank you for the newsletter and other material you sent me. Incidentally my brother ***Johnny Dichy*** *(living in Switzerland) appears in one of the pictures in the newsletter. I am a volunteer at the Beth Hatefutsoth (Museum of the Jewish Diaspora) in the research dept. Specifically I am researching the origin of Sephardic (oriental) names where I am using my knowledge of French, English, Arabic,*

some Italian, some Spanish and some Portuguese. Until now most of the names in the database of Beth Hatefutsoth (and also in the database of YIVO in the U.S.) are of Ashkenazi origin and only a few are Sephardic names. Therefore it is so important to put on record oriental typical names which are slowly disappearing (at least in Israel) because of the tendency to adopt Hebrew names. At the request of my good friend, the late ***Sami Chemtov,*** *I looked for material of interest to Jews from Egypt. Unfortunately, apart from two box files of pictures, there is nothing really important. I could not find even an old "Who's Who" or a "bottin" of Jews from Egypt to help me in my research. Indeed I would like to be in touch and looking forward hearing from you, Shalom,"*

Edgar Dichy
Israel

Merci, cher Victor

"Pour le NEWSLETTER no. 6, toujours très intéressant et très fourni en articles et en "contacts" de toutes sortes qui constitue un lien très puissant entre tous nos compatriotes et coreligionaires d'Egypte. Ne te tracasses pas pour les photos, je sais que tu es très occupé et je ne voudrais en rien t'occasionner une perte de temps. Merci quand même d'y avoir pensé. Pour ce qui est du ***Jewish Camping Club****, je me suis trompé. Ce n'est pas au Midan Tewfik que nous nous étions transférés, après Abdine, mais au Midan Moustapha Kamel. Dans ce Midan, il y avait le photographe bien connu WEINBERG, la grande Papeterie BUCCELATI, le magasin d'habillement de sport NEW LONDON HOUSE où les scouts de la Maccabi commandaient leur uniforme. Nous y avons été à peine quelques mois au deuxième ou troisième étage dans un appartement qui se trouvait dans ce Midan mais nous étions hébérgés chez une autre organisation qui occupait cet appartement et dont j'ai oublié le nom. Par la suite, nous avons loué un appartement qui appartenait à la LICRA à la rue Kasr El Nil, situé à une vingtaine de mètres avant l'immeuble IMMOBILIA, en face de SAULT où nous allions danser et il y avait le chanteur Marco BABEN qui commençait la soirée avec "Oh' Suzanna" et la finissait avec "JAIME LES BANANES" ainsi que "Oh! Joseph, Joseph, don't you make your mind up? It's time I knew just how I stand with you! My mother has a fear wedding bells I'll never (and so on)" Nous y sommes restés Jusquau mois de Septembre 1939 c'est-à-dire au début de la guerre. Je suis toujours très heureux de t'écrire et de te lire même en anglais. La publication de mon livre par la ASPCJE aura lieu vers Septembre/Octobre (incha'allah)et, naturellement, je me ferai un plaisir de t'en envoyer un exemplaire. Amicales salutations."*

Albert Pardo
Marseilles, France

*JCC founded by Prof. Victor Sanua and committee in 1936.

Mon cher Victor,

"Je te remercie infiniment pour les photos que tu m'as adresseés par scanner. Tu ne peux pas savoir combien j'ai été ému et remué par ces souvenirs qui remontent à plus de soixante années et à voir mes chers amis du ***Jewish Camping Club,*** *c'est-à-dire toi, Isy, Michel et les autres. Est-ce que tu sais ce que Isy est devenu ? Je suis triste à chaque fois que je pense à lui.*

Concernant le 7ème Bulletin que tu es entrain de préparer, je crains que tu aies été influencé par les RARES personnes qui ne veulent se rappeler de l'Egypte que les derniers moments avant qu'ils quittent ce pays et où ils ont été malmenés par quelques "mauvais." Egyptiens qui ont profité de leur désarroi. D'autre part, il ne faut pas rendre responsable TOUS les Egypt-iens (avec qui nous avons passé une vie formidable) des agissements des autorités gouvernementales de l'époque à la suite de l'Affaire de Suez. Dans le prochain Bulletin de l'ASPCJE de Paris qui sortira en Juin, il y aura un avis de souscription pour mon livre dont la publication est prévue pour Septembre/Octobre. Incha 'allah.

Je termine ici, par te remercier encore une fois chaleureusement pour le grand plaisir que tu m'as occasionné avec ces photos si émouvantes. Bien que cela ne se fait pas aux USA, je t'embrasse quand même affectueusement."

Albert Pardo
Marseilles, France

I was pleased to receive your I.A.J.E. Newsletter of 2002 volume 4, and perused its contents with much interest. Herewith my check for $50 for renewal of my membership and subscription.

I take this opportunity to inform you of the following two new publications.

1) "The Jewish Community of the Sudan in the 19th and 20th Centuries" by Eli S. Malka (myself), to be published by Ben Zvi Institute of Jerusalem in HEBREW. Ben Zvi Institute had assigned to me the writing of this subject for their 20 volume project to publish in Hebrew a series of books on the "Oriental Jewish Communities in the 19th and 20th centuries which include Egypt, Sudan, Turkey, Greece, Tunisia, Morocco, Bulgaria etc.

Ben Zvi Institute have just informed me that they have decided to append my Sudan Chapter to the volume of Egypt, which other scholars are writing. I believe this volume of Egypt & The Sudan will not appear before sometime in 2003. For your information I enclose the list of contents and illustrations of my above book.

2) "Sephardic Genealogy; Discovering your Sephardic Ancestors and Their World," by Sudan born Dr. Jeffrey S. Malka, grandson of the chief Rabbi of The Sudan. As the editor of Avoteyno publishers write in their announcement, it is an excellent guide to doing Sephardic Geneology by the person who was the developer of Sefardic SIG Internet site for Jewish Gen. This book will be ready in the next 2 to 3 months and orders for it will be taken by Avoteyno at their website: www.avoteyno.inc."

Eli S. Malka
New York

"I am close to get married and both our families come from Egypt. However, the newer generation have been "westernized" and for us it is very difficult to find the authentic Egyptian tune for the wedding and we would love to go back to our roots and traditions. If you could help me by giving me names of famous Egyptian chazzanim so I can look for them on the internet or a way to find a source of this Jewish Egyptian liturgical music, so we can have a truly Jewish Egyptian wedding."

Joseph Mory & Rachel Sabbagh
Guatemala City

"Thank you so much for sending me the latest edition of the IAJE newsletter. I enjoyed reading it immensely, particularly the article on Jacques Maleh by his son Maurice who happens to be my very best friend's brother - Lys Maleh Goldstein. Our special friendship spans over 55 years. I feel a sense of pride in that it was my initiative to have put them both in touch with IAJE in London. I am sure you can relate to the satisfaction which comes from planting a seed. Keep up the good work. Indeed you touch so many lives. Enclosed is a check for my membership renewal. Warm regards."

Viviane Silver
Canada

"My name is Patrick Hummel and I live currently in France (Paris). I am looking for my ancestors and I've discovered that, the father of my grandfather, Isaac Mizrahi, was born in Izmir in 1879 and died in Lausanne (Switzerland) in 1960. As he has spent most of his life in Egypt (Cairo), I would like to know if, by chance, you can find any information concerning him and his ancestors. I should add he was married with Marie Toriel that was born in 1889 in Mansourah (Egypt) and died in 1969 in Lausanne too. They had (in Egypt) 3 children: Max, Albert and Jackie Mizrahi. Thanks by advance for any information we can share."

Patrick Hummel
Paris

Why do so many Jews of Egypt have Italian Citizenship?

In my readings I found the name of *Matthias B. Lehmann*, Professor at the Free University of Berlin, who specializes in Jews in the Ottoman Empire. Since I was born as an Italian I always wondered how my family got the Italian citizenship? I wrote to Professor Lehmann who is now on sabbatical at Indiana University and he e-mailed the following letter which explains two ways that Jews of Egypt obtained their Italian citizenship. My next effort is to study which of the two alternatives applies to my family!

"Thank you so much for your letter and the information about the Int'l Association of Jews from Egypt which I found very interesting. I very much hope to be in touch in the future and hear about your activities. As to your question about the Italian citizenship of your family, there are several possible explanations, of course. To begin with, Jewish merchants from Livorno (Leghorn) settled in various parts of the Ottoman Empire, including Egypt, during the 18th century and established a network of business relations between Italy, the major cities of the Ottoman Balkans and Turkey, and cities in the Arabic provinces of the empire such as Aleppo or Alexandria. In addition, in the Ottoman Empire during the 18th and 19th centuries, many Jews (and members of other minorities) acquired the citizenship of European countries (in particular France, later England, and of various Italian states) and were placed under the special protection of the foreign consulates in Ottoman cities. Some of these Jews might have had family ties to European communities (in the case of the Sanua family, probably to Livorno), but others had no direct ties to Europe whatsoever and had lived for generations in the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire granted such foreign citizens, under so-called "capitulations" it signed with various European states, certain privileges such as fiscal exemptions or placing them under the jurisdiction of their respective Consulate rather than Ottoman jurisdiction, etc. Jews (and Christians) who were needed by the Europeans as intermediaries for their business activities in the Ottoman Empire heavily relied on the services of such Ottoman Jews (or Christians) whom they granted consular protection or formal citizenship.

Thus, whether the Sanua family had originally moved from Italy to Turkey and then on to Egypt or had lived in the Ottoman Empire all along, they probably would have acquired Italian citizenship under the rule of these "capitulations" and retained Italian citizenship from then on. The close relation between Sephardic Jews in Italy, the Ottoman Balkans, and the Arabic provinces of the Ottoman Empire (Egypt in particular) to me always seems one of the most interesting aspects of Ottoman Jewish history. If I find out something more I will be happy to let you know. So much for today. I look forward to hearing from you."

A Description of the Arrests of Young Jewish Men at the Outbreak of Hostilities between Egypt and Israel on May 15, 1948

by
Prof. Victor D. Sanua

The following text was derived from an audiotape used in an interview in French with an Israeli, Egyptian born. He reports on the chaotic moments of their arrest and proper actions taken by the internees when one of the members of the group learned about the death of his father:

"We were sent first to the Jewish schools at Abbassiah (suburb of Cairo) where we stayed for 2-3 days. During those days, scores of our friends of the

youth movement, Jewish and non-Jewish, were brought in bus loads to the schools. There were some rudimentary beds, boards of wood on trestles of iron. The luckier ones were those who came earlier since they had some place to sit and lie down. The others, carrying their bundles or small luggage, walked around to find a place to sit on the floor with their backs against the wall.

Every few hours there were arrivals of trucks from different police stations and from the central railway station with their human cargo. In the hallways, police called up names to deliver luggage. They were mostly Cohen, Levy, Azouli, Harari, Sasson, Bensimon, etc. Suddenly, they call me (identity withheld) without mentioning my first name. I go towards the door and gave my name. They gave me a suitcase which was not mine. I opened it and it took me some time to realize that this suitcase belonged to my brother. The family had time to pick up a few clothes and toiletries for him. An hour later, my younger brother, came sad-looking. My other brother was arrested 15 days later, and we were all interned with some of the notables of the Jewish community. We tried to organize ourselves as best we could while waiting for events to develop. No one had any idea about our final destination. One sure thing was that we would not remain in Cairo in the school buildings. There were too many of us, more than a thousand. The only thing we knew was that there was a war going on between Egypt and Israel. We had some ideas as to where the fighting was going on, but no notion of the development of the events. We had no contacts either with family, press or even with the street. Pardon me, we had some vague contact with the street. Parents calling under the windows asking if "X" or "Y" was with us, and we likewise worried about the fate of absent friends living in different parts of the city. In such conditions, that someone calls from the street if Mr. X. was with us. When we provided an affirmative answer, we were asked to inform him that his father, who was very sick at the time of the arrest, had died and that he had to say "Kaddish" (prayer for the departed) and go into mourning. We were taken aback as we were not in normal conditions. At this time we got in touch with a young man from the Cairo Jewish Quarter who was better versed in the religious rituals. While Mr. X. was in the middle of the room with his head covered, some of the elders recited Kaddish, and with our full heart we repeated after him. When one of the elders requested a hardboiled egg, everyone went looking for one. After five minutes of search, someone returned with a hard-boiled egg. It seems that a good mother had the bright ideas to include an egg in a package of food with the clothing hastily put together, bundled with a string.

Because Mr. X. was in shock at the news of his father's death, he did not want to eat the egg, but he was urged to do so, following the tradition. The man who carried on with the ceremony added the "Kryah" (traditional tearing of the collar of the shirt), which is to remind Jews of the destruction of the Temple and the mourning thereafter. Mr. X. was asked to wash his face and was told to forego the mourning ritual of sitting "Shiva" because of the conditions we were in. This is how the mourning ceremony was carried out in the Jewish school of Abbassiah with all the internees present."

International Research Conference on "The Jews of Egypt in Modern Times"

To take place on 5-7 January, 2004

Organized by: Interdepartmental Division of Jewish Studies and The Institute for Research on Sephardi and Oriental Jewry, Faculty of Jewish Studies, Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel.

The goal of the conference is to identify and discuss new issues and new directions in the research of Egyptian Jewry in modem times, from a broad spectrum of perspectives and research methodologies.

The steering committee of the conference includes: Dr. Nahem Ilan (co-ordinator), Prof. Ariel Toaff, Dr. Yaron Harl, Dr. Bracha Yaniv, Dr. Zvi Zohar.

Correspondence relating to the conference, inquiries etc, should be addressed to Dr. Nahem Ilan, The Interdepartmental Division of Jewish Studies, Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel 52900, or via e-mail to namilan @zahav.net.il

Available Articles on Jews from Egypt

Sanua, V. *A Jewish Childhood in Cairo*, In **Fields of Offerings, Studies in Honor of Raphael Patai**, edited by V.Sanua. Fairleigh Dickenson University Press, 1983

Sanua, V. (1994). *Emigration of Sephardic Jews from Egypt after the Arab-Israeli wars*. Proceedings of the Eleventh World Congress of Jewish Studies, Vol.III. World Union of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem.

Sanua, V. (1994). *The Vanished World of Egyptian Jewry*. **Judaism**, Vol.43, Spring 1994.

If any of our members would like to get copies of these papers, please send a request to the editor and they will be mailed with our compliments.

A Fishy Story

In the earlier newsletter we included a story about the names of several fish in Arabic. One of our readers wanted to know the significance of some words and the following are the definitions provided by Mr. Nahmias, London, who originally sent us the story.

Bassaria: Greek psaria = poisson fish in general.

Ballamita: Greek Palamita = another fish can't tell you which one.
Bakala: Greek and Italian = Morue cod.
Sepia: Greek and Italian = pieuvres octopus.
Akhtabut: sounds like another word for octopus, could be the small ones as opposed to the large ones but am not sure.

With regard to the last part of your e-mail, unfortunately you missed out on one of the funniest bits. The only word that is a fish is TUNA.
Darab Tuna: Darab = to beat together, it means YOU BEAT US.
WAHESHTUNA: WE MISSED YOU.
ANNESS TUNA: you gratified us with your presence.
SHARAF TUNA: You honoured us, so this is a play on words, hope you got it.

International Jewish Genealogy Conference

Features Sephardim

The 23d Annual International Jewish Genealogy Conference, to be held in Washington, D.C. July 20-25, 2003, features an unusually large and excellent program of presentations on Sephardim, as well as other instructive and useful topics for researchers.

The conference program, together with registration information and information about Sefard SIG, may be found at the web site http://www.jewishgenorg/sefardsig. Topics include Sephardim in Jewish History; the Jews of Bulgaria; Greek Jewish Genealogy; Resources in Istanbul; the Jews of Cape Verde; the Jews of Rhodes and Izmir; the Kassin Rabbinic Dynasty, 1540-2002; the Sephardic Legacy in New Mexico: A History of the Crypto-Jews; the Bene Israel Jews of India; The Jews of Iran; the Jews of Ethiopia, and others.

Egyptian Jews in Brazil

Mr. Alain Bigio of Brazil sent us the following letter when we inquired about the status of the Egyptian Jewish community in São Paulo, Brazil. Our understanding is that the Jewish Egyptian community is losing its roots.

"Yes a few years ago we had a BIG dinner party reuniting all the Egyptians that had arrived in Brazil in the fifties and Mr. Claudio Leon (and others) organized it. However that was the last time there was something organized. As I mentioned in my letter to Eli Nahum, the community is not united. In fact I have a published article (in Portuguese) about our Jewish Egyptian unity. In my article I mention the fact that there was a small autochthonous Jewish community in the middle of the 19th century that was reinforced by immigration from Syria, Turkey, Italy, Greece and even eastern Europe.

All these people had their own communities and customs and have not lived long enough together to create a united community. Thus when we arrived in Brazil, those of us who identify with the Halabies join them, others who identify with Ashkenazim join them and so forth, dispersing the community. Of course, also, many interfaith marriages have dispersed the community even more. Surely, I would like to remain in touch."

Alain Bigio
São Paulo, Brazil

Lycée Français du Caire (1933)

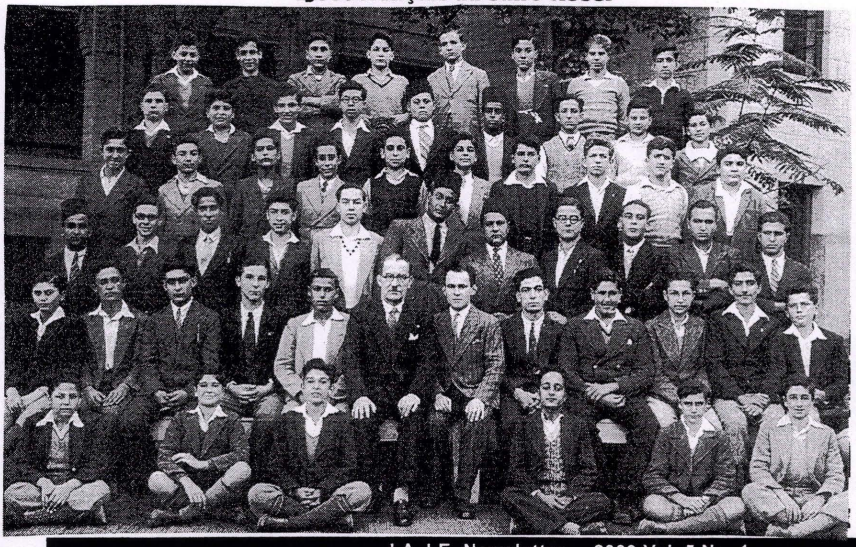


Photo received from Solomon Braunstein, a classmate of the Editor at the American University in Cairo, who now lives in Australia.

Pictured (back row) Solomon Braunstein, Nachman (2nd row) Marcel Pollack, Silberman (3rd row) Albert Babany, Goldstein (4th row) Heuflair, Condilios (5th row) Diamantis, Calamaro, Croyter, Ernest (?), Zuckerman."

Can you identify other students?

"AH! QUE LA VIE ETAIT BELLE ALORS!" (A. OUDIZ)

On Mount Akaba 1946.
Near the Suez Canal.

Having a good time at an outing to Sakkara.
Step pyramids, 1947.

At the beach of Stanley Bay.
Alexandria, 1947.

"ON OUR WAY TO A NEW LIFE!"

Traveling on the SS Saturnia, 1950.
Going to America for a new dream

The new dream realized.
Coney Island Beach Boardwalk, NY, 1950.

I.A.J.E. NEWSLETTER

International Association of Jews from Egypt
Association Internationale des Juifs d'Egypte

8

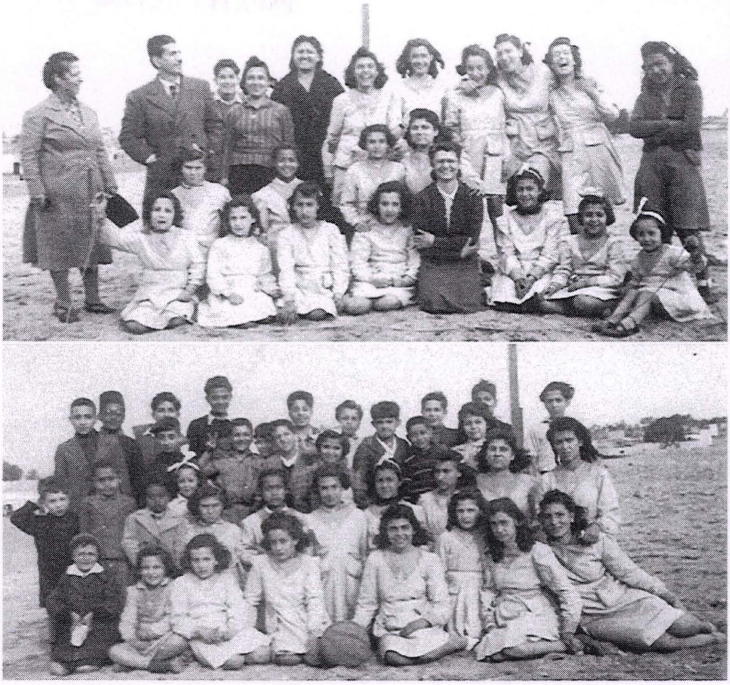
EDITOR: Victor D. Sanua Ph.D. IAJE, 2416 Quentin Road, Brooklyn, NY 11229 2003 Volume 5 No. 2

Editorial

As you may have noticed, the format of the I.A.J.E newsletter has been changed. Except for the printing, it will be entirely prepared under the direction of our skillful assistant, **Steve Dynov**. Another innovation is that IAJE has gone on the World Wide Web (http://www.iajegypt.org). Readers and members can see our various publications and pictures and have the opportunity to interact with us and send us any information they wish to share.

In the past, the policy of the IAJE has been to emphasize the relatively pleasant life that many Jews enjoyed in Egypt, while de-emphasizing, but not forgetting, the trials and tribulations that followed each Arab-Israeli conflict. At the suggestion of our readers, our new policy is to provide equal opportunity for the expression of both positive and negative experiences. In this issue, the new policy is illustrated by the juxtaposition of two book reviews. The first book emphasizes the pleasant life of a young lady in Egypt prior to 1948. The second describes in some detail the hardships that were suffered by a family expelled in 1956. The grandfather of that family had a Tunisian passport, which made them all French citizens and foreigners. We hope that by introducing more varied material, readers and observers will be encouraged to contact the editor and contribute accounts of their own experiences.

Readers will probably recall from a previous editorial the visit we received from **Jimmy Sutton** of Brooklyn, who informed us that his grandmother remembered me when I was a teacher of English and taught at the private **Keroub School** in Cairo, more than sixty years ago! Apparently I made such an impression on his grandmother as a young girl, that she had never forgotten my name after all these years. A few weeks ago when my wife and I were shopping together in Brooklyn, a lady looked at me and asked, "Are you Mr. Sanua?" It turned out to be **Mrs. A. Sutton** herself, the grandmother who had once been my student in Cairo. I immediately went back to my photograph collection of pictures from Egypt and found two of the Keroub School, probably taken around 1940, and both of them appear above. Unfortunately, Mrs. Sutton did not remember the names of any of her classmates when I showed her these pictures. We ask our readers to let us know if they can identify anyone in them. In general, it is very fortunate that in spite of fear of censorship, I was able to pass through the Egyptian customs in the 1950s with hundreds of these photographs, many of them appearing in this and past issues of the IAJE newsletter and now on the photo section of our website.



*Pictures taken in Cairo, Egypt around 1940 of the **Keroub School** on an excursion. My first job after getting my London University Matriculation was to teach English to the girls attending the School. I must confess that I had a tough time with my disciplining them. I was only a few years older, but it was a nice experience. I have enjoyed teaching ever since. I am not in the pictures, I probably took them myself.* ***Could you identify any of the girls and boys in the picture? Please write to the Editor.***

In the course of the past year, numerous conferences have been held in Europe, Canada, and the US on the subject of restitution and

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All funds are to be mailed to:
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Editorial (Continued from Page 1)

reparations for the assets that Jews left behind when they were forced to leave the Arab countries.

The basic purpose of the IAJE newsletter is to bring to attention the historical events prior to and after 1948. As requested in previous editorials, we urge our members and readers to send pictures and stories of their life in Egypt for possible reproduction in our newsletter.

MEETINGS ON BEHALF OF JEWS FROM ARAB COUNTRIES

In the course of the past year, a number of meetings were held in London and New York to discuss the condition of Jews that had to leave or were forced out of their places of birth and left behind their assets. These meetings were arranged under different names. The London conference was held on the 29th. June 2003 and was called, **The Forgotten Refugees – Jews from Arab Lands**, sponsored by the World Jewish Congress, The World Sephardic Congress, and the Board of Deputies of British Jews (BDBJ). Key speakers included **Ron Milo**, Israeli Ambassador to the UK, **Dr. Avi Becker**, Secretary General of the WJC, **Sammy Shammon**, President of the WSC, and **Henry Grunwald** (President BDBJ). One of the purposes of the conference was to increase world attention to the Jewish refugees and to counteract the problem of overwhelming attention paid to Palestinian refugees.

The New York meeting was held as a press conference in front of the United Nations on June 23, 2003 at the Isaiah Wall. It was spearheaded by the **Justice for Jews from Arab Lands,** headed by **Mr. Stanley Urman**, Executive Director of the Center for Middle East Peace and Economic Cooperation. Among the dignitaries were **Leon Levy**, President of the American Sephardi Federation who gave the introduction and opening remarks. Also in attendance were Ambassador **Richard Holbrooke**, Honorary Chair for JJAC, **Malcolm Hoenlein**, Executive Vice-President of the Conference of Major American Jewish Organization. **Prof. Irwin Cotler**, Member of Parliament of the Government of Canada addressed the group. **Ms. Giulia Boukhobza** (Libya), **Maurice Soussa** (Iraq) and **Dr. Victor Sanua** (Egypt) were given an opportunity to present personal testimonies. The **Justice for Jews from Arab Lands** will take the lead role in presenting evidence from a report, **Jews from Arab countries: The case for rights and redress**, prepared by **David Matas** and **Stanley A. Urman** to Congressional hearings that are scheduled to be held, requested by **Senator Ron Wyden** (D.Oregon).

A similar conference, **Jews from Arab Lands: A Forgotten Exodus** was held on November 17 & 18, 2002 in Montreal, Canada, sponsored by the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC). The purpose was to focus on the untold story of the 800,000 Jews forced from their homes in Arab countries around the time of the Arab Israeli Wars. The group is engaged in a worldwide effort to document the losses of Jews forced from Arab lands. The major speakers were **Keith Landy**, CJC National President, **Avi Becker**, Secretary of the World Jewish Congress, and **Irwin Cotler**, Member of the Canadian Parliament.

BOOKS WRITTEN BY NATIVE BORN EGYPTIAN JEWS

We have reviewed two books written by Jews from Egypt because of their importance in reflecting the pleasant life, that came to an end in 1956 when Egypt was attacked by England and France and Jewish families were exiled. The book by **Elizabeth Moustaki**, was brought to our attention by **Mrs. Nelly Ades** of Brooklyn and is about the beautiful days of growing up in Alexandria. The book by **Victor Teboul** chronicles the miseries incurred by the Ben Haim family after their expulsion in 1956 because of the Tunisian passport of the father. Both books may be considered together since they could serve as illustrations of the experiences of thousands of Jews moving on to the road of exile. We believe that many Jews from Egypt could identify with the two stories. Regarding **Moustaki's** book, it is believed that using verbatim a number of excerpts would do more justice to its content. On the other hand, in the case of the **Teboul** book, we will paraphrase some of the major hardships incurred by the family after their expulsion.

The titles of both books are quite meaningful; the first is ***Le Joli Temps avant la Pluie*** (The Beautiful Weather before the Rain) while Teboul's book is ***La Lente Decouverte de l'Etrangete*** (The Slow Discovery of Strangeness). Teboul has problems with his identity. As an 11 year old, he was befuddled to be in the family which spoke French, Italian, Greek, (Greek mother) and Arabic, and learning English in school in a country where Arabic was dominant, and being French because a grandfather had come from Tunisia. All this was quite baffling to his young mind.

Moustaki, Elisabeth - *LE JOLI TEMPS AVANT LA PLUIE* Collection Amicale Alexandrie, Hier Et Aujourd'hui (AAHA), 31, Chemin de Planta, 1996, Cologny, Switzerland.

Moustaki reflects on her early life in Alexandria which was a whirl of good times for a young girl growing to adolescence. The following are the few excerpts from the book, all under appropriate headings, illustrating the pleasant life that the Jews of Egypt had prior to those war events.

ALEXANDRIA AND ITS UNIQUENESS AS A CITY

*Alexandria ad Aegyptum",*comme l'a qualifiee Forster, car disait-il, "elle semble "*accolee a l'Egypte et non a l'interieur d'elle";* et comme l'a decrite Durrell: "*Elle ressemble a un grand paquebot de cristal;, amare a la cote de l'Afrique".* Nous etions ne et nous vivions sur ce long bateau chamarre, microcosme traverse par toutes les civilisations, prêt a prendre son essor vers la planete toute entiere, faisant de nous des citoyens d'un monde apart ou s'enchevetraient toutes les races, toutes les moeurs, tous les langages; avec, en plus, comme pousses vers nous par le vent, ces effluves, ces sons, ces couleurs, toute cette magie de l'Orient, dont nous etions imbibes... Nous avions quelque chose d'intemporel. (p. 9)

EARLY HAPPY CHILD EXPERIENCES

Que la vie etait simple et douce, et le soleil superbe et genereux ! A partir de mi-Avril, quand la chaleur s'installait, mon pere avait l'habitude d'aller prendre un bain de mer, le matin, de tres bonne heure, avant de partir travailler. Parfois sur mes intenses prieres, il acceptait de m'emmener. Plus tard, ma soeur vint aussi; et encore plus tard mon frere, a mesure que nous grandissions....Apres, il nous conduisait pompeusement dans un café desuet tenu par des Grecs,situe non loin de la plage, sur la Corniche, pour y prendre un petit dejeuner bien merite. On nous servait de delicieux petits beignets ronds tous chauds, degoulinants de miel, appeles "*loukoumades"* et une grande tasse de café au lait. (p. 13)

RIVALRY BETWEEN CAIRO AND ALEXANDRIA

A cette époque, les relations entre Cairotes et Alexandrins faisaient vraiment partie du folklore Egyptien. Une sorte de rivalite planait entre les deux villes. Consideree comme la "deuxieme capitale", Alexandrie avait conserve, en outre, son aureole d'ancienne capitale effective de l'Egypte, au passe glorieux. Devenue a present ce grand centre cosmopolite et la ville la plus Europeenne du pays, elle avait acquis une belle reputation de culture et de raffinement. Elle avait aussi le privilege de se trouver sur les bords de la Mediterranee et les Alexandrins avaient tendance a se sentir superieurs aux Cairotes, et a considerer leur sort bien plus enviable que le leur. Mais les Cairotes etaient loin de voir les choses de la meme maniere. Ils etaient, eux, les habitants de la capitale actuelle de l'Egypte, cette immense ville coloree et tapageuse, la plus grande de toute l'Afrique, metropole economique en plein essor, dotee de sites hautement celebres comme ses Pyramides, son Sphinx, sa Citadelle, ses mosquees anciennes, ses musees, sans cesse visites et revisites par des touristes venus du monde entire, fiere aussi de son universite toute neuve qui lui permettait de pretendre a un role culturel dans le pays et meme au-dela des frontieres, parmi les autres nations Arabes. A leurs yeux, nous n'etions que de simples provinciaux et Alexandrie, un lieu de villegiature juste assez agreable pour y passer l'ete. (p. 63)

BOOKS WRITTEN BY NATIVE BORN EGYPTIAN JEWS (Continued from Page 3)

HAVING A GOOD TIME AS AN ADOLESCENT

La "party" avait lieu sur la terrasse qui surplombait la mer, a "Rouchdy", un coin de banlieue, tout proche de "Stanley Bay". C'etait, en effet, l'anniversaire du garcon qui l'avait organisee, un certain Roger. L'hotel apppartenait a ses parents et ceux-ci avaient mis a la disposition de leur fils ce qu'ils appelaient le "roof garden" qui servait habituellement de dancing. Il y avait donc toute la structure necessaire pour realiser une fete dansante dans les meilleures conditions, electrophone, disque, bar, buffet, et plusieurs serviteurs indigenes en pleine activite. (p. 96)

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Le premier ministre Egyptien, Ahmed Maher, qui avait succede a Nahas, estima a bon escient qu'il etait essentiel pour l'Egypte fut presente a cette manifestation (Conference a San Francisco pour etablir la Charte des Nations Unies). Le 24 Fevrier, 1945, il annonca au Parlement son intention de declarer la guerre a l'Allemagne et au Japon; mais cette declaration declencha des reactions brutales et il fut aussitot assassine. Son successeur Nokrachi Pacha, sut se montrer beaucoup plus diplomate; Il expliqua patienment que cette declaration de guerre n'etait qu'une formalite sans consequence, uniquement destinee a permetrre a l'Egypte d'assister a la conference de San Francisco, laquelle etait d'une extreme importance pour l'avenir du pays et pour sa future situation dans le monde politique. Il reussit ainsi a la faire accepter et a rendre effective. (p. 115)

SEXUAL MORES OF THE DAY

Mais, le plus souvent, j'avais besoin de le calmer, de l'empecher de trop s'enhardir dans ses effusions. Les moeurs etaient tres rigides en ce temps-la, en Egypte, pour les filles de "bonne famille", engoncee dans les principes qu'on leur avait inculques. Les garcons, en general, les admettaient for bien et s'efforcaient scrupuleusement de ne pas depasser le seuil de "l'irreparable", a moindre d'y etre encourage. Il etait d'ailleurs de traditions pour les adolescents travaille par leur sexualite aillent se defouler dans les maisons closes que leur peres leur indiquaient complaisamment afin qu'ils ne s'aventurent pas dans des lieux peu recommendables ; et il nous arrivait parfoi, quand l'un de nos camarades ou amis ouvrait son porte-feuille de voir apparaitre, a son grand embarras, un petit bout de papier argente qui enveloppait les preservatifs de l'epoque. (p. 118)

LACK OF CONCERN FOR THE MISERY SURROUNDING THE EUROPEANS

...parfois poignant , avec tous ces mendiants haves deguenilles qui trainaient, certain manchots ou aveugles, paralyses ou difformes, des femmes portant a bout de bras des enfants d'une salete inimaginable , les yeux couverts de mouches, quelles tendaient vers les passants comme un ultime moyen d'exiter leur pitie. C'est malheureux a dire, pour un grand nombre de gens, meme parmi ceux qui se laissaient flechir,qui compatissaient, toutes ces scenes d'une cruautes a peine descriptible, cette detresse evidente faisait tous simplement partie de la vie quotidienne d'Alexandrie, au meme titre que la chaleur, les insectes, et autres inconvenients. Aucun sursaut de conscience ne venait les secouer. Les actions sociales et humanitaires, entreprises par les communautes Europeennes, ne s'adressaient qu'a leur propres membres plus defavorises. Meme parmi les Egyptiens aises, personne ne se penchait sur le cas de ces malheureux. (p. 131)

THE END OF THIS BEAUTIFUL LIFE AND DISPERSION

"C'est vrai que c'est difficile!". Brusquement, chacun de nous avait une nationalite propre qui le propulsait vers une destination aleatoire ou specifique. C'etait insense. Nous n'avions plus rien de commun que nos souvenirs. Nos vies s'etiraient sur des routes paralleles, disseminees un peu partout sur le globe terrestre. Les enfants d'Alexandrie etaient des etrangers les uns pour les autres. Le hazard seul les avait reunis; un autre hazard les separait. Mais nous sentions qu'il y avait quelque chose d'immuable dans les liens qui nous unissaient, que nous continuerions a nous reconnaitre partout dans le monde a cause de tout ce que nous avions vecu ensemble, a cause des saveurs, des odeurs, des joies que nous avions partagees, a cause du soleil dont nous conserverions en nous la chaleur, a cause de l'originalite de cette existence ou residaient tant de complexites, tant de mélanges qui donneraient toujours a nos vies un eclairage, une perspective particuliere... Nous savions surtout que, malgre nos differences, nous etions tous un peu pareils. (p. 229)

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BOOKS WRITTEN BY NATIVE BORN EGYPTIAN JEWS (Continued from Page 4)

Teboul, Victor - *La Lente Decouverte de l'Etrangete (The Slow Discovery of Strangeness)*

Les Editions des Intouchables, 2002, 177 pages. Distribution: Prologue, 1650 Blvd. Lionel-Bertand, Boisbriant, Quebec
http://www.victorteboul.com/

Following the 1956 war, the Ben-Haim father and his older daughter were arrested because they had Tunisian citizenship. A short time later, they were released and instructed to leave the country within seven days. Mr. Ben-Haim's office was sealed and he could not take out any of his property. After obtaining official authorization regarding the clothes and the documents they could take, they passed through Customs to board the *S/S Aeolie* (A smaller version of the famous *S/S Esperia*, well-known to many Jews who had to leave Egypt). Prior to going through Customs, Mr. Ben Haim saw his son taking notes of their experiences. He was told to get rid of his diary for fear that they might be accused as spies. The ship, crowded with expelled Egyptians and large amounts of luggage, was on its way to Marseilles. In France, the families were taken to the Centre d'Hebergement, Notre Dame de l'Osier, until they were sent to Paris to a residential hotel in an unpleasant neighborhood close to the **Folies Bergeres** with prostitutes, pimp, homosexuals, seedy bars, transsexuals, etc. The author writes about the hotel owner who is an extremely beautiful woman who had many lovers. That situation seemed to titillate his growing sexuality. What was surprising to them was that in one street, there was a Jewish food store, exhibiting the Magen David sign with the word "*Casher*" (*Kosher*), a very surprising display for a Jew coming from Egypt, where such things were never seen in public view.

In the course of their exit from Egypt, the family went through severe hardships, which were in contrast to the easy life they had in Alexandria. While in Paris, the family decided to visit their daughter in Lebanon, who by that time had married. The ship had to stop in Alexandria, and since the family was on the black list, an armed soldier stood outside their room. They were not allowed to see their own city from the ship's bridge. With the usual "bakchich", they were able to go up, and see their beloved city from afar. While in Lebanon, they witnessed the struggle between the Christians and the Arabs. Returning to Paris, presented a very serious problem. While their luggage was sent to their Paris hotel, the authorities in Marseilles did not allow them to disembark because they could not accept them without a visa. It seems that while they were at sea, France decided to refuse the acceptance of the Tunisian passport because of some diplomatic conflict between the two countries. This was a very unpleasant situation for our family to say the least.

The ship stopped in Naples and efforts were made to get a visa from the French consulate, with no results, and the *Carabinieres* (Italian policemen) made sure that they returned to the ship. To make matters worse, a group of Neapolitans took advantage of them. They were forced to land in Tunisia, a country which had little significance to the family. A short time afterwards, the diplomatic stalemate between France and Tunisia was solved and they were able to return to their Paris hotel. They were fortunate enough to be assisted by the **HIAS** (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society). The boy was asked once whether he was writing a novel or a history in recounting all these improbable stories. His response was that he was writing history, but it is a novel in content.

He writes in a very humorous style, and the following is an example:

"Je m'imagine de lointains ancetres Francais, meme si mes parents n'en ont pas l'accent. Je ne fais pas grand cas du fait que Ben Haim ne sonne pas tout a fait comme Guitry ou Darieux et encore moins comme La Fontaine. Je me dis qu'a bien y penser, puisque Napoleon avait occupe l'Egypte, peut-etre qu'un de ces illustres savants venu avec le general dechiffrer les hieroglyphes, avait epouse une des mes arrieres-grandes meres avant de faire hebraiser son nom…!"

An additional pleasure in reading the book is that it is sprinkled with phrases and expressions familiar to Jews from Egypt even if they had little or no command of the Arabic language or local foreign languages. These are expressions that have been retained and come to one's lips unexpectedly. They must be part of the Egyptian Jewish psyche!

Basta, Stai zito, haram, routh, sharbat, incha'allah, Allah y khali, el afrit, emshi, Ya rab, mazbout, bacha, Ya ostaz, Walahi, tabghan, ebn el balad, ahlanwasahlan, roumi, habibi, ya hasra, kourabie, konafa, nique, zeb, eleniki polis, oualena, maasalama, mazag, kief, ya salam, tarabouka, moloheya, baladi ya baladi, ana aheb baladi, Goha, sharmuta, shawich, bakchich, maramiropipo, rais, hamsa alek, haragheus, gelati, putaine, etc.

BOOKS WRITTEN BY NATIVE BORN EGYPTIAN JEWS (Continued from Page 5)

Note from the Editor:

The problem of identify was also experienced by your editor when he came to the U.S.A. In a short biography, he wrote the following:

"While I could speak English correctly, being a graduate of the American University in Cairo, I had a slight foreign accent. Many people would ask about my background. This put me in a dilemma, since a simple answer would not provide the required information. I would counter by asking, what they meant by my background. If they referred to my place of birth, it was Egypt, but in the same breath, I would add that I am not an Egyptian. The next question, which was often raised, was the kind of passport I had, and the answer was that I had an Italian passport. But again I had to add that I had never lived in Italy for any length of time. I had inherited the Italian citizenship from my father. The next enquiry would be about my family's origin. My reply was that my family had originally lived in Spain, and had left the country in 1492 when the Jews were expelled.... As to languages spoken at home, it was Ladino, a kind of archaic Spanish that served as a mother tongue; technically we could not consider ourselves Spaniards. Another question raised was where did I spend my formative years? My reply was that as a youngster, I lived in Belgium for 8 years, but never acquired Belgian citizenship. The next question might be about the kind of education I had received. Here there was no doubt that my education was purely in French ...At one time, we felt more French than the French themselves. But certainly, we could not claim any official affiliation with France. The last question may have been, where was my mother born? To this, my answer was that she was born in Istanbul, spoke a fluent Greek, but my mother was not Turkish or Greek" (p. 283)

The above quotation was taken from a chapter written by the editor, "A Jewish Childhood in Cairo" in *Fields of Offerings, Studies in Honor of Raphael Patai*, Victor Sanua (Editor), Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1983)
Of course, now I am a U.S.A. citizen. If readers are interested in knowing more about the experiences of the Editor in the USA, they should consult the following: "Reminiscences on my training as a clinical psychologist" in *A Matter of Life: Psychological Theory, Research and Practice*, Roswith Roth and Sandra Neil (Eds.) Pabst Science Publishers, Dresden, Germany, 2001

Picture reflecting the good life we had in Egypt

This picture was taken around 1935. It is an outing arranged in a major park in Cairo by the Center of the *Union Universelle de la Jeunesse Juive* (UUJJ) (Universal Union of Jewish Youth). The two ladies in light dresses are the two Pendrichs sisters who were well-known in the Yiddish theatre. They also participated in French plays at the UUJJ We understand that both of them lived in Cleveland. **Can you identify anyone else?**

Picture reflecting the hardships of leaving Egypt

Egyptian Jewish immigrants, before embarking on the ship to Marseilles, France. Port of Alexandria, Egypt 1956. (Beth Hatefutsoth Archives)

Inauguration of the Union Universelle de Jeunesse Juive

(Inauguration of the Universal Union of Jewish Youth)

This picture, taken on May 19, 1930, was found among the papers of Moise Sanua after he died a few years ago. He was Secretary to **Haim Nahoum Eff.*** Chief Rabbi of Egypt. It was taken at the inauguration of the Cairo headquarters of U.U.J.J. (Union Universelle de la Jeunesse Juive), President: Albert Mosseri, Secretary: Moise I. Sanua. First row L/R: Nissim Mosseri, M. Berman, President of the Ashkenazi Jewish Community, H.E. A. Hedaya Pacha, Governor of Cairo. Chief Rabbi Haim Nahoum Eff., Mr. E. Sabbe, General Consul of France in Cairo, H.E. Youssef Cattaoui Pacha, a Jewish Finance Minister and head of the Jewish community of Cairo, I. Bellini, Consul of Italy. See Magen David in the background.

* A Turkish title of respect.

The Origin of the Cairo Bassatine Cemetery

Among the many papers I found after the death of Moise Sanua (1993), who was the secretary to Chief Rabbi Haim Nahum Eff, I discovered a draft of a paper in French giving possibly a mythical story about how the *Bassatine Cemetery* was established. The following is a translation of the French text by Dr. Victor D. Sanua. Since there was no name on that text, the assumption could be that Moise Sanua himself wrote the story.

"The Egyptian authorities have succeeded in completely eliminating from the Egyptian territory one of the most flourishing Jewish communities whose history is close to the history of the Egyptian people. There is now a new chapter in this tragedy. A brief and a short documented release by the Egyptian government has added to the inherent sadness of this tragedy, a new consternation, the destruction of the Jewish cemetery in *Bassatine*, which was established centuries ago. It is one of the best known in the Middle East because of its ties to medieval and modern Egyptian history. It seems that the government of Colonel Sadat had not found another appropriate spot for the construction of military garages than this vast isolated spot in the desert, which did not present any military, archeological or even agricultural potential. *

At the time when it was decided to establish the Jewish cemetery, Egypt was governed by the Fatimids (969-1171). One of the last rulers surrounded himself with wise and devoted collaborators among whom were some Jews. They were noted for their good deeds. Egyptian history, particularly during the Fatimid period, included stories of Jewish physicians who were personal physicians to the Caliphs. One of the sovereigns was suffering from an illness, which was almost incurable. He was only saved because of the care he received from a Jewish physician. The story reports that the latter was summoned by the ruler since he wanted to express his gratitude in offering him a piece of land of his choice in Cairo. The doctor refused but on the insistence of the sovereign and after the offer became known to his coreligionists, he accepted. A few hundred Jewish families were living in the area of Bnei Foueila (later called the Haret-al-Yahoud). It was decided that a piece of land could be chosen from land that had become arid because of inadequate maintenance and which had the name of *El Bassatine* (Gardens). All that the Jews wanted was an adequate piece of land to bury Jews. Until then they were buried in empty fields close to the homes of the fanatical Muslims, who tended to throw stones while Jews were burying their dead.

For funerals, the distance between the Jewish quarter and the new cemetery necessitated the transportation of the dead on camels, while the rest of the people, related to the departed, rode donkeys. This reduced the chances of the funeral procession being attacked, particularly when the funeral could be arranged at night.

The story has been transmitted from one generation to the next in the course of centuries. Important Arab historians, like Al-Makrizi, repeated in their work on the success of the famous Jewish physician. When the physician asked the sovereign about the area or the extent of the future cemetery, he stated that he would be satisfied with a piece of land that could be covered by the hide of a bull or a cow. As expected, this answer intrigued the sovereign that he accepted without any discussion wondering how the beneficiary could arrange and build a cemetery under those conditions, but the physician did not give him the secret. He wanted the sovereign to promise that this donation would be accompanied by an official and legal firman. After this interview, the physician obtained the hide of a cow and with specialized workers, the hide was cut in hundreds of fine strips of a diameter of an ordinary thread. Thus, if they are attached end to end, they could form a very long cordon that could circle a lot of ground.

It is at this time that the sovereign embraced the doctor and gave him the firman. The cordon covered the surface of 1400 "hectares" (2.47 acres per hectare) which now was under the jurisdiction of the Jewish community. That was the origin of the *Bassatine Cemetery*."

If any of our readers have heard or read about this fascinating story, please contact the editor.

*** A large section of the cemetery was spared. Manuscript does not give any indication about when it was written. The editor hopes to write up an up-to-date story about the present status of the cemetery in future issues.**

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Henri Curiel 1914-1978

Henri Curiel is an Egyptian Jew who had a great deal of influence in organizing the Communist party in Egypt. In 1987, he was murdered in Paris while going down in the elevator of the building in which he lived. The murderers were never identified. The following is the text received from Elie Nahum, presently living in Milan, providing some information about Curiel.

"Je te propose de te faire un resume **d'Henri Curiel**. J'ai connu personellement Henri, c'etait assurement, une personne tres cultivee, impregnee de doctrine Marxiste-Leniniste et tres competente a une époque on en savait peu ou rien faute de documentations. En effet la censure en Egypte etait severe et l'importation de cette literature etait interdite. Il avait acquis ses connaissances quand il vivait ou etudiait en France, c'est du moins ce que je suppose.

Au debut de guerre, il avait ouvert une Librairie papeterie au Midan Suares connue comme la "Librairie du Rond-Point" et grace a la forte presence de soldats Anglais dont une bonne partie etait politiquement labouriste (socialiste), il obtint pratiquement le monopole de l'importation des livres, revues et periodiques d'Angleterre, et c'est par cette voie-la que la literature socialiste et en bonne partie communiste penetra et se diffusa en Egypte. Haut de taille, maigre, dos legerement voute, myope (il portait des lunettes a fine monture). Calme (la maitrise de soi) competent, convaincu de ses idees, il enchante par son charme, sa parole, la maniere de raisonner, de precher et convaincre tous ceux qui l'ecoutaient . En la matiere, c'etait un precurseur. Il avait fait de nombreux disciples et adherents a son mouvement. A part **Chehata Haroun** dont nous avons parle, je voudrai te signaler une Diane Rossano (nom de jeune fille), a publie un livre fort interessant sous le nom de Didar Fawzy Rossano – Titre: *Memoires d'une militante communiste* – (1942-1990) du Caire a Alger, Paris Geneve- Lettres aux miens – Editeur: L'Harmattan, 1997, Paris Si tu veux en savoir plus sur Henri Curiel, je te recommende d'en lire la premiere partie."

Les Textes De La Memoire

Mr. Albert Oudiz is writing his memoirs and some of his writing appeared in the Newsletter of the Association pour la Sauvegarde du Patrimoine Culturel des Juifs d'Egypte, No. 15, June, 2003. We are providing the IAJE reader with a couple of paragraphs.

"Décembre 1948. Un soleil tiède réchauffait le sable tout autour du camp d'internement de Huckstep ou j'avais été enfermé depuis le mois de Mai. Je m'y trouvais en compagnie d'une cinquantaine de mes camarades ainsi que d'environ deux cents internés membres d'organisations de gauche, de sionistes ou autres, détenus pour des charges diverses, quelques fois relevant de la plus haute fantaisie Le camp commencait a bruire d'une rumeur qui se répandait partout : "*IFRAAG! IFRAAG!!*" (Liberation). Serait-ce pour moi? Jeune marie, j'étais arrivé a la conclusion qu'il ne subsistait aucune perspective raisonnable de reprendre une vie normale en Egypte. Arguant de ma nationalité française, j'avais demandé a être rapatrié en France, ma "mere patrie", que je n'avais jamais connue. (Nos ancêtres les Gaulois?) Je me retrouverai ainsi auprès de ma femme, pour mener une vie de famille normale et fonder un *foyer*. Ce serait, hélas, loin des miens, de mes camarades et du cadre chéri de mon enfance.....

Le contact avec les Parisiens est décevant. Tout le monde est presse inattentif a ses voisins et son entourage, plongé dans ses problèmes et sa petite existence d'ou il exclut ceux qui l'entourent. (Ou donc sont la jovialité et la familiarite envahissantes peut être, mais combien chaleureuses des gens d'Egypte? Nous souffrons, ma femme et moi, de cette sorte d'isolement oü, nous, les gens d'ailleurs, sommes confines."

The last paragraph seems to be of special significance, since that according to reports appearing in the news media, it seems that about 11,000 aged Frenchmen died during the recent heat wave, many more than in Spain and Italy where the heat was worse. It appears that family ties and neighborliness are stronger in those countries. This appears to be confirmed by an article in the New York Times (Aug.24, 2003) by John Tagliabue. in which he writes the following:

*"Prime Minister **Jean Pierre Raffarin**, noted last week that roughly half the victims died in their homes, not in hospitals or nursing homes, implying that French families in a rush to get to the beach, had simply left their loved one to perish in the inferno."*

THE PERLOW FAMILY HONORING CHIEF RABBI HAIM NAHUM EFFENDI

Family Reunion at the Home of Albert and Sophie Perlow No.25/26 on the above picture, Dated December 2, 1950, Cairo Egypt, Chief Rabbi Nahum is No. 24.

Going from left to right from the lowest to the upper rows: "D"=Deceased, Brackets=name at birth.

No.

1. Perlow Miriam:D, Australia.
2. Perlow, Gloria, daughter of No.1, Australia.
3. Perlo, Emmanuel, D, Fla.
4. Albagli,Raoul, D, Fla.
5. Anna Albagli,wife, D, Fla.
6. Levi, Guido & 7. Ethel [Liscovitch] Levi, Italy.
8. [Machbitz] Sonia, now Strauss, Fla.
9. Machbitz [Restatcher] Bertha, Fla. /11Machbitz Maurice, D, Fla.
10. Machbitz, Marc, Hawaii, son of 9/11
12. Cohen, Gisele [Restatcher], 13 Rabbi Cohen Marc, Fla.
14. Restatcher, Mayer, D, Israel
15. Wolkowitz, Lillianne [Perlow] D, France/30, husband, Wolkowitz, D, France.
16. Perlo, Nini, Fla.-[Goldenberg] wife of No.3
17. Wolkowitz, Deborah, now Breillat, France, daughter of 15.
18. Perlo, Olga [nee Perlow] wife of No.27, Wolf Perlo, both D, Cairo, Egypt
19. Gurevitch, Vivianne, France.
20. Pinetti, Laura, D, Switzerland
21. Liscovitch, Alice, [now Poliakine], Italie.
22. Liscovitch, Ella [nee Beinisch] wife of 23,Liscovitch Isaac, both D. Canada.
28. Appel, Sophie [nee Restatcher], NY, wife of 29 Appel Isy, D, NY

About 70% of the people were leaving Egypt and they were all Honoring Rabbi Haim Nahum Eff. Probably a farewell party in his honor.

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Film Review: *Cinema Egypt* by Rami Kimchi (Synopsis)

"This film portrays the experience of Sephardic Jews in the 20th century through the life story of Henriette Azar (73). **Henriette**, mother of director **Rami Kimchi**, having left an Egyptian village for Alexandria as a young girl, immigrated to Israel at 24. The film is interspersed with scenes from Egyptian classical fiction film, such as "Leila the Village Girl" (Egypt, 1941), staring **Leila Mourad** and directed by **Togo Mizrahi**, both Jewish stars of Egyptian Cinema. These clips, an analogy of **Henriette's** life, also reflect Egyptian life of her time and emphasize the artistic collaboration between Jews and Arabs with Egyptian culture! ***Cinema Egypt***, a poetic documentary, moves between reality and fantasy, between East and West, between awareness and denial. ***Cinema Egypt*** premiered on Israeli National television in December 2001 and was screened at the Mother Tongue Festival in Israel, May 2002, at the Los Angeles International Sephardic Film Festival, November 2002 at the New York International Sephardic Film Festival, December 2002 and the Montreal Jewish International Film Festival, May 2003.

Rami Kimchi has served as a filmmaker and a critic of cinema and literature since 1986. His films include ***Galia's Wedding*** (1986, Independent Production), ***Travels with My Brother*** (1997, production of The Israel Second Authority for Radio and Television), and ***Cinema Egypt*** (2001 production of Israel Film Service). He has published numerous articles in the journals *Reeh, Moznaim, Ha'haretz, Iton 77,* and *Hakivon Mizrach*. He has also served as a lecturer in the Film and Television Department at Tel-Aviv University.

Rami holds a BA degree in film and television from Tel-Aviv University, with a major in production; an MA degree in Hebrew Literature from Tel-Aviv University; a DEA from the University of Paris; and he is currently on a fellowship working on his Ph.D. at the University of Michigan, in the Department of Near Eastern Studies.

Mr. Kimchi provides the following remarks before showing his film:

"I believe that the film is showing that although my mother lives in Israel, her life story reflects the other narrative the postmodern narrative, the wandering narrative. The film presents my mother as a person who is in a state of a constant exile, who has no home and never had one. Egypt, her place of birth, was not her home; Turkey, the birthplace of her parents, was not her home. Spain, whose ancient language, Ladino, is her mother tongue, is not her home. France, whose language is my mother's cultural language, is not her home either" ...

Sephardic Genealogy: Discover Your Sephardic Ancestors and Their World by Jeffery S. Malka

Winner: Best Judaica Reference Book (2002) by Association of Jewish Libraries.

"At last! A guide to researching Sephardic ancestry. In this profusely documented work, Malka explains how to trace Sephardic ancestry through archives as ancient as twelfth century Spanish notarial records or as recent as today's country repositories.

Taking us on a journey across environments as diverse as the Amazon Basin and the Ottoman Empire, the author discusses Sephardic history, its various diasporas, and where to find its records. The origins of Sephardic surnames and clues derived from their origins and meanings are clearly explained and an extensive bibliography is provided for additional study. This book opens a fascinating world most of us are not sufficiently familiar with. An absolute must on any genealogist's bookshelf".

Email: malkajeff@orthohelp.com

Siddur Farhi Available

"Would you be kind enough to mention in your newsletter and web site the availability of the **Siddur Farhi**. I have reprinted the **Siddur Farhi** which is a page-by-page Arabic translation of the daily prayers according to the Sephardic liturgy.

The translation was done by my grandfather, Dr. Hillel Farhi. It was first printed in 1914 and last in 1932. This new edition (2003) may have limited commercial appeal except for our captive audience of former Egyptians. For additional information, please refer to the attached introductions and the following URL where a few pages are available for viewing."

http://www.farhi.org/Siddur/Siddur.htm

Email received from:
Mr. Alain Farhi, New York

Egyptian Rubric

Funny Stories and Jokes (nokates) received from the membership.

The Egyptian Dry Cleaner

El MAKWAGUI AVIZ RIPASSAUR DI LOUXE. A mes amis, Monsieur, Madame at Lady, Je suis servant Hag Ahmed Hassanein El-Faransawi, les trois selebre Osta des grands locandas du Cairo Fait toutes sortes et qualites de lavements pour dames et missieux, repassage et encore tunturirie des couleurs alf-sanf. Lavements des bantalon fanella blue, tres bien one shilling cinq biastres. Hag Ahmed Hassanein El-Feransawy ne pas voleur il est sujtte Francaise (Hemoya) et pouvait avoir continuee aussi. Venais prendre un sharbat chez lui a Haret Ibn el Sha, a Abdine dans le derriere du docteur Mahfouz Omar el Guerguaut tres selebre

Received from **Ted Nachmias, London**

Samak Moussa (Le Poisson De Moise)

Petit garcon, j'aimais ecouter ma mere me racontant des histoires de son temps. C'est ainsi qu'elle me donna l'explication scientifique (d'apres elle) de la forme particuliere de la sole. Quand **Moise** obtint de haute lutte et avec l'aide de Dieu la liberation des Juifs des jougs du Pharaon, il emmene en toute hate son peuple vers la Terre Promise qu'il devait atteindre après 40 ans de marche dans le desert. Des le debut, leur marche fut arretee par un obstacle infranchissable – La Mer Rouge.

Le people Juif regarda vers Moise, Moise regarda vers l'Eternel qui lui dit: "Prends ton baton et donne un coup dans la mer". Aussitot les eaux s'ecarterent et les Juifs purent passer l'obstacle a sec. Cependant le geste de Moise eut un effet inattendu. Tous les poisons qui se trouvaient sur la ligne du baton furent coupes en deux. Depuis lors, les soles sont appellees **Samak Moussa,** et ainsi nous avons l'explication de leur forme aplatie, de la difference de peau entre un cote et l'autre. Si non e vero!

Received from **Albert Oudiz. Paris.**

Two Jokes

Sultana Pirotte Vidal, Belgium sent the following two jokes. . The second one has nothing to do with the Middle East, but since we found it funny we have added it here.

1) An Egyptian guy is visiting Scotland and he wants to attend the Highland games. He goes to the entrance and sees it is very expensive. While standing he notices that men called McDonald, McLean, McAdam, Mc something other are allowed in free after giving their names. So he goes to the man standing at the entrance and says: **McGuagi**!!! (Presser in Arabic) and goes in free.

2) A whole busload of women from various Jewish charitable organizations overturned and were killed. At the reception desk, St. Peter, assigned them to hell. They had hardly been there a week when Satan phoned Peter and demanded that he removes the women to heaven. "Why, St. Peter asked, what have they done?"

"Satan answered, they have banded together, collected money, employed engineers and installed a cooling system."

Egyptian Expressions

Arabic – **English** – French

Sofra Dayman – **May your table be always that good** – Que votre table soit toujours aussi bonne.

Naeeman – **Pleasant bath or shower (When coming out of the bath or shower)** – Bon bain (Ca se dit après un bain)

Rabenah Yechaleek – **May G-d Keep you (alive)** – Que le bon Dieu te garde.

Teishe (masc) Teishi (fem) – **May you live** – Que tu vives.

Teishe oue tefrah (mas) Teishi oue tefrahi (fem) – **May you live and be happy** –Que tu vives et que tu sois heureux. Que tu vives et que tu sois heureuse.

Sabah el kheir – **Good morning (Lit., May you have plenty)** – Que le matin soit plein de bien.

Sabah el eshta – **Morning of cream** – Matinee de crème.

Sabah el fole – **Morning of fole (white flowers more fragrant than jasmin)** – Matinee de fole (jasmin).

Sibak (mas) Sibek (fem) – **Let go. Don't bother** – Laisse aller. Ne t'en fais pas.

Maa el salama – **Go with peace** – Va en Paix.

Rabena yestor – **G-d protects** – Le bon Dieu protége.

Maalesh – **It's alright** – Ca ni fait rien.

Layta el shabab yaoudou – **If only youth would return** – Oh, si la jeunesse retournait un jour.

The above text was sent to us by Blanche Sachs.

NOTICE:

The publication of the newsletter solely depends on the membership dues and donations. Please send them to IAJE (address on first page).

It is a matter of survival!

THE ASSOCIATION OF JEWS FROM EGYPT (UK)

The Association of Jews from Egypt (U.K.), which was formed about three years ago, is a group in London that has been quite active. They have been instrumental in arranging for the publication of a series of articles on Egyptian Jewry in the Quarterly *Jewish Renaissance*, in conducting a series of lectures, arranging for parties and Fetes Champetre (with a belly dancer). They are planning to devote a soiree to the singer **Leila Mourad**, the well-known Jewish Egyptian singing star, which will be presented by her nephew, **Joseph Assouline**. They plan regular, special evenings of reminiscences which are motivated by the desire to record as many accounts as possible describing expulsions, separation and early hardships in adopted lands. All of these are to be filmed on video.

They also publish a newsletter, which should be of great interest to Egyptian Jewry. They believe that with these efforts, they might be able to reset the historical record distorted in the news media. The next section of our newsletter provides a resume of their major articles on Egyptian Jewry. A photograph received from Ted Nahmias shows the committee members visiting Cambridge University during one of their meetings at the home of Mrs. Sarah Kemp, who lives in the town.

The above picture was sent to me by Ted Nahmias and includes the committee of the Association of Jews from Egypt, U.K. They were meeting in Cambridge. From left to right: **TED NAHMIAS, SARAH KEMP, ESTHER DEE, CAROLINE HAZAN, DAVID HAZAN, GERARD DE BOTTON, SUZY SIDI, MARY MESSECA, MAURICE MALEH**

Jews From Egypt

The U.K. group was instrumental in publishing a number of articles on Egyptian Jewry in the ***Jewish Renaissance, Quarterly Magazine of Jewish Culture, (UK),*** mostly written by the members of the AJE (UK) We shall only provide here a synopsis of historical papers on contemporary Jewry, which appeared in the magazine:

"From Exodus to Exodus". **Mr. Alec Nacamuli** provides an historical overview of the Jews living in Egypt. During the Third Century B.C.E., it is estimated that there were 200,000 living in Alexandria under the Ptolemaic successors of Alexander the Great. In modern times, the Jews have contributed enormously to the economic development of the country. In Cairo, besides the prosperous Jews, there was a group of indigenous Jews, Arabic speaking Jews, who depended on charity for survival. They were probably the descendants of the original settlers. Later, the arrival of Jews settled in other part of the City. There were 80,000 Jews around 1948, many of them of European origin, including immigrants from Turkey. In time, Jews actively participated in Egyptian politics. It seems odd that Jewish leaders with Zionist tendencies were also active in the Egyptian nationalistic movement (Waft). During World War II, King Farouk did not hide his sympathy with the Axis Powers. During that period there was the emergence of the Muslim Brotherhood, which demonstrated anti-Semitic tendencies. Anti-Jewish riots took place every year on the anniversary of the Balfour declaration and also subsequent to the UN Partition vote. Between 1949 and 1951, 20,000 Jews left Egypt. In 1952, there was the revolution by Young Free Officers under General Naguib. In

Jews From Egypt (Continued from Page 13)

1956, the nationalization of the Suez Canal by Colonel Nasser caused the invasion of the country by French and British forces. All Jewish French and British nationals and the majority of Jews were expelled. Their departure was considered to be the **Second Exodus**, of the twentieth Century. In May of 2000, Mr. Nacamuli returned to the Eliahou Hanabi Synagogue in Alexandria for a *Shabbat* service. There was only one man, Dr. Max Salama, among the rows of empty seats in the Synagogue.

"The Good Summer" Dr. Ellis Douek provides a nostalgic overview of the good times his family had during the summer months when they rented a flat near the beach in Glymenopoulo, Alexandria. The men in the family remained in Cairo, and visited Alexandria during the weekends. They traveled to Alexandria either by car or by train. During the summer months, King Farouk resided at the Ras-el-Tin Palace to enjoy the cooler climate.

"A Leavened Passover" Mr. Teddy Nahmias writes that following the 1956 events, hundred of families packed their belongings and left Egypt, most boarding ships bound for to European Mediterranean ports. His family took the *S/S Enotria*, a small version of the well-known *S/S Esperia*. It seem that at the time of their departure, some of the neighbors stood in silence watching them go, while the Sudanese *bawab* (door man) was sobbing. Nahmias' father became very tense as they went through the customs and police clearance. They felt comfortable once they were on the deck of the ship. They entered in conversation with other passengers who indicated their destinations such as Canada, Italy, Australia, etc. Someone in the crowd reminded the group that the next day would be Pessah. It was embarrassing, "no matzos, no harosset, no marror," but instead a massive *chamets torta* to celebrate the festival of the unleavened bread. The irony was that they were Jews leaving Egypt celebrating Jews leaving Egypt.

"Egypt in Israel" Dr. Victor Sanua reports on the clandestine efforts made by young Jews to leave Egypt for Palestine. They were held back by the British authorities. While the Jews from Egypt adapted very well economically in Israel, they showed no interest in politics and in contrast to the Moroccan Jews, they have little electoral clout in Israel, or anywhere else. They settled in modern towns. They generally depict their past life in Egypt as a lost paradise and de-emphasize the hard times some of them had leaving the country. In view of the negative connotation that the word Egyptian has, they prefer to be considered as Europeans.

(The full study written by Dr. Victor Sanua can be found in the Proceedings of the 11th 1994 World Congress of Jewish Studies. (Also, available on the IAJE Website.)

Other contributions include **The "Cairo Genizah" by Maurice Maleh** who reports on the remarkable documentation of Jewish life in Medieval Egypt now based at Cambridge University. **Roger Bilboul writes about the "Nebi Daniel Initiative"** for the purpose of saving the archives of the Alexandria rabbinate. The status of these archives would be quite in danger when the last Jew of Alexandria dies.

It would be ironic to know that in the future generations, we shall have plenty of information about how Jews lived in medieval times and know very little about Jews living in the twentieth century. Mr. Bilboul's efforts are laudable and should be encouraged. Details of these efforts can be found on www.nebidaniel.com

Janet Levin writes about the history of the Arwas family. **Victor Arwas** now lives in London surrounded by art objects, which he has collected for years. Janet Levin also writes a story about **Robert de Botton,** Financier, art connoisseur, bibliophile (died May 2000) The article includes an eulogy by his son Alain de Botton, given at the memorial service.

Albert Oudiz of Paris wrote a similar review in the newsletter of the l'Association pour la Sauvegarde du Patrimoine Culturel des Juifs d'Egypte. He stated at the end, "Quand donc beneficierons-nous de la meme hospitalite d'une revue Juive Francaise?"

CHECK US OUT ONLINE

We are pleased to inform our readers that IAJE has created its own website. You can now read articles and publications, view photos, receive more information about the IAJE, and view complete copies of our past newsletters.

Check us out @ http://www.iajegypt.org

Also, don't forget to sign up to our online discussion group: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/iajegypt

I.A.J.E. NEWSLETTER 9

International Association of Jews from Egypt
Association Internationale des Juifs d'Egypte

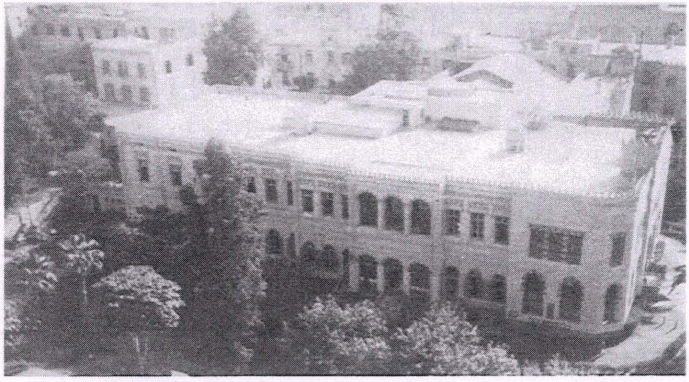
EDITOR: Victor D. Sanua Ph.D. IAJE, 2416 Quentin Road, Brooklyn, NY 11229 2004 Volume 6 No. 1

Editorial:
GOLDEN SCHOOLDAYS

This issue reports on the various schools in Egypt attended by Jewish young people. Jewish children as a rule did not attend Muslim Arabic schools while schools sponsored by the Jewish community were primarily in the lower grades only and did not prepare students for study abroad. European or American schools were the most popular. A large number attended Catholic schools which were renowned for their strictness and high quality, as well as the secular French school at the *Lycée Français* (Mission Laique). There were many schools in different languages sponsored by different nations. However, one language dominated all our interactions, and that was French, more so than Arabic. It was only during World War II and afterward that the English language became more and more dominant in the world, and it was eventually adopted by Egyptian Jewry. This explains in part their relatively easy adaptation when they settled in Anglo-Saxon countries after leaving Egypt.

You will note that I have added many pictures of schools to accompany the text. Some of these pictures have been culled from photo albums which your editor was able to take out of Egypt when he left in 1950. This was so even though at the time, for Jews to take such pictures out of the country was not advisable because of the Egyptian censorship laws, ostensibly for security reasons.

There has been a conscious effort to make the newsletter more "academic" in content. In this issue are provided the titles of papers delivered at three conferences that have been held in the past about Egyptian Jewry. One was held at Tel Aviv University in 1984; another was held by the IAJE itself at the Middle East Institute at Columbia University in December 1998. The most recent conference took place at Bar-Ilan University in Israel January 12-14, 2004, entitled, "The Jews of Egypt in Modern Times." The editor wrote a paper for that conference entitled "A Short History of the Jews from



The main building of the American University of Cairo (AUC) where your editor and many Jews of Egypt attended, in 1939. This picture may appear to have been taken by a helicopter, but it was not. It was taken from the terrace of the nearby Bahari building. The terrace could only be reached by walking on a narrow ledge over ten floors to reach the service staircase, which was a dangerous attempt showing the tendency of youth to disregard danger! The AUC building was built in 1860 and originally served as the palace of a very wealthy man. At one time it was an Egyptian University. The buildings were acquired by AUC in 1919. The campus included Ewart Memorial Hall, used for important recitals, symphony orchestras, and plays. The Palestine Symphony Orchestra conducted by Arturo Toscanini once performed there.

The choir of the American University of Cairo in 1941, with **Mr. Alexander**, our choirmaster, in the center. The male student on the far right is **Anthony Economides**, a talented pianist of the choir.

[See Next Page]

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All funds are to be mailed to:
Victor Sanua, Ph.D., Editor
Int'l Assoc. of Jews from Egypt
2416 Quentin Road

Editorial (Continued from Page 1)

Egypt Following the Arab-Israeli Wars." A copy of this paper is available by e-mail to any of our members who request it, at sanuav@stjohns.edu.

I would like to express my appreciation to all those members who have already sent in donations, above and beyond their membership dues, for a special project which will help ensure that the memory and patrimony of the Jews of Egypt is properly preserved for the generations to come. In the very near future we plan to produce a bound book which will include all nine issues of the IAJE heretofore published with an index, plus at least a dozen or so copies of articles on Egyptian Jews which have appeared in various periodicals and conference proceedings, fifteen short articles on Egyptian Jewry which have appeared in Image Magazine. The three sections were written by the editor. When the book is completed, copies will be sent to all known universities having a Jewish studies program and a Judaica library.

The editor asks the Jews of Egypt to be generous in supporting this cause. Checks should be in American dollars and made out to the "International Association of Jews from Egypt." The names of contributors, as well as the names of any relatives they wish to honor, will be included in the final publication.

This effort is quite modest in light of the fact that Jews from Egypt have done very little to save their patrimony, especially compared to such groups as the Iraqi Jews. They now have a museum of their own and a building dedicated completely to research about their community, and we wish them well. We sincerely hope that, after all Jews from

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THE QUESTION OF THE JEWISH REFUGEES FROM ARAB COUNTRIES

As was reported in the Jewish Week of April 2, 2004, a recognition is growing that Jews displaced from Arab countries have their rights considered anytime those of Palestine refugees are discussed. Two separate Congressional resolutions to that effect were introduced at the end of March 2004. The measures were introduced by Senator **Rick Santorum** (Republican, PA) and Representative **Gerald Nadler** (Democrat, NY). This was done at the request of **Justice for the Jews from Arab Countries**, which is a coalition of twenty-seven Jewish communal organizations headed by **Mr. Stanley Urman**, a businessman who served as Director. **Sen. Santorum** said that he hoped to get bipartisan support for the resolutions. They urge the President to instruct American representatives in bilateral and multinational forums to make sure that measures dealing with Palestinian refugee issue be "matched by a similar explicit reference to the resolution of Jewish refugees from Arab countries."

It appears that after decades of ambivalence, Israel is now supporting recognition of the fact that the Arab countries in the 1940's began a series of events which ultimatley turned hundreds of thousands of Jews into refugees. We have received documentation from the **Ministry of Justice of the Israeli Government** to that effect. It included two reports, one of which appeared in the Jerusalem Post of January 12, 2004 entitled "The Other Refugees. Did the Arab States Collude to Force out the Jews?" and another article by **Lauren Gelfond**, "Baghdad Dreams". The subtitle reads as follows: "When Jews started fleeing Iraq after World War II, they never thought they would look back. But as seen across the Tel Aviv suburb of Givatayim, the recent fall of Baghdad is stirring old memories – and new hopes."

We have also received a report from the Ministry of Justice of Israel headed "*Les fondements historiques des plaintes*

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Malka Hillel Shulewitz, ed. (1999). *THE FORGOTTEN MILLIONS: The Modern Exodus of Jews from Arab Countries.* London, Cassel.

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10. SUMMARY **Malka Hillel Shulewitz**.

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN
18TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

Dear Professor Sanua,

Thank you very much for taking the time to send me a copy of the newsletter of the International Association of Jews from Egypt Association. The recognition of Jews displaced in Arab lands is an important issue that gains little public awareness. However, your publication is a valuable tool in the movement towards recognition of Jews from displaced Arab lands. I am sure that there will be information useful to us in the Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia.

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen Chair, Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia, House of Representatives

BOOKS WRITTEN BY NATIVE-BORN EGYPTIAN JEWS

Pardo, Albert, (2003). *L'Egypte que j'ai connue (The Egypt I knew).* Published by *Nahar Misraim* de **l'Association pour la Sauvegarde du Patrimoine Culturel des Juifs d'Egypte**. Mr. Andre Cohen, Secretariat, 8 Rue des Tanneries, 75013 Paris, France, 18 Euros. Email: aspcje@ifrance.com

Mr. Albert Pardo is an Egyptian-born writer, who because of his French citizenship was expelled from Egypt following the 1956 war between Egypt and the invading French, British, and Israeli armies. The war was precipitated by Nasser, President of Egypt, who expropriated the Suez Canal, an international waterway. All three countries withdrew from Egypt because of the insistence, on the part of the United States, for them to leave.

In spite of the duress of his expulsion, and leaving all of his assets, Pardo has kept very fond memories and feelings about his life and Egypt and this is reflected a great deal in his book *L'Egypte que j'ai connue* (The Egypt I knew). He now lives in Marseille and is planning to write another book of his memoirs. He expresses his great love for Alexandria and the country as a whole with the following poem:

SOUS TON CIEL BLEU
(Under Your Blue Sky)
By: Albert Pardo

Sous ton ciel bleu
J'ai vu le jour.
Sous ton ciel bleu
J'ai été comblé d'amour.
D'abord, celui de ma famille
Puis, celui de mes amis
Enfin, celui de mon épouse chérie.
Sous ton ciel bleu
Les fils du Nil
M'ont abondamment octroyé:
Considération, Confiance, Amitié.
Sous ton ciel bleu

Je me suis toujours efforcé
De mériter ce qu'ils m'ont donné.
Loin de ton ciel bleu
Je clame sans cesse
Ta générosité et ta gentillesse
Et, si le célèbre adage ne ment pas
Qui dit: "Qui a bu l'eau du Nil en boira"
Alors, je reviendrais me désalterer
Aux sources de l'hospitalité
Sous ton ciel bleu

To set the broad outline of his book, we chose to include the preface of his book as a historical introduction:

"C'est un sentiment de reconnaissance qui m'a fait écrire ce recueil. J'ai eu la chance de naître et de vivre durant trente sept années dans un pays exceptionnel. Exceptionnel par son histoire, par sa culture, par ses habitants. D'autres plus qualifiés que moi ont parlé de la fabuleuse Egypte Pharaonique. Mon ambition est de faire mieux connaître "l'Egypte de tous les jours", vécue "de l'intérieur", en contact direct avec ses habitants et, de plus, de faire découvrir des aspects insolites de la vie Egyptienne en grande partie disparues, à l'époque ou les communautés Européennes et étrangeres, les khawagates*, tenaient le haut du paver. Pour paraphraser un titre célèbre, je ne suis pas "Un homme (qui) se penche sur son passé" mais, tous les jours que Dieu fait, je pense" à mon passé et je remercie le Seigneur de m'avoir permis de vivre dans ce pays-ci, dans cet environnement-la

* A non-Muslim individual living in Egypt whose original family is European.

BOOKS WRITTEN BY NATIVE BORN EGYPTIAN JEWS (Continued from Page 3)

et dans le milieu familial qui fut le mien. Certains diront que vivre dans le passé est un comportement négatif. Mais, pour moi, lorsque le passé est plein de charme et de souvenirs merveilleux, il peut devenir, en le récréant de temps en temps, une source de "bonheur intense" que je souhaite partager avec autrui. Si la lecture de ce recueil pouvait inciter le lecteur à aller visiter l'Egypte et retrouver certains détails que j'évoque et à les apprecier, à contacter les Egyptiens dont la plupart sont chaleureux, gentils, hospitaliers, alors j'aurais l'impression d'avoir "rendu" un peu de ce que l'Egypte m'a octroyé. De tous ceux de ma connaissance qui ont visité ce beau pays, pas un seul n'en a été déçu."

While Mr. Pardo was a *khawaga*, he developed a very close association with the indigenous people being very fluent in the Arabic language. Many Europeans had limited knowledge of Arabic because in general they attended French or English schools. It is because of his closeness to the people that Pardo is able to weave a whole tapestry of what life was like before his expulsion. In spite of the tribulations inflicted by the authorities on the Europeans, Pardo would only like to maintain in his memory of the "kindness, generosity, hospitality, and joie de vivre" of the Egyptian people. He has such positive feeling about the country that he encourages people to visit it. He has a prodigious memory to recreate in great detail different aspects of life in Egypt. His book includes four major sections: the historical, different aspects of Egyptian life, unusual occupations, and his personal experience as a European. He adds a glossary of Arabic words at the end of the book. He uses those words with some frequency within his book.

We shall only include a few aspects of Pardo's reminiscences. First he writes about the pleasantness of spending his vacation at Ras el Bar (near Damiette) and Alexandria. He wrote about the *café* life, which he describes as the center for social activities, particularly the playing of backgammon by the patrons of the *café*. It was also used to conduct business and in general Greeks owned these cafes. It was customary for the waiters to call out loud in Greek to the server in the back room the orders that the customer needed. Muslim waiters with enough savings established their own *cafes* in their neighborhoods and like the Greek waiters gave their orders in the Greek language, in spite of the fact that everybody spoke Arabic. According to Pardo, it seems that hundreds of French, English, and Greek words, are used in popular Arabic. This reflects on the influence of foreign communities on the Egyptian common language. Literary Arabic, which is very difficult to learn, does not allow such innovations. It is interesting to note that the Arabic language does not have the consonant "P" or "V," both are replaced by the sound of "B," thus the word "push" becomes "bush.!" An Arabic speaking individual can easily be identified when he speaks English.

In backstreets of the major cities it was customary to see two men pushing a cart and yelling "*Robabekia*" and "*Bottillias*" which of course does not sound Arabic. The words indicate that they wanted to buy old clothes (*Robabekia*) and empty bottles (*Bottillias*). It seems that Italians held such jobs and the words "*Robabekia*" and "*Bottillias*" were adopted by Arabic speaking workers. Old traditions do not die. Another important occupation is the work of the laundry woman (*lessiveuse* in French, *ghassalat* in Arabic). In those days washing machines were rare and therefore, periodically people would ask *ghassalats* to do their laundry. Each apartment had a small room on the terrace of the building for that purpose. Water in a large petrol drum was heated on a Primus stove. The hot water was poured into a circular metal tub, called *tocht*, one meter in diameter. The washerwoman would squat and do the washing by hand. Wet clothes were hunged out on the terrace and they dried very fast by the munificent Egyptian sunshine. At that time pollution did not seem to exist. Pardo describes other occupations, which were familiar sights in Egypt such as the *Zabbal* (garbage collector), *arabeah khantour* (horse drawn carriages used for leisure transportation), the vendor of *irq sous* (itinerary vendor of Anis soft drink), woman fanning *dorra* (corn), *tarbouche (fez)* cleaning, children collecting cigarette butts, mattress wool thrashing by a *menagit*, etc. While Pardo's book has pictures of such occupations, drawn by Christian Archache, we are including at the end of this newsletter, pictures drawn by an Israeli-Egyptian Jew, Elie Cohen of the Israeli Painters and Sculptors Association.

During the Pourim holidays, relatives and friends exchange pastries, and the following are the ones that Pardo remembers: *"Samboussek, Menena, Assabii Loz, Ouedan Hamann, Senane Hamann, Roskass, Mogados, Ghorayeba, Ba 'laoua, Konafa, Kahk Khaouagate, Kahk Bessemssem, Charapatto, Boumoeloss, Pain d'Espagne, Boyoss, Boyikoss, Pasteless!"*

REMINDER:

Be part of this important endeavor to preserve our precious heritage. Send your subscriptions and donations to the IAJE c/o **Dr. Victor D. Sanua, 2416 Quentin Road, Brooklyn, NY 11229** USA – do it today, do not delay!

The International Association of Jews from Egypt is certainly delighted to review this book, which brings fond memories to most of us, but as in the case of Pardo, the unpleasant experience of our expulsion has been minimized in the course of the years.

On a more personal note, your editor has known **Albert Pardo** since June 13, 1937 when we met at a Boys Scout camp in Heliopolis, a suburb of Cairo. We had our own group that we established after graduating from the Catholic Junior high school, which we called the **Jewish Camping Club (JCC)**. We shall try to write a story about **JCC** in a future issue of the newsletter. We became friendly with Mr. Pardo and he joined our group. **JCC** disbanded when **World War II** broke out in 1939.

Gathering of the **Jewish Camping Club** and the Boy Scouts at Heliopolis, Cairo on June 13, 1937. Albert Pardo is third from the right in the back row. The editor is third from the left.

Excursion with the **Jewish Camping Club** group at the Barrages Gardens, Cairo 1937.

Oudiz, Albert, (2004). *JE VIENS D'UN PAYS QUI N'EXISTE PLUS.*

We have received the above book from our good friend Albert Oudiz from Paris. I come from a country that does not exist anymore. (2004). It could be obtained from Nahar Misraim , Paris. It will be reviewed at some length in the next issue of the newsletter. In the meantime, we are offering our readers some idea about the content of the book.

I. **Mon Enfance au Fil des Jours**,- Mon quartier bien-aimé, Plan schematique de Daher, Le théatre de la rue, Les Tentations de la rue, Ferveur religieuse,, L'Ecole de mon enfance, Les Vacances: Ras el Bar, Aboukir

II. **L'adolescence –** Sport à la Maccabi (Daher), Scoutisme à la Maccabi, Le tambour
Camping à la Maccabi, le Cinéma de (grand)-papa, Les Trois soeurs, Fugitives rencontres –La Tête dans les nuages

III. **Ma famille**

IV. **Reminiscences Cairote-** Petit Métiers, Menus service, *La Ghassaalah,* La Lavandière, Pastèques au couteau, Ya'oub, Le marchand des *Mekhallel,* El *Sabarssagueeyyah-* Les ramasseurs de mégots, Le Jacquet Oriental ou Tric Trac (Tawla), *Khamsin,* Menue Monnaie.

V. **Vers l'Age Adulte** Terreur Policière en Egypte, Le Canal de Suez ou marriage au Pays du Cholera. Nuit Blanche au Caire, HUCKSTEP.

VI. **Vers une vie nouvelle**

Published by Nahar Misraim de l'**Association pour la Sauvegarde du Patrimoine Culturel des Juifs d'Egypte.** Mr. Andre Cohen, Secretariat, 8 rue des Tanneries, 75013 Paris. E-mail aspcje@ifrance.com

BOOKS ON EGYPT PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO (Continued from Page 5)

Gazale, Midhat, (2003). *PHYRAMIDS ROAD: AN EGYPTIAN JOURNEY. A MEMOIR OF CHANGING EGYPT.*

This is a thoughtful poignant, personal memoir begins in Cairo of the 1930s, with the author's schooldays at the Lycee Francais, and moves on to paint a rich social and ethnic picture against a backdrop of momentous events: the accession of King Farouk, the Second World War, the Revolution of 1952, the Suez Crisis of 1956. In the unfolding of these historic times, the sense of place too is strong, with vivid descriptions of places long ago such as the British barracks, which once stood where the Nile Hilton now stands, and others that have changed substantially, like Midan Soliman Pasha, now Midan Talaat Harb. The author's life then follows an unexpected course of cultural encounter, as he plunges into a high powered business career in America, Japan and Europe that takes him high into executive circles – where the lessons he learns of cross-cultural perceptions are both useful and entertaining. Finally, after more than three decades of absence, the author returns to a bewilderingly changed Egypt. He has to ask for help to cross a busy street, a nostalgic visit to his old school brings not pleasure but sadness and, oppressed by the size and pace of Cairo, he seeks the refuge of the idyllic tree-shaped Pyramids road that he remembers so well from his childhood—only to find that too has changed beyond recognition. Midhat Gazale recollects people, events, and places with uncommon clarity and gentle humor. His memoirs will fascinate anyone who has ever asked the question: What was Egypt like then? and How has it changed?" 224pp. Hardbound, $24.50

Tzalas, Harry E., (2003). *FAREWELL TO ALEXANDRIA: ELEVEN SHORT STORIES.*

"The eleven short stories in this book take us back to an Alexandria past, the cosmopolitan city as it was experienced by the author in the years before, during, and following the Second World War. Against a backdrop of a major event in Alexandria's history, from the halcyon days of the late 1930s, through the alarums of the War, to the 1952 Revolution and the dispersion of almost the entire foreign community of the city, Tzalas weaves his stories peopled with characters from his youth. These are ordinary people, people of different nationalities and faiths, but all Alexandrians, living side by side in the Great City. in describing each character with great sensitivity and perception, Tzalas succeeds not only in capturing the essence of the city itself, but in poignantly foretelling the fundamental changes and exodus that were to come.

Harry Tzalas was born and educated in Alexandria. In 1956, he emigrated with his family to Brazil before settling in Greece. He is the founder and president of the Hellenic Institute for Ancient and Medieval Alexandrian Studies, based in Athens." 224pp. Paperback, $15.95

The above two books can be ordered from the American University in Cairo Press. C/O Book International, P.O. Box 605, Hendon, VA 20172, Tel: 1 703 661 1570.

OTHER BOOKS OF INTEREST ON EGYPT

Azou, I,, Michou, (2001. Murmures d'Alexandrie. Jean-Claude Lattee

Thomson, Victoria, (1998). Losing Alexandria, A memoir. Sydney: Picador Pan Macmillan

L'Exclusion des Juis des Pays Arabes, (2003) Editions In Press, 12 Rue du Texel, 75014 Paris. Reviewed in Los Muestos, Dec. 2003

Bard, Mitchell G. (2003) Mythes et Realites des Conflicts du Proche-Orient. Traduction et Adaptation française , Liliane Messika. Editions Raphael, 8 rue des Coutures Saint-Gervais, 75003 Paris.

Announcements of Death of Members & Correspondents

We are sorry to report on the death of our members, **Mr. Victor Cohen**, Montreal, Canada and **Mr. Joseph Bijou**, Brooklyn, New York. We also report two deaths of the editor's family, **Mr. Max Sanua**, Paris and **Mr. Andre Sanua**, Tel-Aviv, Israel. Both attended with the editor the **St. Jean Baptiste de la Salle** school, Bab el Louk. We would like to report also on the death of **Mr. Anthony Economides**, Athens, Greece. Anthony was a classmate at AUC and best friend of the editor.

International Association of Jews from Egypt sends their heartfelt condolences to the families of the deceased.

CATTAUI PACHA SCHOOL

Tout en haut: de gauche a droite Namer (?), Jacob Tadts (a Jew from Abyssinia, fellacha), Isaac (Zouza) Levy, Feldman, Raymond (Nisso) Biriotti, Sam Pardo, Abram (Boumy) Cohen, Samy (Mimi) Shemtob, and X?

2eme rang : Marc Zayan 3' fille : Regine Gholam, 5' fille Rosette Azoulay, (proprietaire de la fameuse boutique de cadeaux & Parfums I Paris : Raoul & Curly) puis Lebhar

3eme rang Elie Salem puis 3eme fille Marcelle Sayegh puis au bout Mr. Setton, économe de l'Ecole

Assis an centre : Monsieur Roger Moline Directeur des écoles Israrelites du Caire

Note: The above picture of a French-Jewish Elementary and Junior High School was sent to us by **Mr. Albert Oudiz**. Could you identify some of the other students in the picture? We met the school director, **Mr. Moline** in France after he was forced to leave Egypt after 1956. Later in the USA we became acquainted with Moline's son who was working for the French government, representing France at the United Nations.

The black student in the picture is an Etheopian Jew. **Rabbi Haim Nahum Effendi** arranged to bring to Cairo young Etheopian Jews to be educated. His hope was that they would serve as educators of their own people when they returned to their home country.

ABRAHAM BETESH SCHOOL IN HELIOPOLIS, CAIRO

School picture of elementary pupils at the French-language Jewish school Abraham Betesh at Heliopolis, 1940 sent to us by **Mr. David Abadi**, London, England. Can you identify any of these pupils?

The above picture of a Square Dance group taken in 1954 at the American University in Cairo, was sent to us by **Blanche Cohen Sachs** of Randallstown, MD. Sitting from right to left: Suzy Pirotte Vidal, Blanche Cohen Sachs, Jouise, and Gameela Khalil. Standing from right to left: Floyd Cunningham, Jr., unidentified, Kamal, Mr. Savage (Drama Teacher)

A girls' basketball club in Cairo. circa 1940. The editor recognizes two women who went on to attend the American University in Cairo. Could you identify any of the other players? Picture taken from Les Juifs d'Egypte. Images et Textes. Edition du Scribe, 1984.

Pictures of Pleasant School Days

A class in Political Science during a break on the campus of the American University in Cairo in 1944, behind Oriental Hall.

A Masked Ball at Oriental Hall at the American University in Cairo in 1943 during WWII. Student on the left in military uniform was a French student who was in training to join the Free French Army.

Extaday, A Childhood in Cairo 1939-1949: The Jasmine Necklace II

We are pleased to inform our readers that **Sultana Latifa (Vidal Pirotte)** has sent to us her second book as above. Her first book was reviewed by **Blanche Cohen Sachs** in a previous issue of the newsletter. We hope to review her second book in a future newsletter. Readers interested in getting the book should call Sultana Latifa at 00 32 87 3118 09 or email her at pirdal@msn.com

Not everyone had a good life in Egypt!

These pictures were taken by your editor while visiting the notorious psychiatric hospital, ***KHANKA*** *in the* ***ABASSIAH*** neighborhood, which was similar to Bellevue of New York. In those days the expression "You ought to go to Abassiah" was used in conversation. As a future psychologist, he attended treatment sessions where metrazol was used. This was the time when Lobotomy and electroshock were the treatments of choice for mental disorders. The top picture shows a conversation between the inmates and the students. The picture below shows the mental patients allowed to roam in their enclave.

NOTICE:

The publication of the newsletter solely depends on the membership dues and donations. Please send them to IAJE (address on first page).

It is a matter of survival!

Lecture Series on Jews from Egypt at the home of Dr. Sanua

ADA AHARONI Ph.D. Technion, Israel. Sociological research of Jews from Egypt in Israel.

PIERRE CACHIA Ph.D. Columbia University. Land-locked Islands: Foreign communities in Egyptian provincial cities before 1950.

VICTOR D. SANUA Ph.D. St. John's University. Psychological implications of the Middle East conflict

JEAN-MARC OPPENHEIM Ph.D. Middle East Institute of Columbia University. Cultural rivalry between the British and the French in Egypt

ALBERT DE VIDAS Ph.D. Fairfield University, Ct. Reminiscences of an Alexandrian Sephardic youth in the 1950's.

YEHUDA OZARI Ph.D. Research Fellow at Princeton University Now major executive of American Industries. The forgotten years, experiences leaving Egypt in 1952.

ELIE MALKA, The Jews of Sudan.

MARIANNE SANUA Ph.D. Florida Atlantic University. Traveling with my father in Egypt.

THE MAJORITY OF THE ABOVE LECTURERS WERE BORN IN EGYPT. MOST OF THESE LECTURES HAVE BEEN VIDEO TAPED. All these lectures were followed with a dinner of *foul medames* and other Middle East specialties, specifically *Arak*.

Letter to the Editor

Les reunions chez toi me manquent les haflats, el foul, avec les oeufs *khaminados* (hard boiled eggs in Ladino) et nos braves amis; Cachia, Ades, Mioni, Malki; Cohen Sabban, Soli Mosseri etc. C est vrai ça coute, à part que on n'est pas toujours libre. Ci-joint mon chèque pour $100, en espérant de recevoir le prochan numero de "International Association of Jews From Egypt"

Emile Cohen, Brooklyn

Conferences on Egyptian Jewry USA & Israel

The following is a listing of papers on Egyptian Jewry, which were presented at three conferences, the first at Tel Aviv Unversity (1984), Program chairman Professor **Shimon Shamir**. He edited a book of these papers. An evaluation of the conference written by **Moise Sanua** will be included in a future issue of our newsletter.

The second conference (International) took place at the Middle East Institute of Columbia University, December 1999. The whole conference has been video taped. Financial request to transcribe all of the papers have not been successful so far. Professor **Victor D. Sanua** was program chairman. Dr. **Jean Marc Oppenheim** was in charge of local arrangements for the conference at Columbia University.

The most recent conference was held at Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan, Israel in January 2004. We shall review in this issue of the newsletter, a few of the papers that were presented primarily dealing with contemporary studies on the expulsion of Jews from Egypt (see page 12). The Program chairman of this conference was Professor **Nahem Ilan**. He was assisted by Dr. **Arie Schlossberg**.

Conference at Tel Aviv University, June 1984

The Jews of Egypt: A Mediterranean Society in Modern Times

Papers are found in a book, The Jews of Egypt, edited by **Dr. Shimon Shamir** (1987), Westview Press, 5500 Central Avenue, Boulder, Colorado 80301

Aharoni, Ada, The Image of Jewish Life in Egypt in the Writings of Egyptian Jewish Authors in Israel and Abroad

Gerholm, Tomas, Economic Activities of Alexandrian Jews on the Eve of World War I, According to *le Mercure Egyptien*

Govrin, Nurit, The Encounter of Exiles from Palestine with the Jewish Community of Egypt During World War I, As Reflected in Their Writings

Hassoun, Jacque, The Traditional Jewry of the Hara

Kramer, Gudrun, Political Participation of the Jews in Egypt Between World War I and the 1952 Revolution

Landau, Jacob M., The Decline of the Jewish Community in the Eighteenth Century Cairo; A New Interpretation in the Light of Two Iberian Chronicles

Mayer, Thomas, The Image of Egyptian Jewry in Recent Egyptian Studies

Mizrahi, Maurice, The Role of Jews in Economic Development

Moreh, Shmuel, Ya'qub Sanu': His Religious Identity and Work in the Theater and Journalism, According to the Family Archive

Shamir, Shimon, The Evolution of the Egyptian Nationality Laws and Their Application to the Jews in the Monarchy Period

Shmuelevitz, Aryeh, The Jews in Cairo at the Time of the Ottoman Conquest: The account of Capsali

Somekh, Sasson, Participation of Egyptian Jews in Modern Arabic Culture, and the Case of Murad Faraj

Winter, Michael, Egyptian Jewry During the Ottoman Period as a Background to Modern Times

Zohar, Zvi, Lowering Barriers of Estrangement; Rabbanite-Karaite Intermarriage in the Twentieth-Century Egyptian Halakha

Conferences on Egyptian Jewry USA & Israel (Continued)

First International Conference on The Jews In Modern Egypt *From the Ottoman Period to the Present: Reflecting on the Second Exodus 1948-1998*
Thurs. Dec. 4, 1997, 9:00-5:45 pm, Middle East Institute, Columbia University

1) **Ada Aharoni, Technion**: *The Culture and Heritage of the Jews from Egypt as an Element in the Promotion of Relations Between Jews and Arabs*
2) **Joel Beinin**, Stanford University: *Economic Role of the Jewish Business Class in 20th Century Egypt*
3) **Jacques Hassoun**, Psychiatrist, Paris: *The Diversity and the Demise of the Egyptian Jewish Community*
4) **Emanuel Marx**, Tel Aviv University (former Director, Israeli Academic Center in Cairo): *Dealing with the Jewish Community in Egypt*
5) **Yoram Meital**, Ben Gurion University: *The Development of the Jewish Community in Cairo*
6) **Yaacov Meron**, Ministry of Justice, Israel: *The Common Denominator of the Expulsion of the Jews from Egypt and Other Arab Countries*
7) **Jean-Marc Oppenheim**, Middle East Institute, Columbia University: *Anglo-French Cultural Imperialism and the Jews of Modern Egypt*
8) **Victor D. Sanua**, St. Johns University: *A Short History of the Expulsion of the Jews from Egypt and Their Adaptation in Israel and in France*
9) **Sasson Somekh**, Tel Aviv University (Director, Israel Academic Research Center, Cairo): *Egyptian Novelists Remembering Their Jewish Neighbors*
10) **Albert De Vidas**, Editor, Erensia Sefardi and Amicale Alexandrie: *The Immigration of Spanish Jews to Egypt*
11) **Walter Zenner**, SUNY Albany: *Egypt as a Destination of Jewish Immigration*
12) **Zvi Zohar**, Hebrew University: *Halachah, Suicide, and Social Policy: Analysis of the Responsa of Egyptian Rabbis*
13) **Mara Leichman**, *A Comparison of Jews from Egypt and Morocco in Israel*

Bar-Ilan University
Interdepartmental Division of Jewish Studies
Department of Jewish History
The Institute for Research of Eastern Jewry
***The* Jews of Egypt in Modern Times**

An International
Research Conference
Monday-Wednesday, 12-14 January 2004

Aharoni, Ada, Egyptian Jews in Modern Times and Multiculturalism
Arnon, Yishai, The Religious Zionist Movement in Egypt, 1944-1956
Barda, Racheline, Exodus II: From Egypt to Australia
Ben-Ya'akov, Michal, Moroccan Jews in Egypt
Cohen-Egler, Tamara, Image, Memory and Identity; Egyptian Jews in Brazil
Della Pergola, Sergio: The Demographic Characteristics of Egyptian Jewry in the Context of the Demographics of 20th Century World Jewry
Fedida, Yves, Analysis of the 1840 Montefiore Census of Alexandria
Ginat, Rami, Stages in the History of the Communist Movement in Egypt – the Jewish Aspect
HaCohen, Avi'ad, The Contribution of Egyptian Rabbis in Modern Times to Halakhic Public Law
Harel, Yaron, The Communal Identity of Syrian Jews in Egypt
Ilan, Nahem, "Lehem HaMa'arekhet": The Collected Eulogies Composed by Rabbi Aharon Ben-Shim'on as a Literary and Historical Source for the History of Egyptian Jewry
Kabha, Mustafa, The Egyptian Jewish Press in the Arabic Language
Katz, Malka, The Activity of the "Mizrahim" in Egypt from the 1920's onward; Between Ideological and Economic Support
Kerem, Yitzhak, Emigration and Settlement of Greek Jews in Egypt
Kupfeshmidt, Uri, The Orosdi-Back Department stores: whom did they serve?
Laskier, Michael, Communal Organization in Cairo: Explicit and Hidden Struggles over Communal Leadership during the Nasserite era, and the Relationship between the Leadership and the Authorities
Marzouq, Joseph, Murad Farag – Author and Leader
Nacamuli, Alec, Family Life and Education in Egypt and in the Diaspora

Conferences on Egyptian Jewry USA & Israel (Continued)

Rhine, Ra'anan, Diplomacy, Propaganda and Humanitarian Gesture: Franco's Spain and the Jews of Egypt, 1956-1968

Roemer, Sarina, Jewish Immigrants in Sao Paulo

Rouchou, Joelle, Memories of Egyptian Jews in Rio de Janeiro

Sanua D, Victor, A Short History of The Exodus Of Jews From Egypt following the Arab-Israeli Wars

Sarfaty, Rahel, The Yedid Collection – a Reflection of a Multifaceted Community

Schlossberg, Arie, Jewish Heritage in Egypt – Perpetuation or Disappearance

Se'adiah, Haim, Rabbi Nahum Effendi and Rabbi Dr. Moshe Ventura – Two Models of Public and Spiritual Leadership

Shamir, Shimon, The Jewish Community of Egypt

Shweika, Ya'akov, The Institution "Ahava ve-Ahva": Goals, Activities and Influence

Snir, Reuven, Involvement of Jews in Arabic Canonical Culture in Egypt in Modern Times

Somekh, Sasson, The Image of the Jew in Egyptian Literature

Starr, Deborah A., Layla – Bint al-Balad?

Toaff, Ariel, Italian Rabbis in Alexandria

Toaff, Ariel, Objectives and trends in the Study of Egyptian Jews in Modern Time

Tsimhoni, Daphne, Memory and Quest for Identity: Egyptian Patriotism, Levantinism and Zionism in the Memoirs of the 20th Century Egyptian Jews

Ya'akov, Ephraim, Yemenite Jews in Egypt

Yerushalmi, Ovadiah, The Egyptian Jewish Press

Zohar, Zvi: "Bat Na'avat HaMardut": Rabbi Aharon Ben-Shim'on's Halakhic Project to Rescue Wives from Maltreatment by their Husbands

Conference on Egyptian Jewry at Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel, January 12-14, 2004

The interdepartmental division of the Jewish Studies Department and Jewish History of **Bar-Ilan University** arranged an International Research Conference **"The Jews of Egypt in Modern Times"** which took place at the International Congress Center Monday-Wednesday 12-14 January 2004. The chairman of the Conference was **Professor Nahem Illan. Dr. Arie Schlossberg** assisted him. Thirty-five papers were presented by scholars who included Egyptian-born Jews from various countries and Egyptian Jews from Israel and abroad.

We can only mention a few highlights of the conference. The titles of all the papers are found on page 11. A major speaker was **Professor Shimon Shamir** who reported on his experiences as the Israeli ambassador to Egypt, when he was involved with a study of the last vestiges of the presence of Jews in the country. He indicated that the study of Jews of the Middle East tend to be scarce if not existing in university libraries. In 1984, **Dr. Shamir** was instrumental in arranging for a conference on the Jews of Egypt, which was held at Tel-Aviv University. It resulted in a publication of a book in 1987 with a title The Jews of Egypt, a Mediterranean Society in Modern Times printed by the Westview Press, Boulder USA. A list of the papers that appeared in the book are on page 8. **Mr. Jean Claude Niddam**, from the Ministry of Justice of the Israeli government spoke about the need to collect evidence of the assets that Jews have left in Egypt before their expulsion. A detailed questionnaire has been made available and forwarded to Jews around the world so as to have an inventory of the lost property the Jews from Egypt have left behind. Since we have received a copy of that questionnaire, members are invited to send a request to IAJE for those forms if they want to make their own claim.

Professor Ya'akov Schweika spoke of the founding of *Ahava ve Ahva* by his father, which offered seminars in religious topics and how important it was in influencing a number of young Jewish religious scholars. He referred to the great fear, which Egyptian Jews had about the possession of Hebrew books. The fear impelled them to discard these books. Professor Sergio Della Pergola spoke on demographic characteristics of Jews in Egypt. According to his estimate, there were 65,839 Jews in Egypt in 1947, 8,500 in 1960 and 100 in 2002.

Dr. Arie Schlossberg, a psychiatrist who heads the *Centre pour l'Etude et la Recherche du Patrimoine des Juifs d'Egypte,* provides scholarships to students interested in conducting research on Egyptian Jewry. See page 26 for the awards. During his talk he urged that steps be taken for the preservation of our heritage and voiced his concern that the Jews of Egypt had not taken any measures to ensure the survival of their tradition. He emphasized the fact that the Iraqi Jews in Israel have already established an impressive organization which includes a headquarter for their historical research and a museum. What the Jews of Egypt need to do besides fund raising, is to bring together whatever artifacts we were able to take out of the country in spite of censorship and bagage restrictions. (Many Egyptian Jews were allowed to take, in general two bags with them when they left the country and a small amount of cash.)

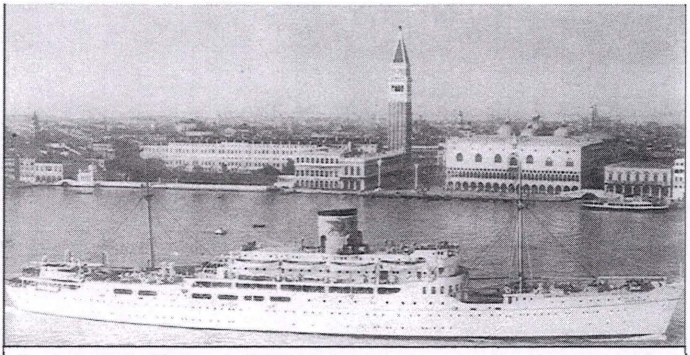
Professor Ada Aharoni spoke about the fact that the Jews of Egypt were raised in Western schools and were also familiar with the local Arab culture. Therefore they could serve as a model for a harmonious relationship between Jews and Arabs. **Professor Victor Sanua** provided a short history of the

Continued on Page 27

The above picture was taken on the deck of the *SS Esperia* on our way to Naples, September 3, 1950. The gentleman in the middle is an Iraqi student headed for the USA to do graduate studies in America with whom I became very friendly. The picture shows the last letters of Esperia on the life preserver behind him.

On the *SS Saturnia*, sister ship of the well known *SS Andrea Doria*. Your editor is in center. On our way from Naples to New York, September 8, 1950.

Esperia is an Italian word for "hope" which was an appropriate name of a ship for those traveling to a better world. Many Jews from Egypt are familiar with the ship shown on the right, the **SS Esperia** of the Adriatica Line. Thousands of Jews from Egypt who had become refugees or were forced out of the country because of the impossiblities of making a living, boarded that ship in Alexandria. They all landed on Italian shores first. Through the assistance of international Jewish organizations, they were able to go to various countries depending on their nationality and type of visa they had.



The Italian ship *SS Esperia* (9,314 grt, 488 ft. long) was launched in 1941, but not completed until 1949. The background is the city of Venice. Sent by **Victor Acker**

They went primarily to France, with later departures to the USA, England, and Brazil. Some settled in Italy, but the bulk headed for Israel. Prior to going to Israel a number of Jews of Egypt received in France agricultural training, which they planned to use once they settled in Israel. In one of our articles, "A short History of the Expulsion of the Jews of Egypt following the Arab-Israeli war", we provide a narrative of the difficulties incurred by Jews of Egypt before their departure and difficulties in the process of leaving the country. They were fearful to use the word "Israel" in their conversation. Instead, they used the expression *chez nous* (crudely translated, "at our home").

The editor took the **SS Esperia** on September 3, 1950 on his way to the USA as he was admitted to one of the universities to attend graduate school in psychology. The ship was loaded with refugees. He witnessed a very moving event once the ship reached international waters. All of a sudden, all those refugees started to sing with great gusto, the *Hatikva*, the national anthem of Israel. This was an expression of a deep feeling of relief from the unpleasant experiences they had before and during their departure.

The editor was planning to land in Naples and take the first liner going to the USA. He had made no reservation ahead of time. He was lucky to find a ticket, only in second class, on the **SS Saturnia**, a sister ship of the well-known **Andrea Doria**. The **SS Saturnia** was leaving for New York City the same day of his arrival in Naples. Two weeks later, he arrived to attend graduate school in Michigan in the USA.

Jews from Egypt in Brazil

NOTE: We wrote to Mr. Alain Bigio of Sao Paulo, Brazil to let us know about the status of Egyptian Jewry in Brazil. We received the following report.

"A few years ago we had a big dinner party reuniting all the Egyptians that had arrived in Brazil in the fifties and **Mr. Claudio Leon** (and others) organized it. However that was the last time there was something organized. As I mentioned in my letter to Eli Nahum, the community is not united. In fact I have a published article (in Portuguese) about our Jewish Egyptian unity. In my article I mention the fact that there was a small Jewish community in the middle of the 19th century that was reinforced by immigration from Syria, Turkey, Italy, Greece and even Eastern Europe All these people had their own communities and customs and have not lived long enough together to create a united community. Thus when we arrived in Brazil, those of us who identified with the *Halabies* (Aleppo Syrian Jews) joined them, others who identify with the Ashkenazim joined them and so forth, dispersing the community. Of course also, many interfaith marriages, have dispersed the community even more. So this is basically my opinion. So feel free to publish my letter in your magazine with no restriction whatsoever. I surely would like to remain in touch.

LEILA MOURAD – 1918-1995
Meeting arranged by AJE (UK)

"Our afternoon (01/25/04) of nostalgia and tribute to the actress and singer was a resounding success. Eighty Four of our members were present and had it not been for the restrictions imposed by the Avenue House, rules we would probably had an attendance of over 100. **Leila Mourad** was beautiful, she had a voice of a nightingale. She became one of the greatest stars of Egyptian cinema and recorded hundreds of songs. Born in Cairo in 1918 **Leila Mourad** passed away in 1995, however still remembered by thousands.

Joe Assouline's expose' on his aunt, expertly bilingual, addressed the audience in both French and English to everyone's delight. One could just assess the sheer pleasure he gave them simply by observing all the smiles on people's faces. "Le Clou" was of course the excerpt from one of the most popular films with **Neguib el Rihani** the great Egyptian actor, and **Anwar Wagdi** her husband. A typical musical comedy of the era, spoken in Arabic, illustrating the ambiance of Cairo and Alexandria, in 1949 and its western influence now long gone."

Written by **Ted Nahmias**, London, England.

Historical Sketch on Leila Mourad

Leila Mourad was a leading performance artist of a Jewish family of actors. She was considered by many as Egypt's second diva, after **Um Kalsum**. **Muhammad Abdel Wahhab**, a leading vocalist of the interwar period, recognized Leila Mourad's vocal talents. Under the tutelage of **Togo Mizrahi**, a filmmaker, her acting ability developed quickly. She appeared in 28 films and recorded hundreds of songs. She co-stared in six movies with actor-director-producer **Anwar Wagdi**. She married him and in the process adopted the Muslim religion. They were divorced in 1950. Her religious status caused quite a number of problems. She was accused of having visited Israel in 1952. The Syrian government persisted in enforcing a total ban on her films and songs. Jewish religious groups were appalled by her conversion, but when there was a rumor that Leila Mourad visited the Maimonides synagogue in the *hara* (Jewish quarter) and asked the sexton to pray for the soul of her father, she regained the esteem of the Jews of the *hara* having appropriately honored her father.

See Benin, Joel (1998).

A Short History on the Education of Jewish Children in Egypt

At the turn of the 19th century, Egypt did not have regular schools for Jewish children except *Kuttabs*.where the children received primarily religious instruction from Rabbis. The first effort at secularization of the education was made around 1840 with the assistance of Crémieux, a Jewish French politician. He founded a school for the middle class, which did not last too long. Later on towards the latter part of the 19th Century, with many arrivals of immigrants primarily from European countries, parents were conflicted between sending their children to non-Jewish schools or inadequate Jewish schools run by the Jewish community. The parents got in touch with the *Alliance Israèlite Universelle of Paris*. This association was established in 1860 by the "fortunate and assimilated" French Jews to help other fellow Jews whenever they were, suffering discrimination because of their religion. It established schools in Morocco, Iran, Israel, Lebanon, Tunisia, Turkey and Syria. The Jews of Egypt invited the Alliance to found a school system similar to the network of schools for Jewish children in all Muslim countries.

Originally as reported by Moise Sanua, whose contributions have been mentioned frequently in the newsletter, the Rabbis objected to such secular education. The school system by the Alliance was created in 1902, but contrary to their efforts in other Muslim countries, the Alliance did not last long in Egypt. Most teachers were trained in Paris at the Ecole Normale. The Jewish community, in time took over the educational responsibility and established the *Ecoles Gratuites Israelites at Abbassiah*.

Our assumption is that early on, the Jews from Egypt being

financially better off than Jews in other Muslim countries did not seem to need the services of the Alliance Israelite Universelle for a long time. In 1912, the Alliance gave their facilities to the Jewish community. In time, a large building was constructed at Abbasiah, suburb of Cairo with the name of Ecole Sebyl, possibly indicating the area. In general, it provided primary education. The languages taught besides French were English, Arabic, Hebrew and Italian. It seems that Jewish schools were provided with Italian teachers, free to the school and paid by the Italian government, which at that time was Fascistic.

In 1945, according to **Nissim Sabban Cohen**, the **Sebyl School** was able to prepare students for the Egyptian *bachot*, the government high school diploma, but it was able to graduate only one class. Because of the Arab Israeli conflict in 1948, the school was taken over by the Egyptian authorities.

Besides the regular community schools, there were other schools named after big donors, **Ecole Cattaoui Pacha** for boys and **Ecole Marie Suares** for girls. Both Cattaoui and Suares were very rich bankers. Our good friend from Paris, **Albert Oudiz,** reflects on his years at **Cattaoui Pacha School** which seemed to have provided a sounder education than the other schools. Boys and girls were separated in the six years of primary education, but they were joined afterwards. Oudiz looked forward to the time when he would be able to sit with girls! Other schools which were private include **Ecole Jabes** reported on page 26, **Ecole Abraham Betesh** in Heliopolis, a rich suburb of Cairo founded by a Belgian company (see class picture sent to us by **Mr. David Abadi** on page 7, and **Ecole Keroub** where the IAJE Editor started his first job as a teacher of English. Pictures of the **Keroub School** appeared in issue #8 of the newsletter.

There was another school in the Community called, *Goutte de Lait (drop of milk)* established by **I. Benaroio**, an Italian Jew. It was built with the intention of providing a heavy breakfast to children of poor families prior to classes.

Alexandria had a similar system of schooling by the community, except that they had a *Lycee de l'Union Juive* which offered the *Bachot* (high school diploma) with similar standards to the regular French Lycee. It seems that it was established when one brother Leonce, teacher at St. Catherine School in 1925, spoke about the blood libel which revolted the elders of the Jewish community. This impelled them to establish a secondary school of their own.

Our friend, Dr. Albert de Vidas, reports on a very interesting conflict regarding the schooling of Jewish children. Alexandria, at the turn of the 19th century, had many Jewish families from Leghorn (Livorno), Italy and Trieste. The problem arose whether they should study Italian or French. After a number of discussions the decision was reached that boys should go to French schools and girls should go to Italian schools. This separation did not last long and French dominated as a language.

It is somewhat surprising that Jews from Egypt never established a system of Jewish high schools. We are assuming that such schooling would not be quite appropriate in a Muslim country. According to one of my Coptic (Christian) correspondents, Coptic religious schools had no prestige, and it was preferable to attend government schools. The other problem was that parents who wanted their children to go for higher education and professions preferred for them to go to non-Jewish schools, which provided official diplomas, which made it possible to attend Universities in foreign countries.

Children of rich families in need of a profession were schooled abroad. It must be added that bright Jewish children from modest homes were given scholarships by the Rabbinate to enable them to further their studies in non-Jewish schools. The Rabbinate sent promising religious students to a Sephardic Seminary in the Island of Rhodes to become Rabbis.

In general, children of middle class and above went to religious schools or Lycees (secular). The writer was sent to College des Freres St. Jean Baptiste de la Salle at Bab el Louk. There were 5 other similar schools in other areas of the city, Daher, Choubrah, Heliopolis, Zeitoun, St. Marc which provided Junior High School studies. Three times a year, students of the upper classes had to take exams at the Central High School called Koronfish. Their buildings were not in a desirable neighborhood. The school was founded in 1854 in a pleasant neighborhood, but in time there was a decline. There was another Catholic school which was not a branch, it was called College de la Salle.

Education in Catholic school was very strict. Every day there was homework and study of a text, anything to do with French culture, surprisingly nothing about Egypt. We had to take orals in the morning, and if our rating was poor, we had to stay after class at 4 30 P.M. to study and confront the teacher when ready. The only day we had no classes was Thursday. Every two months we had class exams, and those who were getting failing grades could not be promoted. During those days, many children had private tutors to help them. We had two hours of Arabic and two hours of English every week.

Looking at my own report card 1933-1934, the following subjects were included in the curriculum. Instruction morale (catéchism), Lecture expliquée, Grammaire, Texte choisis, (poetry), Ortographie, Phraseologie and Analyse, Composition Française, Arithmétique, Histoire, Geographie, Sciences Physiques, Calligraphie, Dessin, Solfège, Politesse (During the summer months, I did not do so well, possibly because I was mischievous!), Visite des Cahiers, Gymnastique, Arabe, Anglais. Furthermore, every week we were graded and we had to obtain a signature from our parents. Good students who came out first in the class in French, English, or Arabic, received medals, which were pinned to their black smock for a week.

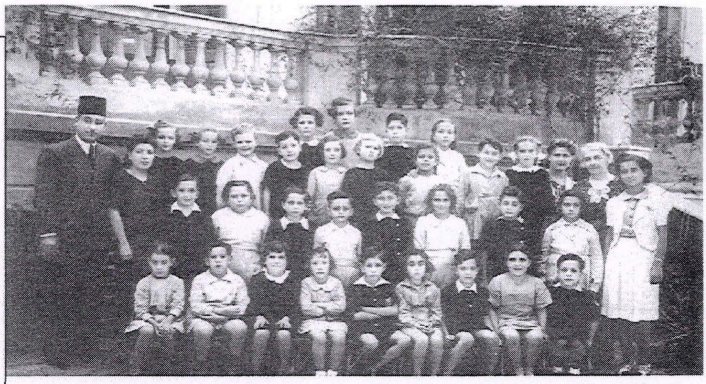
A SHORT HISTORY (Continued)

Sometimes your Editor managed to get the three medals the same week. The Arabic medal was a surprise since he never learned to speak the language appropriately, but the editor managed to learn the literary Arabic, which had little similarity with popular Arabic.

About 50 percent of my classmates at Bab el Louk were Jewish. Jacques Acher (see newsletter of ASPCJE, Dec. 2003), the percentage was even higher (90 percent) at the same school. It must be indicated that during our three years of schooling, there were no efforts of any conversion to Catholicism in our classes by the Brothers, and we never heard of such incidents.

Regarding our preparation for Bar Mitzvah, we had no afternoon religious schools. Our Jewish education consisted of a rabbi coming to our homes to teach us the rudiments of our religion. However we identified ourselves very strongly as Jews. At home we learned how to sing the *Hatikva* in Ladino. My friends and I went to the Synagogue *Shaar Hashamayim* (*Temple Ismaliah)* every Friday night, and strictly observed the holidays. Intermarriage was unknown. Children of very religious families attended classes at *Ahava Ve Ahva* founded by **Rabbi Choueka**, whose two sons are now in Israel, **Yaakov Choueka** (computers, at Bar Ilan University) and **I. Chavet** (nuclear physics). Incidientaly, the synagogue of Egyptian Jewry in Brooklyn is also called *Ahava ve Ahva*.

Continued on Page 26



Class picture of the French-language Jabes School, Cairo, 1938. Could you identify anyone?

Mrs. Rachel Jabes, founder of the Ecole Jabes in 1934 at her desk.

L'ECOLE JABES

Text sent to us by Mrs. Tina Jabes Winston., Washington, D.C. It originally appeared in Maurice Fargeon's book, LES JUIFS EN D'EGYPTE, depuis les Origines j'usqua ce Jour. (1938)

"L'Ecole Jabes a ete fondee en Septembre 1934 par Madame Rachel Jabes dans un petit local à Abdin. Le succès remporté, encouragea la Direction de l'Ecole à chercher un local plus spacieux assumant de ce fait une lourde responsabilite qui devait par la suite gener le développement normal du nouvel establissement. Cependant, grâce à l'énergie de Madame Jabes, les difficultés des premiers moments furent vite applanies, et l'on put constater qu'en un laps de temps relativement court, l'Ecole avait marqué des progrès considerables.

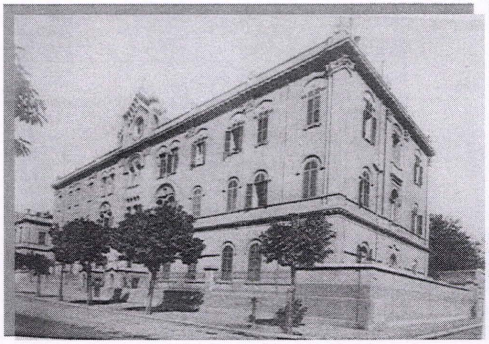
Au début le nombre des élèves ne dépassait guère une centaine. Ce chiffre s'est accru des la deuxième annee en s'élevant à 200 pour atteindre en 1937 280 élèves. En 1938 le nombre des élèves se chiffrait par 350. Pour s'expliquer cet accroissement, il y a lieu de considérer les résultants obtenus lors des examens officiels du Certificat d'Etudes primaires durant les trois dernieres années. En 1935 sur douze élèves présentes, douze sont reçus avec quatre mentions. En 1936 sur 15 présentés, 15 sont reçus avec 8 mentions. En 1937 sur vingt élèves presentes au Certificat d'Etudes Primaries, vingt sont reçus avec 14 mentions et sur quatre présentes pour la première annee au Brevet élémentaire tous les quatre ont été reçus. Ajoutons que les 20% des élèves sont des sujets Egyptiens de confession Musulmane."

A Listing of Biographical Sketches on Notables in a Jewish Community in Egypt

As a young person in Egypt the editor often heard about the famous rich Egyptian Jews who made so many contributions to the Egyptian economy. Naturally they all managed to get out of the country, if not expelled. We have always been wondering where their descendants are and whether they have any interest in knowing about the life of their forefathers who were born and raised in Egypt.

The following names have been taken from the 1942 annual directory of prominent Jews from Egypt which was published by the *Societe des Editions Historiques Juives d' Egypte* founded by **Maurice Fargeon** who wrote the classic book on Les Juifs en Egypte published in 1938. We are here providing the names of those who appeared in this annual as well as their professions. In many instances, the professions indicated that they were owners of great enterprises or managing big businesses in some details. To simplify matters we only wrote the word "business" as profession. In some cases the profession was indicated as *rentier* since we have not been able to find the equivalent in English. This is the man whose source of income are the rents of his buildings and lands. If any of our members recognize the names on that list as being a descendant of that family line, or an acquaintance of the family, they could write to the editor and he will send the biographical sketch.

ACHER, Abramino, Business
ADDA, Elie, Lawyer
ADDA, Joseph, Rentier
ADDA, Victor A, Business
ADES, Emile N, Rentier
AGAMI, Aslan Levy, Business
AGAMI, Levy Solomon, Buisness
AGHION, Gaston, Engineer Architect
AGHION, Max, Rentier
ALBAGLI, Dr. Victor, Psychiatrist
ALEXANDER, Aron, Lawyer
AMBAR, Shaoul, Business
AMIEL, Isaac, Entrepreneur
APETKMANN, Alexandre, Business
ARWAS, Victor, Business
AVIGDRO, Samuel, Engineer Agronomist
AZOULAI, Maurice, Business
BABANY, Leon, Lawyer
BARAGAN, Marc, Lawyer
BARCILON, Haim, Rentier
BASSAN, Leon, Business
BENACHER, Moise, Travel Agency
BENGHIAT, Joe, Business
BENYACAR, Marco, Business.
BENVENISTE, Isaac, Hospital Director
BENZAKEIN, Felix, Lawyer
BERESSI, Victor, Business
BERMAN, Michael, Business
BONDI, Giuseppe A, Arms Salesman
CAMPOS, Benvenuto, Rentier
CASTRO, Leon, Lawyer
CATTAN, James, Bookseller
CATTAUI, Aslan, Business
CATTAUI, Rene Bey, Business
CHALOM, Rodolphe Bey, Lawyer
CHONCHOL, David, Gynecologist
CHOUEKA, Jacques, Jewler & Broker
CICUREL, David, Business
CICUREL, Salvator Bey, Business
COHEN, Alfred N. Business
COHEN, Daniel, Lawyer
COHEN, Rene, Business
COHN-GALATZ, Isac, Business
DORRA, Haim, Industrialist
EZRAN, Albert, Business
EZRI, Abramino, Business
FARHI, Joseph, Paper Business
FORTE, David, Business
FRANCO, Moses L, Business
GATTEGNO, Maurice, Rentier
GOAR, Edwin N. J., Business
GOAR, Jacques, Rentier
GOLIGER, Jacques, Jeweler
GOZLAN, Albert, Jeweler
GREEN, Ralph, Rentier
HALLAC, Edouard, Business
HANAN, Victor, Business
HARARI, Clement, Lawyer
HARARI, Ernest, Lawyer
HARARI, Ralph, Business
HARARI Pacha, Sir Victor, Business
HAYM, Albert, Business
HAZAN, Mtre Daoud, Lawyer
HOUROWITZ, Avinoam, Engineer
JABES, Isaac, Business
JASSY, Sam, Lawyer
JEHIEL, Maurice, Lawyer
KATZ, Dr. Fritz, Surgeon
KRISCHEWSKY Henry, Banker
KRONBERGER, Abramino, Business
KRONBERGER, Maurice, Business
LEVI, Emilio, Industrialist
LEVI, Guido, Business
LEVI, Dr. Isaac, Administrator
LEVI, Sedaka, Lawyer
LEVI BABOVITCH TOBIA, Rabbi
LEVE de BENZION, Moise, Business
LISCOVITCH, Isaac, Jeweler
LUZZATTO, Pacifico, Business
MADJAR, Vitali, Rentier
MAINZER, Prof. Fritz, Pathologist
MANI, Felix, Business
MANI, Simon, Business Shipping
MAWAS, Zaki, Lawyer
MENASCE, Baron Charles, Rentier
MENASCE, Baron Felix, Rentier
MEYERHOF, Dr. Max, Oculist
MISRAHY Pacha, Emmanuel, Lawyer
MIZRAHI, Salomon, Agronomist
MODAI, Raphael, Lawyer
MOLCO, Dr. Albert, Pathologist
MORPURGO, Nelson, Lawyer
MOSSERI, Felix N, Business
MOSSERI, Henry, Engineer Agronomist
MOSSERI, Bey Joseph V, Film Distributor
MOSSERI, Maurice N, Business
MOSSERI, Maurice, Cotton Business
NACAMULI, Albert, Paper Business
NACAMULI, Isaac, Rentier
NAGGAR, Elie, Business
NAHMAN, Rephael Architect
NAHOUM, S.Em. Haim, Rabbi
NAHUM, Enrico Halfalla, Business
NEUMAN, Leon, Editor
OHANNA, Nesim, Rabbi
OREBI, Zaki, Lawyer
PADOA, Felix, Lawyer
PALACI, Henry M., Business
PICARD, Prof. Dr. Hugo, Surgeon
PINTO, Prof. Dr. Carlo, Physician
POLAK, Edwin, Lawyer
POLIT, Elie, Journalist
RODRIGUE, Ezra, Business
ROLO, Robert J. Business
ROLO, Sir Robert S., Lawyer
ROSENBERG, Prof. Dr. Max, Physician
ROSSANO, Fernand, Broker
ROSSANO, Jaques, Broker
SAKKAL, Raphael, Exchange
SALAMA, Joseph, Business
SALEM, Ovadia, Business
SALINAS, Lazare, Administrator
SALTIEL, Albert, Business
SAPORTA, Daniel, Engineer Agronomi
SAPORTA, Jacques, Business
SETTON, Cesar, Finance
SHINDLER, Robert, Printer
SONSINO, Vita, Lawyer
TIANO, Isidore, Art Expert
VAENA, Isaac, Fruits & Vegetables
VENTURA, Dr. Moise, Rabbi
VIDON, Asian, Business
VIVANTE, Sabino, Lawyer
WEINSTEIN, Benjamin, Surgeon
WEINSTEIN, Joseph, Lawyer
WEINSTEIN, Moise B., Printer
YALLOUZ, Dr. Alfred, Transportation
ZARMATI, Lionel, Lawyer
ZILKHA, Abdallah, Bank Administrator
ZILKHA, Khedouri, Bank Administrator
ZILKHA, Maurice, Bank Administrator



College St. Jean-Baptiste de la Salle, Bab-El-Louk (Formerly Ismailieh) on 20, Rue Cheikh Rihan. Picture taken in 1928. It was sent to us by **Richard Milosh** of Adelaide, Australia, an Armenian born in Egypt. He is working on a doctorate on the history of Armenians and Jews from Egypt who immigrated to Australia. This school was built by the French Catholic Brothers

Excursion to the Sakkarah necropolis by 8th graders attending St. Jean Baptiste de la Salle school (Bab el Louk). The names we can recall are: Joseph Harari (Australia), Isaac Crespin (Israel), Zolmino, Fuchs, Mario Feininger (USA), Victor Cohen, Albert Chouchan (Israel, dec.), Rodolphe Goldstein (Israel, dec.), Andre Sanua (Israel, dec.), Albert Ades, Fernando Zetouni, Abraham Coronel (dec.), Roland Goldstein (Israel, dec.), Joseph Bension, Claude Alouche, Alvonello, Jean Tseppas (Greece, his father owned one of the best known pastry shops in Cairo). Can you identify any of the other students?

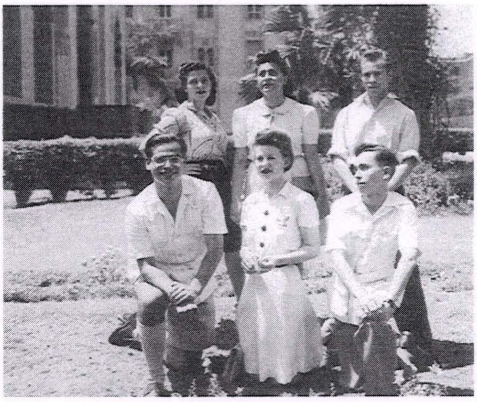
Lincoln High school attached to the American University in Cairo with some classmates. 1938. Main University building in the background.

Graduating class of Lincoln High School of AUC. 1939. Oriental Hall in the background.

REMINDER:

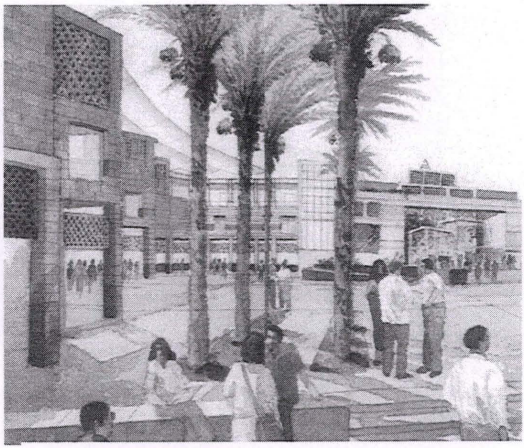
Be part of this important endeavor to preserve our precious heritage. Send your subscriptions and donations to the IAJE c/o **Dr. Victor D. Sanua, 2416 Quentin Road, Brooklyn, NY 11229** USA – do it today, do not delay!

Le Lycee Francais of Cairo on Hawayati St. Built in 1927.



Some members of the graduating class in 1945 on the campus of American University in Cairo.

American University in Cairo celebrates diversity at International Day, photographed by Claude Stemmelin. AUC Today, Summer 2003.



The projected 260-acre new campus site of American University in Cairo which will be completed by 2007.

CHECK US OUT ONLINE

We are pleased to inform our readers that IAJE has created its own website. You can now read articles and publications, view photos, receive more information about the IAJE, and view complete copies of our past newsletters.

Check us out @ http://www.iajegypt.org

Also, don't forget to sign up to our online discussion group: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/iajegypt

Funny Stories and Jokes (nokates) received from the membership.

Goha (Djoha) against *le seka el hadid* (Railway)

Do you remember one of Goha's *hadduda* (story) which goes like that? Goha lived in Doumiat. One day his father told him "ya ibni" you are a big boy now, you should go to Cairo and see how beautiful our capital is. So Goha packed his bag went to the railway station and asked for a *Taskara aala Masr* (a ticket to Cairo). *Taieb* (yes) said the employee, it's 5 pounds. *Abadan* (never) said Goha I'll pay you 3 pounds. "La ya raguil mush mumkin". If you want to go to Cairo the ticket price is 5 pounds you cannot bargain with the administration. Look said Goha you either accept 3 pounds for the ticket or I'll walk to Cairo. "Aala kefak", said the railway employee, "ruh mashi". So Goha took his bag and started walking between the rails. An hour later a train arrived. Seeing a man on the track, the engineer blew the whistle once, he blew it twice, but Goha kept on walking. Finally the train stopped just behind him but before the engineer was able to say a word, Goha turned around and shouted to him "ismaa ya raguil, ultilak talata guiney, yabay, ma tigrish uaraia" Sabah el kheir wa allah maakoum... (Listen man, I told you three pounds and don't run after me! Good morning and may god be with you.)

Sent by Albert Braunstein, Melbourne Australia

LIKE TEACHING CAMELS

Djoha had six children and did not earn much money. His business was very poor. One day the Sultan was coming to visit in Djoha's neighborhood. Of course, everyone began to get ready for this great event. Djoha borrowed a camel from his neighbor. He went before the Sultan and said: "Look, I am a great magician!"

"So, what do you do?" responded the Sultan.

"Do you see this camel?" Djoha said. "I can make this camel talk!"

"Come on now, how could you possibly do that?" replied the Sultan.

Djoha answered, "Only when we are alone can I give you the explanation. Call me to your palace!"

The Sultan departed. After two or three days, he sent for Djoha, and said to him: "You came with a camel, you told me that you know how to make him speak. Know that you cannot lie to the Sultan! If you are telling a lie, it will cost you your head!"

"Alright," said Djoha. "I agree you can cut off my head, if I am lying." Then he said, "In order to make the camel speak I have to teach him for twenty years, and for that reason I need a villa next to the Sultan's palace, where the camel can stay. The camel will receive good food to eat, and I must receive two ducats every day." The Sultan agreed and said to him, "Take your family and come!"

When Djoha went back to his neighborhood, his friends said to him, "Djoha, you are risking your head! A camel can't speak!" "You think I don't know that a camel can't speak? But for twenty years I, my wife and my children will live like kings! And in twenty years," he said, "Either I will die, or the Sultan will die, or the camel will die!"

From **Matilda Koen-Sarano**, Israel
Translated from Ladino by **Marianne Sanua**, Boca Raton, Florida.

Story appearing in the Association of Jews from Egypt (UK) Newsletter

La femme d'un Saidien se fait opérer des hémorrhoides et tous las amis qui viennent la visiter demandent où est-ce qu'elle s'est fait opérer.? Il repond: FE TIZHAH (son *derrière*, un mot plus poli!) et chaque fois c'est toujours la même question et la même réponse. Enfin, le fils du Saidien, Ahmed, est très gené et demande à son père de ne pas employer ce language vulgaire. Son père lui demande qu'est-ce que tu veux que je dise? Le fils lui dit: dis leur qu'elle a fait l'opération dans son POPO. Les amis viennent le lendemain et posent la même question. Le Saidien ouvre la bouche se gratte la tête, essaie de se rapeller ce que son fils lui a dit: impossible de trouver le mot. Alors de la fenêtre, il appelle son fils Ahmed, et lui dit: Hezay Tiz Omaq Esmahah Bel Faransawi??? (How do you say, "Your mother's *derriere* in French?"

From AJE (UK) newsletter by **Ted Nahmias**, London.

El Mashkallah Entahet

Nokta de Goha, Intitulee, "*La Querelle est Terminée*". Translated into Arabic by **Blanche Cohen Sachs**.

Yom wahed Goha samaa nas beyetshakellou maa baad. Howa akhad el lehaf betaou ou kharag bara. Lama kharag, el deiia el kharag min el bab, wahed min el mishtakleen nutt aleigh ou saraa el lehaf betaou. Oue kolohom garou fel dalam. Mebalbel, goha rah yenam. Meratou saaletou, "Leih canou b'yshtaklou?"

Goha al, "Ana maarafsh haga, kol ana aaraf en el lehaf tar ou el mashakala entahet."

From the book Nasreddin Hodja, Texte: Alpay Kabacali: Traduction: Pierette Grolier, 1988.

CONTINUED (Next Page)

Egyptian Rubrics (Continued)

Ya Mustapha by Bob Azam

Ya Mustapha, ya Mustapha,
Ana bahebak ya Mustapha
Sabaa senin fel Atarine
Delwa-ti negi chez Maxine.
Quand je t'ai vue sur le balcon
Tu m'as dis monte et ne fais pas de façon.
Chèrie je t'aime, chèrie je t'adore
comme la salsa del pomodor.

Tu m'allume avec une allumette
Et tu m'as fait perdre la tête.
Ya Mustapha, ya Mustapha
Ana ba hebak ya Mustapha
Repeat as many times as you want....

Sent by **Sultana Vidal**, Belgium

Abdel Wahab Song 1943

ZAHRA WETEDBAL ALA AGHSANHA,
WETROUH FEL HAL YALLA OTOFHA ABL AWANHA
DAL OMR KHAYAL
ENSA HOUMOUMAK WEKHALLI ALBAK KHALI
WEHBESS DAMEAK DA DAMEE ENAK GHALI
WECHRAB KASS ELTAHANI
DABOKRA KOLLO FANI
FANI
FANI.....

La fleur se fane sur sa branche et disparait,
sans délai cueille la avant sa déliquescence,
car notre vie aussi n'est qu'une ombre.
Oublie tes soucis et garde ton coeur heureux,
retiens tes larmes car tes larmes ont une valeur exceptionelle
et bois jusqu'a la lie la coupe du bonheur
car demain tout est neant
neant
neant.....

Poeme mis en chanson par **Abdel Wahab** vers 1943
Sent by **Victor Lipkin**, Paris, France

Gentillesse Populaire Egyptienne ou Dialogue Bilingue

Ce matin je rencontre mon amie Raymonde CONFINO qui, toute émue, me raconte là, avec son épouse, "dernière" de son fils, cadre plein d'avenir d'une importante banque francaise. Il était parti en voyage avec son épouse en...Egypte. Tout excité, il débarque de son avion au Caire et appelle aussitôt sa mère de son appareil portable pour lui dire que le voyage s'était bien passé. "Maman, lui dit-elle, il fait froid dans le taxi, comment dire en arabe, au chauffeur de fermer la vitre ?
"E'fel el shobbak /
"..E ... Eeef .. el sho ...sho... ?
" Non, pas comme ca, lui dit-elle passe l'appareil au chauffeur, je le lui dirais moi-même. Le chauffeur se saisit du telephone
" *Aywa ya sett.* dit-il (Oui Madame).
" *E'fel el shobbak* men fadlak.
" *Hader ya sett* (volontiers Madame)
" *We etwassah fe ebni, we hasseb 'aleh we hayatak* (Occupe-toi bien de lui surtout, sur ta vie !)
" *Eyouni ya sett.* (comme sur la prunelle de mes yeux! Madame)!

Et me voila rassurée pour la durée de son parcours, conclut Raymonde, rayonnante de plaisir. Pourrait-on imaginer cette scène entre une maman Egyptienne et un chauffeur Parisien. ? ou n'importe ou ailleurs dans le monde d'aujourd'hui ? Non, vraiment pas.

Albert OUDIZ, Paris

Misha Greselot (1919-1986)

Misha Greselot was a well-known caricaturist and humorist of great talent. He drew numerous drawings for the press, publicity, graphics and portraits. His collections of drawings reflect what was life like in Egypt (which does not exist anymore) in the forties. He published a series of pictures familiar to those who lived in Egypt during that period, and particularly of street vendors. We shall only provide here one of such vendors with a humoristic caption, and this is the vendor of round bread which looked like a big bagel covered with sesame seeds which were sold with hard-boiled eggs. Misha was born in Cairo in 1919 of Russian origin. As a youngster, he lived in Berlin until the age of 14. At the time of Hitler's rise to power, his family returned to Egypt where he spent 15 years of his life. He graduated from the American University in Cairo in journalism. He could write in French, English and German. In 1949, he selected France to immigrate out of Egypt. He provided his drawings to many humoristic newspapers and journals, such as Ici-Paris and France-Dimanche.

Caption by Misha Greselot

In the Cairo street, you can also buy these attractive lines of bread- by the yard as they sell it in France, or in enormous rings which have this advantage you can use them as a hula-hoop substitute. This is his song: "I sell "Simeet" and eggs, hard boiled and "stanguer" *zaatar*, too. They are baked brown and crisply coiled and fit the finest "gout" (taste in English)

Note: We have to thank Mr. David Abadi, London and Mr. Eli Nahum, Milan for providing information about Misha Greselot. If any member is interested to have more pictures by Misha, please write to the Editor.

COMMENT NOUS AVONS QUITTE L'EGYPTE

The following is a story received from one of our members reporting on her and her husband 's desire to leave Egypt because of unpleasant experiences Both had the Egyptian citizenship.

Février 1957, mon mari professeur dans une école normale de l'Etat, moi institutrice dans un collège de la Mission Laique Française, nous decidions de quitter l'Egypte. Etant de nationalite Egyptienne, il a fallu faire des démarches pour quitter le pays auprès des autorités..Ces démarches nous les avons faites sans parler à quiconque de peur d'être empêché de quitter le pays. Effectivement, depuis Octobre 1956, date à laquelle les Français et les Anglais avaient été renvoyés dans leur pays, il manquait des professeurs et des institutrices de langue francaise dans toutes les écoles et ils avaient besoin de nous, mais nous savions qu'un jour ou l'autre, notre tour viendrait ils nous mettraient à la porte. Pendant cette guerre de 1956, toutes les écoles etaient fermées, mais les professeurs et institutrices devaient obligatoirement venir tous les jours et attendre les ordres de reprendre les cours. A l'école normale où travaillait mon mari, le directeur avait réuni les professeurs en disant qu'il avait reçu des instructions du Ministère pour, pendant les cours, dénigrer l'attitude des Israeliens et des Juifs en particulier,,, ce disant, il levait la tête et regardait mon mari. sachant qu'il était Juif, il était très gêné et inconfortable. Deux de ses collègues se sont proposes de signer à la place de mon mari pour lui éviter de venir tous les jours et écouter ce même discours en attendant les reprise des cours. A partir de Décembre, Janvier 1957, les classes avaient été reprises normalement dans toutes les écoles et les nouveau directeurs étaient des Musulmans de langue française. Quand nos papiers était regularises, nous avions reçu nos passeports sur lesquels il etait écrit "départ simple sans retour en Egypte".

Mon mari a donne sa démission qui a ete acceptee et le lendemain, je donnais la mienne au directeur. Il ne voulait me donner ma lettre de démision sous pretexte que je n'avais pas ete loyale parce que d'après lui, je devais donner ma démission en même temps que mon mari; je ne voyais pas en quoi cela posait un problème, aussi, je me suis assise confortablement sur mon fauteuil en disant que je ne quitterai pas la pièce sans ma lettre de démisssion. Il faisait semblant de travailler, mais je le sentais très gêne, au bout d'un quart d'heure, il leva la tête et me demanda comment il avait été perçu par les professeurs. Je lui ai répondu qu'à mon sens quand un directeur prend ses nouvelles fonctions, son premier devoir est de réunir le personel pour le connaitre d'abord. savoir s'ils n'avaient pas certaines suggestions à faire etc... au lieu de quoi, il essayait de se tenir au courant des ragots qui se tenait dans les salles des professeurs, évidemment cela ne lui a pas plus; il a continué à faire semblant de travailler et au but d'un moment, il me remettait ma lettre de démission.

Nous n'avions pas le droit de rien emporter en quittant le pays. Aussi avons nous laissé toute une vie de souvenirs, nos meubles, nos biens et tant de choses auquelles nous tenions. C'était triste. Nous ne sommes pas posés de questions à savoir où nous irions; de plus d'Octobre 1947 à Septembre 1949, nous avions vécu à Paris, mon mari ayant eu la chance d'avoir une bourse du Gouvernement Français pour préparer et passer son doctorat de psychologie. Nous sommes arrivés à Paris le 8 Mars 1957; et le 1er. Avril, il travaillait dans une maison d'Edition. S.M.

Note: During a telephone conversation with Mrs. S.M. she indicated that she was frisked by a female at the Alexandria customs. She checked her bag and found some chocolate that Mrs. S.M. intended to give to her children once she was on board the departing ship. The custom official helped herself with some of the chocolate!

RABBI HAIM MOUSSA DOUEK
The Last Chief Rabbi of Egypt

Rabbi Haim Moussa Douek was born in Antab, Turkey in April 1905. The whole family immigrated to Egypt. Rabbi Douek attended school at *Ecole de l'Alliance Israelite Universelle* during the day, and in the afternoon he attended *Keter Torah*. He pursued Rabbinical studies at that school from 1918-1933. He studied the Talmud closely under Rabbi Yossef Pinto and under supervision of Rabbi Haim Nahoum Effendi, the Chief Rabbi of Egypt and subsequently he was ordained as a rabbi. In 1931, he became a founding member of the *Ahaba ve Ahva* institution. He was appointed Rabbi to *Ahaba ve Ahva* to teach the Talmud. In 1957 the government closed down the institution. In 1954 the Chief Rabbi of Egypt, Haim Nahum Effendi, appointed Rabbi Douek as chairman of the Bet Din (the Rabbinical court). In 1956 he was appointed deputy to Chief Rabbi Haim Nahum and to succeed him as Chief Rabbi of Egypt in the event of Rabbi Nahum's death or incapacitation. By that time Rabbi Nahum had been blind for many years. At his death in 1960, Rabbi Douek became Chief Rabbi of Egypt. The Jewish community, by that time, had dwindled to about ten thousand. When Rabbi Douek left the country in 1972, there were less than 100 Jews in the whole country. He came to the United States in 1972 and died in 1974.

In 1984, Rabbi Douek's private book collection, that had been brought from Egypt, was donated to Yeshiva University. The full story was printed in the Image Magazine of August 2003 and was mailed to us by Rabbi Douek's son, **Jacques Douek**, Brooklyn.

Letters to the Editor

Note: **Dr. James Beshai** was a freshmen at AUC while the editor was a senior student. Many years later your editor had to give a lecture at the University of Kentucky. **Mr. Beshai** was then working on his Ph.D. in psychology at UK. We were certainly very pleased to meet again and we have been in touch ever since. In this letter he writes about **Am Ali**, the man at the door of the university. We are including the picture of **Am Ali** taken by us in 1939 within this letter. He was very pleased that we brought to his memories an important picture. The following is his reaction to our latest newsletter:

"I was delighted to receive your letter and to read the IAJE Newsletter. It is a masterpiece of memories of youth which evoked my nostalgia for the French Cairo of our college days at AUC. I read the whole newsletter even though I barely have a reading French. Octave Kiven and R. Rizzo were my French teachers at Lincoln School. I think that I acquired French by osmosis whenever I listened to discussions with my cosmopolitan classmates at AUC. I remember Maurice Hodara commenting in French: "Quesque tu dis mon cher, c'est de Cicurel ça." I do not recall who was chiding him on the color of his shirt which did not look up to par, and he invoked the prestigious name of Cicurel. Cicurel topped the list of stores in Cairo in those days. If you bought from Sednawi, Ben Zion or Omar Effendi you were not quite into the elite.

Picture of **Am Ali** at the door of AUC who seemed to be a fixture of the establishment taken by V.D. Sanua in 1939.

I have so many fond memories of several of my classmates. I remember you walking by the Eucaliptus tree at the center of the green by Oriental Hall. I don't recall feeling at ease to talk to you, probably because your were a senior and I was a freshman. Then there was this brilliant senior who was majoring in science-mathematics. Dean Howard was running the school of correspondence courses for the USAFI and chose **Maurice Hodara** to be the supervisor replacing Marcia Conn. Maurice became my idol then because of his strong personality. He talked like a physician already when I met him as a freshman in 1943. He was determined to become a physician like Dr. Magyar who had a clinic in Fuad Ist Street. Maurice did in fact attain his medical degree at the Sorbonne no less. Collecting autographed "bon mots" was fashionable in those days, and he wrote one sentence: "Jimmy, success will be yours if you become more materialistic and less self-conscious". Maurice was always trying to help me get out of my shell. I was, and still am, a very shy introvert who would not dare speak to a stranger. Everyone on campus did not look like the typical native or *ibn el-balad* I was used to meet. I was living in a suburb of Cairo (Hadayek El=Qubba), and commuted for an hour by Bus 14 to AUC. Most of my classmates came by chauffeur driven Packards. I got to know the Nubian doorman guarding the gates of AUC. I forgot his name now. Was it **AM ALI** (Uncle Ali)?

I have his image sitting in a cubicle where he seemed to live 24 hours a day. He cowered with his corpulent figure over a wooden sofa filling the inside with his high white turban wrapped over his head. The entrance to AUC on Kasr El Eini Street was reserved for the chauffeurs who brought upper class co-eds like MaiJane Behman, Josette Tamches, the Eschinazi sisters, Esther Besso and others. Your editor came to school on foot! I was earning my college fees by working as a messenger boy at the USAFI. I would deliver correspondence courses between AUC professors and American GIs stationed at Huckstep Camp and John Paynefield Camp This area is now Cairo International Airport. It was a different era from the Cairo of today. There was a wonderful spirit binding Egyptians with Greeks, Armenians, Jews and other Europeans. Your Newsletter helps bring this spirit back to life…

Time is the greatest leveler, and I find that with aging the once familiar is no longer familiar. But the photos of Cairo do put me into a wonderful youthful period of my life as a college student at AUC. Your Newsletter also has an admirable humanistic quality beckoning us to the time when all lived together with love, charity, and good will to one another. *Incha Allah* a day will come when this is the case for Egypt and its neighbors. Happy New Year to you and to your family, and many thanks for your personal notes.

James Beshai, Lebanon, Pa.

CHECK US OUT ONLINE

We are pleased to inform our readers that IAJE has created its own website. Visit us online today!

Check us out @ http://www.iajegypt.org

Also, don't forget to sign up to our online discussion group: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/iajegypt

"Of all people I've never met, neither seen, but in pictures, never talked to, but on the phone, never exchanges opinions, feelings and sentiments but in writing, of all these people so far away, you're the closest one to me. How can you explain this???

May be because you're a "jewsfromegypt" like me?,
May be because you're a "fils du Daher" also like me?,
May be because you were living "*Shareh Tursina*" while I was living 200 yards far from you: "*Shareh Said*" in Cairo?,
May be because your sense of humor as well as your scale of values, a precisely those I prefer,
May be because both of us are more than 80 years of age, but our hearts, still of 17 and this, for as long as God may keep us on this earth.
May be because I deeply feel that we constantly are on the same "wave length",
May be because I have discovered "at first sight", that you also felt the same about me."

Albert Oudiz, Paris, France

The street sign on the building where I was born. I lived at that address until I was seven years old. The picture was taken when I returned with my daughter, Marianne Sanua, to visit Cairo in 1982. The neighborhood has changed from the time I have left!

Just received your wonderful IAJE Newsletter #8 which I read from cover to cover. Enjoyed reading every word. Enclosed is check for $100 for my membership and for help and encouragement for the publication of the book of our collective writings, memories and history in Egypt. Please add a note in memory of and tribute for my father, **Salomon Joseph COHEN**. Through his Import/Export wholesale business, he brought much wealth and culture to Egypt. He could not take any of it out. In memory of my mother, **Flore (nee Aghion Fermon) COHEN** who gave kindness to everyone.

Many thanks for including my list of Arabic Egyptian expressions and my Book Review of *The Jasmine Necklace* in the last *Newsletter*. Thanks to Papa's encouragement, my years of studying Arabic even though it was not required, have been helpful. I passed the High School Egyptian Government Test. More importantly, I enjoyed and still do enjoy languages. I sometimes miss the cosmopolitan atmosphere we experienced in Egypt.

Blanche Cohen Sachs, Randallstown, MD.

I have to confess, Victor, that you have been one of my main inspirations in writing this book. Though I was born in Egypt, I left at the age of three, and have very little recollection of what life was there. Your stories, writings and the books you've suggested have all contributed to make me fall in love with the Egypt that you knew of the 30s' and 40s'. I even now share your nostalgia! My father loved his life in Egypt and spoke fondly of the same places you did. I hope my book and why not my movie, will be a legacy to the world, reminding them of our existence, we, the Jews of Egypt. This has been a labor of love for me. You have done such a wonderful job in trying to keep alive people's awareness of the Egyptian Jews. I admire the zeal and perseverance that you've demonstrated. You have been very generous of your time. Your work is of service to all of us. I know that you are now discouraged by the lack of interest shown by the members, but you should not give up. All organizations have their ups and their downs.

Juliana Maio, Beverly Hills, CA

REMINDER:

Be part of this important endeavor to preserve our precious heritage. Send your subscriptions and donations to the IAJE c/o **Dr. Victor D. Sanua, 2416 Quentin Road, Brooklyn, NY 11229** USA – do it today, do not delay!

I read it, not with interest but with fascination. I enjoy reading the articles (but not those in French) and coming to understand the lives of relatively recent Jews in Egypt. The pictures give faces (and building) to a civilization that was. It is a world unknown to me, and your work to sustain this community is an incredible endeavor. (And your talented new Assistant Editor promises to carry this work into the next generation.)

Matti Gershenfeld, Jenkintown, Pa.

Nous venons à peine de recevoir le volume 5/2 que vous avez eu la gentillesse de nous envoyer individuellement à cause de notre changement d'adresse. Mille merci ! Nous en avons pratiquement "avalé" chaque ligne du debut jusqu'à la fin avec un grand sourire et les larmes aux yeux Nous nous sommes senti transplantés vers la ville de "L'Eternel Printemps" assis sur le sable de la plage a Stanley Bay attendant de prendre des vagues) comme nous le disions. Vers la fin de l'apres midi, nous avions hâte de nous habiller pour aller renconter nos amis à la gare de Ramleh pour diner et danser au Monseigneur ou chez Atheneos . Pendant ces quelques minutes d'attende, c'etait "Salut" d'un coté et de l'autre. Nous connaissions pratiquement tout le monde qui aussi attendaient des amis. Helas, la "Ville de l'Eternel Printemps" n'est plus que la ville de l'Eternel Souvenir.
Encore une fois mille merci! Ci-joint, ma donation

Menasce Levi, (Lycee Francais,1940), Los Angeles, Ca.

"Nous vous remercions , ainsi qu'a tous vos collègues pour le magnifique et énorme travail que vous accomplissez pour les Juifs d'Egypte. Comme vous dites si bien, c'est la dernière generation qui peut encore se rappeler d'une jeunese priviligiée sur le sol Egyptien. Je vous envoie une vieille photo de ma mère, que je vous prie de me renvoyer car c'est la seule que je possède durant les années scolaires, et peut-être qu'en la voyant, dans votre journal, les anciens élèves des Ecoles Jabes se rappeleront de leur enfance et nous ferons savoir où ils ont émigré. Peut-être un nouveau rapport sera crée."

Tina Jabes Winston ,Washington DC

J'ai reçu votre newsletter de Decembre 2003 (Vol.5, No.2) à Geneve ou j'assistais à une réunion de AAHA où Mme Suzy Vidal présentait son bouquin *The* Jasmine Necklace sous le nom de Sultana Latifa. J'ai montré les belles photos de "Immortal Alexandria". Encore une fois pour tous les souvenirs d'Egypte un grand merci et un petit cadeau pour vous prier de continuer votre bon travail.

Elie Sion, Geneva ,Switzerland

Many thanks for your nice letter and for the newsletter #7 that you have been so kind send me. I kept reading it more than once, every time with an increasing pleasure and keen interest. Its contents revived again in my remembrance those memorable sweet years – sometimes mingled with some bitterness and anxiety – of our youth in Alexandria, an era that unfortunately deteriorated and worsened for most of the Jews living in Egypt, subsequent to the hostile political events which occurred in October 1956.

All this was in the past. At present, however, we express our pride and satisfaction for the outstanding achievements accomplished by the major part of our contemporary fellows, scattered throughout the world, and, owing to their upbringing, skills and manifold abilities, seemed having managed quite well and even reached high moral & social standards, as reported in your last issue. In this instance, I would like to convey to you hereby my congratulations for the job you are fulfilling in order that our history could also prevail in the generations to come, since within a decade or so, there will hardly remain alive Egyptian born Jews who had themselves experienced that unforgettable period. May the Lord bless you and help you in your endeavors to carry out successfully this project, which will no doubt be a vivid document enlighting the course of our history to our descendants.

It would indeed much interest me getting further details regarding next year's International Conference which is due to be held in Tel-Aviv. I'll be too pleased to attend and exchange with you a few personal memories of the past.

Y. Amiel, Holon, Israel

New Members and Renewals of Membership to May 2004

Abadi, David, Herts, England
Attias, Albert, Brooklyn, NY
Behar, Larry, Fort Lauderdale, FL
Benjamin, Odette, New York, NY
Bishop, Rosette S., Arlington, VA
Braunstein, Albert, Melbourne, Australia
Cassuto, Maggie, Forest Hills, NY
Castro, Claude, New York, NY
Castro, Elie, Brooklyn, NY
Chehebar, Charles, Brooklyn, NY
Cohen, Emile, Brooklyn, NY
Cohen, Liliane, Montreal, Canada
Cohen, Solomon, New York, NY
Cwerner, Rachel & Sarah **Douek**, New York, NY
Dewdney, Micheline Sarah, Kingsford, Australia
Dweck, Maurice, London, England
Elie, Richard, Milan, Italy
Feninger, Claude, Malvern, PA
Forti, Mathew C., New Rochelle, NY
Gabbai, Rabbi Albert E., Philadelphia, PA
Gaon, Nessim D., Geneva, Switzerland
Ghazal, Ezra M., Teaneck, NY
Hakim, Esther, Asnieres, France
Hassid, Albert Yousef, San Francisco, CA
Jabes, Gemma M., Washington, D.C.
Kuper, Maggie E., Boca Raton, FL
Lagnado, David, West Palm Beach, FL
Levi, Menasce, Beverly Hills, CA
Lipkin, Victor, Paris, France
Maio, Juliana, Beverly Hills, CA
Malak, Simone, New York, NY
Matalon, Moshe, Wilmette, IL
Meli, Robert, Queens, NY
Michaan, Suzanne, Palm Beach, FL
Mizrahi, Suzanne, Boulogne, France
Modiano, Mario, Athens, Greece
Nahum, Elie, Milan, Italy
Oudiz, Albert, Paris, France
Oudiz, Chloe, Los Angeles, CA
Pardo, Tania, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Ribacoff, David, Oceanside, NY
Rofe, Elie, Brooklyn, NY
Romano, Nina, Pompton Plains, NJ
Sabban, Nessim Cohen, Brooklyn, NY
Sachs, Blanche, Randallstown, MD
Sasson, Cesar, Brooklyn, NY
Simon, Armand, Los Angeles, CA
Sion, Elie, Geneva, Switzerland
The Jewish National & University Library, Jerusalem, Israel
Tucker, Sheila, Silver Spring, MD
Winston, Tina Jabes, Washington, D.C.
Wynblatt, Paul, Pittsburgh, PA
Zonana, Joyce, New Orleans, LA

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR RESEARCH PAPERS ON THE JEWS OF EGYPT

The Center for Studies of Jewish Egyptian Heritage hereby announces two research scholarships on the subject of Egyptian Jewry in modern times in the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. $1,000 for students studying for their Master's Degree $2,000 for students studying for their Doctor's Degree.

Students interested in the above will kindly send in their applications for a scholarship to:

The Academic Committee of the Center for Studies of Jewish Egyptian Heritage, Arie Shlossberg M.D., P.O.B. 65141, Tel Aviv 61651, Israel

The application should include:
1) A 1-page synopsis on the proposed research. 2) The tutor's recommendation. 3) Personal details, including address, telephone, facsimile and E-mail, as well as a short biography. 4) The application may be made in Hebrew – English – French.

Date limit for sending application — 30/06/04

Jewish Refugees (Continued from Page 2)

des Juifs originaires des pays arabes", to which was added a questionnaire in English, "Guidelines to filling out the claims form of Jews from Arab Countries". If any of our members are interested to fill this claim form, please write to the editor and he will send a copy. For a more extensive coverage of those events which made so many of us refugees, the reader is encouraged to read the book edited by **Malka Hillel Shulewitz** The Forgotten Millions. The titles of the chapters in this book follows are on page 3.

A Short History (Continued from Page 16)

Some of the above information is the result of our reading **Maurice Fargeon**, *les Juifs en Egypte* (1938), interviews and our own personal experiences. We asked our friend, **Emile Cohen**, a member of A*hava ve Ahva* synagogue, who went to **Koronfish** if there are any Jews from Egypt at the Brooklyn Egyptian synagogue, who attended the school of the Jewish community in Cairo. To our regret, he informs us that most of them have passed away. We would urge anyone who could correct us or could add more information about the schooling of Jewish children in Egypt to get in touch with us and it will be published in a future issue of the newsletter. Thank you.

The following are the sections of the forthecoming IAJE Book on Jews from Egypt

Section I
9 Newsletters of the International Association of Jews from Egypt

Section II
13 General Articles on Egyptian and Sephardic Jewry
by Victor D. Sanua, Ph.D.

Section III
15 Articles published in Image Magazine
by your Editor.

The IAJE website has been created and can be viewed at http://www.iajegypt.org ! Most of the documentation in this book can be located on our website!

Retour Aux Sources
Return to the Sources

We have received a notice from Roland Mountvert (Tel # 514-345-1154), a Canadian travel agent born in Egypt who has arranged for a trip to Egypt which includes six days in Alexandria, six days in Cairo, and a few days in Sharm el Sheikh. He is also arranging an excursion with a cruise down the Nile from May 20-27, 2004. The visit includes Abou-Simbel Kom Ombo, Edfou Luxor, thebes, Temple of the queen Hatchepsout, Karnak. We are sorry that this announcement is a little late for our members to join such a wonderful trip, but we are sure that Mr. Mountvert will arrange for similar trips in the future. Upon the return of the group to Canada, we are going to ask one of the members to write their impressions about the trip.

GUM'ETKUM KHADRA – "HAVE A GREEN WEEK": THE SPOKEN LANGUAGE OF EGYPTIAN JEWS

By: Gabriel Rosenbaum

Dr. Gabriel M. Rosenbaum, from the Dept. of Arabic Language and Literature, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and who is currently on sabbatical and Visiting Fellow at Wolfson College, Cambridge University, talked about his research at a meeting of the Association of Jews from Egypt (UK). He has specialized in the ancient Jewish-Egyptian dialect and has through extensive research and interviews gathered together many words, terms and expressions, enough to fill up an entire book. We hope to have a summary of his work in a future issue of the newsletter.

From **AJE (UK)** newsletter. March 2004.

The Silent Exodus'

"The Israel Solidarity Campaign (BM ISC, London WC1N 3 XX) is showing on 14th March 2004 the UK premier of a unique documentary using original footage and personal testimony. It covers the persecution and expulsion of the Jewish Communities from all the Arab countries. It is said to be a moving and sometimes disturbing film which will raise the vital underlying issues of Arab/Jewish relations and the Middle East peace settlement."

Contact line: 07956052170

Taken from AJE (UK) Newsletter, March 2004.

Editorial (Continued from Pg. 2)

Egypt have passed away, future investigators conducting research will find our material in the libraries of the world, and thus our memory will be preserved.

The editor was prompted to compile this documentation some time ago when he received two letters. The first, received from a major Israeli library, contained the following paragraph:

"These two IAJE Newsletters are welcome material for our library and we are definitely interested in receiving the Newsletter or any other material concerning Egyptian Jewry. *We have practically no material on contemporary Egyptian Jewry."* [emphasis added]

The second letter was from an Egyptian lady, which reads as follows:

"One day in May of this year upon visiting the Center for Jewish History (New York City) with my daughter Brigitte and granddaughter Gabrielle, I asked if they had any literature on the Jews of Egypt. The lady in charge gave me your IAJE Newsletter of 2000, vol. 2 no. 1 which I read with great interest."
We send greetings to all our friends and hope that you will enjoy this issue.

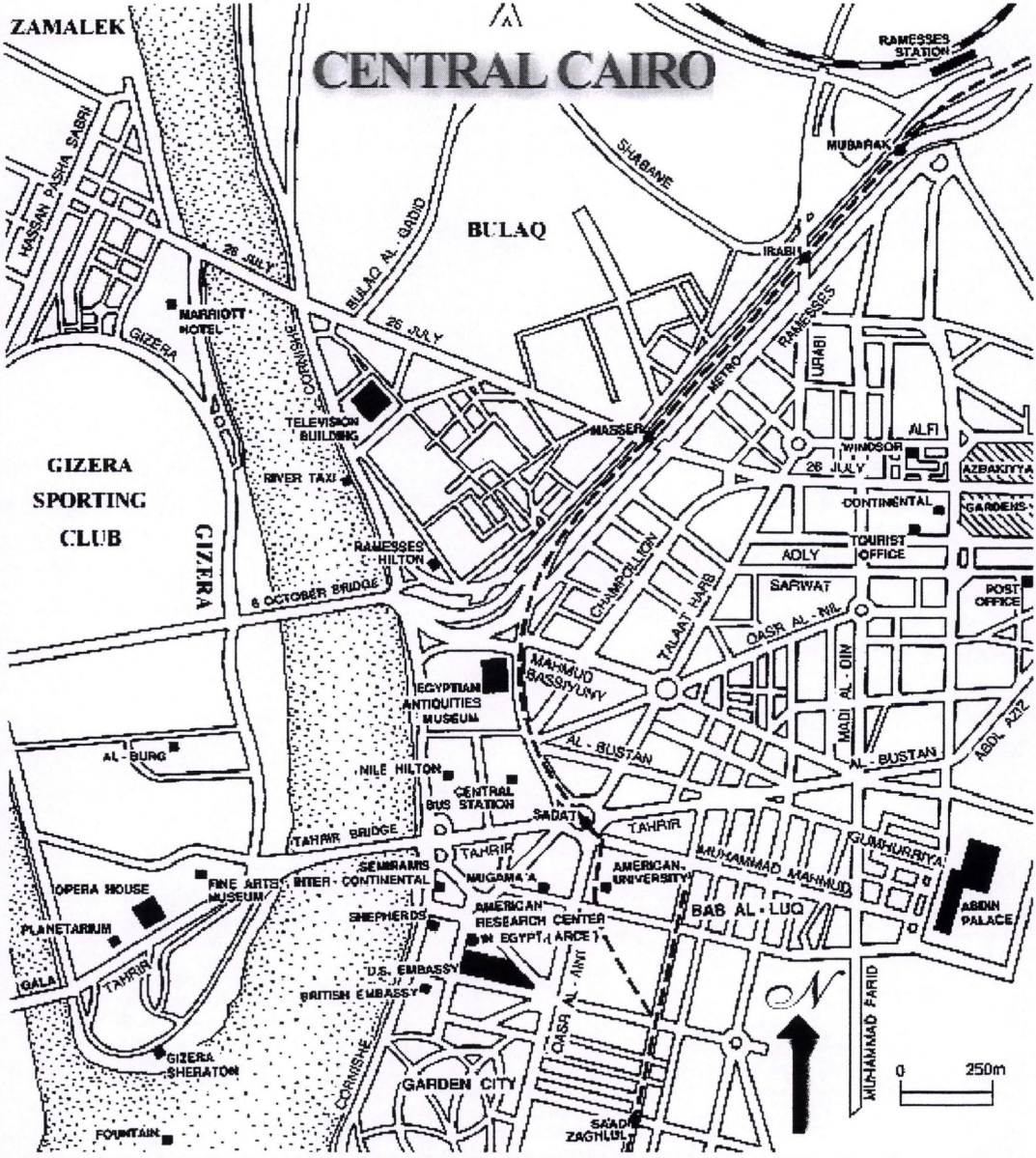
Conference on Egyptian Jewry
(Continued from Page 12)

exodus of Jews from Egypt and provided some details on the difficulties encountered by them on their way out of Egypt. **Racheline Barda** spoke about the settlement of Jews of Egypt in Australia. **Tamara Cohen-Egler**, **Sarina Roemer**, and **Joelle Rouchou** spoke about "The Modern "Exodus from Egypt": to Brazil".

Dr. Arie Schlossberg arranged for the conference participants to visit a frontier Kibbutz. He also arranged for a visit to the Iraqi Jewish Museum. For a closing activity, delegates spent a delightful evening at the Rafael restaurant where everyone had a chance to express his opinion regarding the measures that have to be taken to maintain our own memories of Egypt.

There was an exhibit of newsletters published by various Egyptian Jewish organizations around the world. International Association of Jews from Egypt, USA, Association of Jews from Egypt (United Kingdom), Association pour la Sauvegarde du Patrimoine Culturel des Juifs d'Egypte (France).

NOTE: **The editor would like to express his gratitude to Mr. Itzak Sanua first for reading our paper at Bar-Illan University "A Short History of the Exodus of Jews from Egypt" and second for sending us the program and some of his reflections on the meeting. Because of sudden illness in the family, the editor was not able to present his own paper in person in Israel. We sincerely hope that the organizing committee of the conference will be able to publish this important collection of historical papers.**



Cairo is the capital of Egypt and the interlectual center of the country. To be even handed (!), the editor plans to include in the next issue a map of Alexandria, which was considered to be a cosmopolitan playground of the country.

Outdoor lunch during a picnic at the Barrage Garden. (1947).

With classmates of the American University in Cairo at the main entrance of the Zoological Garden in Cairo. (1945)

Guests of the Rialto Hotel of Stanley Bay, Alexandria. (1947)

Excursion of a young group at the Barrage Gardens, a suburb of Cairo. (1945).

At the Guezirah swimming pool. Cairo 1946.

A boat ride on a Felouca on the Nile river. Cairo 1948.

An evening of fun at the club Judeo-Espagnol. Cairo 1947.

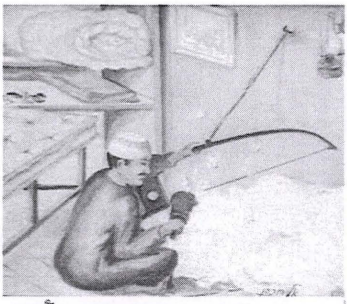
A visit to the Sakkarah necropolis near the main pyramids in Ghiza, Cairo. 1948

A visit to Fayyum, an oasis about 60 miles southeast of Cairo, 1947. Picture overlooking Lake Fayyum.

A family picture of the Sanuas, Hemsys, and Beniadas at the Stanley Bay Beach, Alexandria 1947.

Horse drawn carriage, *arabeah khantour*, old common vehicles for leisure transportation.

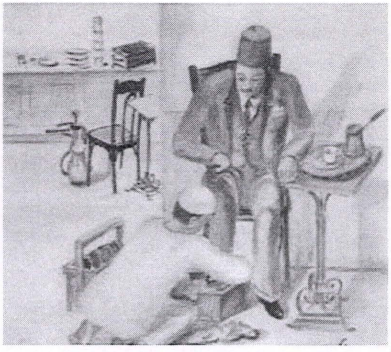
Vendor of *irq sous*, a soft drink available in the streets of Cairo. The other man is smoking an *narguileh*.



Mattess wool thrashing by a *menagit*.

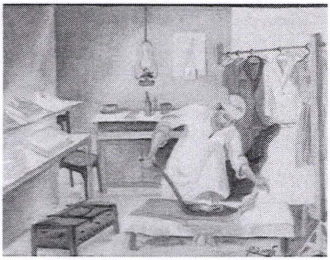
Playing backgammon at a café, children collecting cigarette butts.

A street vendor fanning corn or *dorra* over a charcoal fire.

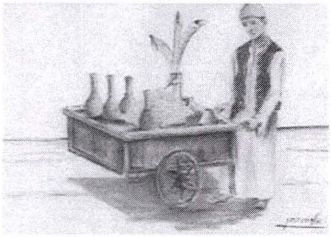


A store keeper with a *tarbouche* (fez) having his shoes shined by an itinerant boot black.

The *Magwaghi* ironing clothes in his shop with his foot in Egypt.



Street vendor of *termes*, a kind of chickpeas with *gargoulettes* (earthen jars that cool water).



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15 PAPERS MOSTLY IN REGULAR PERIODICALS
BY **Victor D. Sanua**

120 PAGES

OFFPRINT FROM THE
JEWISH JOURNAL OF
SOCIOLOGY

VOL. IX. NO. 1 JUNE 1967

A STUDY OF THE ADJUSTMENT OF SEPHARDI JEWS IN THE NEW YORK METROPOLITAN AREA

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Reprinted from 'The Jewish Journal of Sociology', Vol. IX, No. 1, June 1967

A STUDY OF THE ADJUSTMENT OF SEPHARDI JEWS IN THE NEW YORK METROPOLITAN AREA

Victor D. Sanua

IT has been estimated that the total Jewish population of the United States is approximately 5·5 million. No one knows the number of Sephardi Jews among them. It is roughly estimated that they total 60,000 in the whole of the United States, with 40,000 residing in the New York City area. Literature on Sephardi Jews in the United States is scarce. Bernardete [1] has written a chapter on Sephardi Jews in the U.S.A. in his book *Hispanic Culture and Character of the Sephardic Jews.* Other published papers [2, 3, 4, and 6] have reported on the Sephardi Jews, but none provides empirical information obtained by interviews and questionnaires.

The purpose of this paper is to present background information on Sephardi Jews in the New York City area, and to present preliminary data derived from interviews with, and questionnaires administered to, Jews originating from Syria and recent newcomers to the United States: Jews from Egypt.

The original group of Sephardi Jews who came to the New World about 300 years ago have lost their traditional Sephardi characteristics. At the beginning of the present century, during the great immigration from Poland and Russia, a small number of Sephardi Jews came to the United States. Because of the political upheavals and rising nationalism in the Ottoman empire, Ladino-speaking Jews from the Balkans, and later, Arabic-speaking Jews, primarily from Aleppo, emigrated to the United States, impelled by a desire to seek security and to better themselves economically. Before 1908 a trickle came to the United States, but the bulk came during the years 1908–24.

As in the case of the east European (Ashkenazi) Jews, life in the New World was hard, especially since they had little knowledge of the language, and few of the skills needed in an industrial society. A further handicap was that they did not speak Yiddish, and were cut off from the larger Jewish community as a consequence. On their arrival in the United States, Sephardi Jews segregated themselves along language

lines, and even by cities of origin. While they were familiar with several languages (Spanish, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, and French) only a few had received advanced secular education from the Alliance Israélite schools.

During their first years of settlement in the lower East Side of New York City, Ladino-speaking Jews made a living by operating coatroom concessions in hotels, fruit and vegetable stores, or becoming contractors for mass-produced ladies' dresses. Now many are owners of large-scale factories for dresses and children's wear and in some instances are listed on the stock exchange. Syrian Jews are mainly self-employed in businesses ranging from small retail stores to very sizable import firms dealing in textiles, linens, and clothing. Approximately 75 per cent of the Syrian Jewish families still speak Arabic at home, and the rest speak English exclusively.

Initially, the life of the Sephardim was a continuation of life in the Old World. After working-hours, males congregated in coffee houses where they talked, drank strong coffee, and played taboli (backgammon). After their initial adjustment in the lower East Side, Ladino-speaking Jews moved to the Bronx and the New Lots section of Brooklyn, while the Syrian Jews moved to the Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn. Today Syrian Jews live predominantly in Brooklyn, except that they have moved to better neighbourhoods, and both groups also have communities on Long Island and in Westchester.

The most recent arrivals from the Middle East, Egyptian Jews, are either Ladino or Arabic-speaking; most of them were educated in French schools. Very few are of Ashkenazi origin. Those who are of Syrian origin tend to settle in the Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn, while the Ladino-speaking Jews from Egypt tend to settle in the Forest Hills section of the Borough of Queens.

The first social organization for the Ladino-speaking and the Syrian Jews was a burial society, which bought land for a cemetery. There are numerous fraternal organizations among the Ladino-speaking Jews, and the focus of their communal activities seems to be the Sephardi Old Age Home in Brooklyn, a modern institution for which they raise funds. Syrian Jews have several congregations stemming from the first Magen David Congregation. Communal activities revolve around the congregations, in varying degrees, from fund-raising for the Talmud Torahs to publication of a newspaper which prints local news. There is also considerable support for the Magen David Yeshiva, the first Sephardi Yeshiva in the United States.

Before the 1956 Suez Campaign the number of Egyptian Jews in the United States was very small. The quota for Egyptians to the United States, irrespective of background, was 100 per year. Because of the ill-treatment of Egyptian Jews in Egypt during and after the Suez hostilities, a group of Jews from Egypt living in New York, who usually met socially, banded together to see what they could do on behalf of

their friends and relatives. They contacted the American Jewish Congress, and with the advice of Dr. Phillip Baum, a lawyer from the A.J.C., organized themselves as the 'American Jewish Organization for the Middle East, Inc.' for the major purpose of rescuing Egyptian Jews. (We wish to express special thanks to Mr. M. Ribacoff for providing us with the historical background to the settlement of Egyptian Jews in the U.S.A.)

All known Egyptian Jews were sent a circular letter asking them to supply a list of their relatives in Egypt, and requesting them to cite incidents of ill-treatment that their relatives had undergone. The sole purpose of this request was to prepare documentation of the plight of Egyptian Jewry, which was then submitted to Congressional hearings on changes in the U.S. immigration laws to enable the victims of persecution to enter the United States. Senators Case, Ives, and Lehman sponsored the bill, which was passed in 1957, providing for the entry of 25,000 refugees into the United States. Many other nationality groups took advantage of this special legislation.

The American Jewish Organization for the Middle East, Inc., before the enactment of the law, tried to obtain visas for Egyptian Jews to enter the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and Brazil. Only later did Brazil open its doors, with few restrictions, to Jewish immigrants.

Many Egyptian Jews expelled from Egypt held French or British passports, and many were stateless. Rich Jews were able to settle in Switzerland; others went to Australia, Canada, France, England, and Italy and were permitted to work. Many went to Israel. When the Refugee Bill was enacted in the United States, Egyptian-born Jews who were in Europe, and who had not by this time settled in permanent jobs, requested visas to come to the United States.

Most of the Egyptian Jews are fluent in several languages, French in particular. The HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) arranged for the settlement of these refugees in different cities in the United States, and discouraged their concentration in New York City. Homes and jobs were made available in Cleveland, Seattle, Louisville, Houston, Atlanta, Los Angeles, San Franscisco, Buffalo, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Washington. In Seattle and Atlanta, Egyptian Jews were absorbed by the existing community whose members had come much earlier from Turkey.

In New York City two groups of Egyptian Jews were formed, one in Queens and the other in Brooklyn. The Queens group approached the Shearith Israel Congregation (the first Sephardi congregation in the U.S.) to obtain their assistance in establishing a synagogue. It was started as a store-front meeting place, later moved to a former dance studio, and eventually with a great deal of assistance from Mr. Ivan Solomon, the group built their own synagogue, which opened for services in 1963. However, the structure is far from complete. This congregation,

while started by Egyptian Jews, includes in its membership other recent newcomers from Italy, Turkey, Greece, Morocco, Algeria, Iran, Afghanistan, and some who originate from Bukhara (Soviet Union). It is a Sephardi congregation rather than a purely Egyptian Jewish congregation. With the help of the Shearith Israel Congregation, a Talmud Torah was opened. The synagogue is well attended during the High Holidays and follows the same liturgy as in the old country, with oil lamps and traditional Sephardi chanting. The synagogue building is also used for social purposes. An interesting sidelight is the problem the group faces in the shortage of women for marriage. According to our informants, many of the males travel to Israel, marry women with the same cultural background, and return with them to the United States.

The second congregation of Egyptian Jews was established in 1960 by approximately eighty families in the Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn, where Syrian Jews have lived for many years. Within the last two decades, Syrian Jews, achieving higher economic status, as indicated earlier, started moving to better neighbourhoods. It is estimated that at this date the Egyptian Jewish congregation numbers 175 families. Syrian Jews helped the Egyptian Jews in their initial settlement by employing them in their businesses. They were given synagogue and Talmud Torah facilities, and they organized themselves as a separate congregation. While most of the Egyptian Jews who settled in Brooklyn were themselves of Syrian origin, they preferred to maintain their own identity. They were reluctant to merge with the dominant Syrian community, partly because of a difference in the liturgy between the two groups.

It did not take too long for the Egyptian Jews to become self-sufficient. Many of them opened businesses, or sought employment in large companies, which was facilitated by their knowledge of many languages. It should be noted that the two Egyptian communities in New York have very little contact. Initially, Egyptian Jews found life somewhat hard in the United States, but they have since prospered.

Iraqi Jews who have recently settled in the United States are still somewhat unorganized as a group. Since Iraqi Jews were not allowed to leave Iraq following the 1948 Israel War of Liberation, those who emigrated to the United States came by way of Iran where a large number had settled before 1948. Many of the older-settled Iraqi Jews are in banking and manufacturing.

Empirical data on Egyptian Jews

During the summer and autumn of 1964, a study of Egyptian and Syrian Jews living in the New York metropolitan area was undertaken under the auspices of the Wurzweiler School of Social Work, Yeshiva University. For the Syrian Jews, we used a sample of 150 families out of

a total listing of 1,500 names from a general mailing list maintained by a senior employee of the mother congregation, Magen David, and kept up to date by him for over twenty-five years. As for Egyptian Jews, a master list was accumulated through the 'pyramiding effect'. A total of 15 Egyptian Jews were requested to list the names and addresses of their relatives and friends whose whereabouts they knew. These original 15 subjects were also requested to mail a blank sheet to their relatives and friends so that they, in turn, could provide the investigator with additional names of Egyptian Jewish families living in the New York City area. On the basis of this process, names and addresses of 450 such families were listed.

During the summer of 1964, interviews were conducted with 36 Egyptian families who were selected at random. However, owing to the tedious process involved, it was decided to collect data on additional subjects by the use of a schedule which was mailed to the rest of the sample. This schedule, consisting of a seven-page questionnaire, was prepared on the basis of responses recorded during the interviews with the original group of subjects, and was mailed to 150 subjects who were selected at random. Fifty-four subjects in this group returned the completed questionnaire. It should be noted here that of the original group who were interviewed in person, only two refusals to participate in the study were encountered.

Thus, data were obtained on a total of 90 families, which included the 36 subjects interviewed in the pilot study, and 54 subjects who completed and returned the mailed questionnaire. A comparison of the socio-economic status of these two samples failed to reveal any differences. They were, therefore, combined and considered to be representative of the Egyptian Jewish population in the New York Metropolitan area.

The schedule included items relating to present employment status and highest educational level achieved by the head of the household. Both items were designed to evaluate the socio-economic status of the family, based on Hollingshead and Redlich's classification. An evaluation, based on such criteria, showed that these Egyptian Jews belong predominantly (90 per cent) to middle and upper socio-economic classes. It seems that despite their recent arrival in the United States, Egyptian Jews have made useful contributions to the economy of the country by their professional and business skills. Undoubtedly, their economic adjustment was facilitated by their familiarity with several languages (50 per cent of the males spoke fluent English before their arrival in the United States) and their high level of formal education.

Eighty per cent of them were born in Egypt, and 50 per cent had an Egyptian passport at the time they left Egypt. Only 12 per cent of the Egyptian Jews own their homes; they live mostly in rented apartments. Approximately 25 per cent of the respondents have lived in other areas

outside New York State and have moved to New York City, thus indicating that despite HIAS efforts to spread Egyptian Jews outside New York City, they prefer to live in the metropolis. Only 8 per cent indicated that they had relatives living outside New York City.

Seventy-five per cent of the males are employed full-time, while the rest are self-employed; 30 per cent of the wives hold part-time or full-time jobs. Eighty-eight per cent of Egyptian Jews have regular contact with other Sephardi Jews, 62 per cent with non-Sephardi Jews and 36 per cent with non-Jews. It would seem that Egyptian Jews in New York City have more contact with non-Jews than Syrian Jews have in spite of the latter's longer settlement in the U.S.A.

Thirty-eight per cent of Egyptian males have had more than six years of religious education; 40 per cent of the women have some type of religious education. Only 10 per cent of Egyptian Jews have their children in yeshivas (day schools). Despite the fact that the conservative or reform movement did not exist in Egypt, 42 per cent indicated that this was their Jewish affiliation; about one-third felt that they were just Jewish, and one-third described their family as Orthodox. Only half of the group belonged to a synagogue, equally divided between Conservative and Orthodox. However, 44 per cent of them indicated frequent attendance at synagogue services. Compared with the Syrian Jews, Egyptian Jews are less observant in religious practices; only half of the group light Friday night candles regularly, while 80 per cent light Chanukah candles. (New York Sephardim appear to have forsaken altogether the use of oil lamps in their homes.) Fifty per cent buy kasher meat, while 32 per cent use separate dishes for meat and dairy foods; only one-third of the group are unwilling to eat non-kasher food outside the home.

Adaptation to life in the United States

Approximately half of the group indicated that they were better off financially in the United States, while the other half thought that they were worse off. At the time of the survey, half of the Egyptian Jews had American citizenship.

Respondents were asked about their first impressions when they arrived in the United States. Only 12 per cent were disappointed; 40 per cent were pleasantly surprised; while the other half found the United States as expected. By and large, most parents found that their children had adjusted well to life in the United States. Most of the Egyptian Jews (85 per cent) socialize with friends and acquaintances they had known in Egypt. When respondents were asked about the most difficult problem that confronted them when they arrived in the United States, two major problems loomed: (1) a sense of social isolation; and (2) adaptation to the fast American tempo. Thirty per cent stated that they had no problems whatsoever, while sixty per cent commented that they liked the

sense of security and freedom which they felt. However, they thought that there was not enough social life; 70 per cent said that social life in Egypt was more pleasant while 22 per cent found it to be the same. On the other hand, 88 per cent indicated that they had been able to get adjusted to life in the United States, while the remainder stated that they were still having some difficulties or were uncertain about their adjustment.

Demographic information on Syrian Jews

The socio-economic status of the Syrian Jews is somewhat high, since not a single respondent was lower than Class III, and they tended to concentrate in Class II. Approximately 60 per cent of them have their own business. Approximately 70 per cent of the houshold heads are native-born Americans, but their grandparents or parents came primarily from the city of Aleppo, with a few from Damascus. Fifty per cent own their homes, and prefer to live in Brooklyn. A very small percentage of their wives work. In 46 cases who responded to the questionnaire, there was only one instance of intermarriage; this contrasts with the 17 per cent which we have found in an earlier study among non-Sephardi Jews [5].

Social contacts and marriages with non-Sephardi Jews are increasing in frequency. We found that 70 per cent of the Syrian Jews have social contacts with non-Sephardi Jews. However, spending a summer or a vacation in the Catskills ('Borsht Belt'), which is a popular vacation spot for New York Jews, is not very popular with Syrian Jews: only 30 per cent stated that occasionally they might go to the Catskills. There is one beach resort (Bradley Beach, N.J.) which attracts many families, who are now buying summer homes there. As for social contacts with non-Jews, only 10 per cent indicated that they have any regular contacts.

Religious Activities

In general, Syrian Jews have had an intensive religious education. More than 15 per cent have attended yeshivas or Hebrew day schools; 85 per cent of the men have had more than six years of religious education of any type, while only 40 per cent of the women have had any Hebrew education. Approximately half of the parents have placed their children in yeshivas or Hebrew day schools. Practically 100 per cent of the Syrian Jews who responded are members of Orthodox synagogues. Conservative Judaism has had no impact on the group. Attendance at religious services is rather frequent: approximately 65 per cent of the household heads attend religious services frequently (19–49 times a year), with 25 per cent of them attending at least 100 times a year. Religious practices at home are rather intensive: 50 per cent of the families light Friday night candles, and another 25 per cent do it some-

times. Ninety-five per cent light Chanukah candles; 100 per cent buy kasher meat; and with one exception, all respondents use separate dishes for meat and dairy foods. Sixty per cent will eat only kasher food outside the home. All have mezuzoth on their doors. Eighty-five per cent contribute to Jewish philanthropies. Of those who contribute, 40 per cent give annually less than $99 while the rest give more than $100.

Summary and discussion

Our study shows that Ladino-speaking Jews and Arabic-speaking Jews, despite their early limitations in the New World, have adjusted themselves to life in America, and have managed to become financially successful at a much faster pace than other ethnic groups, including non-Sephardi Jews. Until today they have been able to maintain their own identity and still speak of themselves as Spanish or Syrian Jews, and thus both function as ethnic groups. The Syrian Jews tend to live in the same neighbourhood and go to the same resorts. They have many synagogues, a community centre, a yeshiva, a B'nai B'rith Lodge, a Masons group. These are American Jewish organizations, but their purpose is to serve the Syrian community. Intermarriage outside the group is discouraged.

The probability that the Syrian Jews will ultimately merge with the dominant Jewish group is very remote, since they maintain very close contacts among themselves, which discourages assimilation.

While we have not conducted a survey of Ladino-speaking Jews, our conversations with some leaders of the community reveal that they are very much concerned that the traditional Spanish characteristics are losing their strength, in view of marriage outside the group and with non-Jews. It would seem that the melting pot concept has had more effect on the Ladino-speaking Jews than on the Syrian Jews. Undoubtedly this is due to the fact that Syrian Jews have very strong ties to the Jewish religion and its practices.

Egyptian Jews who have recently settled in New York City are themselves of Spanish or Syrian origin. It would seem that the French culture in Egypt has, to a certain extent, replaced the traditional practices which are still found among the Spanish and Syrian Jews living in the New World. Acculturation to the European ethos seems to have proceeded in a non-Western environment such as Egypt much faster than in the modern metropolis of New York.

Our data show that within the eight years during which 82 per cent of Egyptian Jews arrived in the United States, they have reached an unusually high social and economic status, and that, by and large, they are satisfied with their conditions.

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Printed in Great Britain by Butler & Tanner Ltd., Frome and London

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

SIXTH WORLD CONGRESS OF JEWISH STUDIES

held at

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

13—19 August 1973

under the auspices of

The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities

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Volume II

WORLD UNION OF JEWISH STUDIES

CONTEMPORARY STUDIES OF SEPHARDI JEWS IN THE UNITED STATES

VICTOR D. SANUA
New York

It has been estimated that the total Jewish population of the United States is approximately 5.5 million. No one knows the number of Sephardi Jews among them. The rough estimates which have been offered in the literature range between 60,000 to 200,000. Probably the actual figure may be between these two extremes. A large percentage reside in the New York Metropolitan Area.

The earliest Jewish settlers who came to the New World about three hundred years ago were of Spanish-Portuguese descent. However, in time they lost their traditional Sephardi characteristics, and this group has been completely assimilated. The late Judge Cardozo of the Supreme Court of the United States, in a letter sent to Professor Jose Benardete (1952) indicated that as far as his family was concerned, it had no cultural traditions with reference to the survival of Spanish Jewish traits.

In addition to the great immigration from Poland and Russia, small groups of Sephardi Jews came to the United States in the early years of the 20th century. Because of political upheavals and rising nationalism in the Ottoman Empire, Ladino speaking Jews from the Balkans, and later, Arabic-speaking Jews, primarily from Syria, immigrated to the United States, impelled by a desire for security and to better themselves economically. Before 1908 only a trickle came to the United States, but the majority came during the years 1908–1924.

Following the Israel-Arab wars, other Jews from the Mediterranean reached the United States, particularly Egyptian Jews following the 1956 war, and Lebanese Jews after the 1967 war. Individual families of Morroccan and Iraqi Jews have also immigrated to the United States.

Literature on the Sephardi Jews in the United States, apart from journalistic reports, tends to be scarce. One of the earliest attempts at a sociological study of Sephardi Jews in New York was undertaken by Hacker (1926). Right at the start Sephardi Jews established themselves on the Lower East Side of New York City, and opened typical coffee houses as a place for recreation. The author remembers visiting one of the last remaining coffee houses when he came to the United States after

The most adventuresome members of this Seattle community were the Marmaralis, who had lived on the small island of Marmara, near the Bosphorus in Turkey. Some of their Greek friends had already gone ahead of them. In time, the Seattle community grew large enough to afford the luxury of two synagogues. The community grouped itself into a congregation of Rhodeslies, who came from the Island of Rhodes, and a congregation of Tekirdolis, who came primarily from other parts of Turkey.

The Sephardi Jews in Seattle were able to maintain their isolation until World War II, which helped break down the barriers between Ashkenazim and Sephardi Jews. Marriage between them, once unthinkable, became commonplace. Sephardi boys, while in the Army, and later in college under the G. I. bill, and Sephardi girls dating non-Sephardi Jewish soldiers, drew the community out of its isolation. As the younger generation lacked attachment to the old culture, and many became professionals, they joined more prestigious non-Sephardi synagogues. The Ladino language is hardly ever spoken among the third generation. While the first arrivals worked in small shops, shoe stands, and groceries, and some worked as longshoremen, tailors, barbers and butchers, now the Sephardi community of Seattle is well-represented in the fields of law, science, medicine, engineering and education.

New York City

Two groups studied by the author (Sanua, 1967) include the Syrian Jews in Brooklyn, and the Jews recently arrived from Egypt, who are primarily of Sephardi origin, and reside in Brooklyn and Queens. The data collected on these two groups were obtained through interviews and mailed questionnaires.

Syrian Jews

With the Syrian Jews, we selected 150 names out of a total of 1,500 from a list maintained by a senior employee of the mother congregation, Magen David, in Brooklyn, and kept up-to-date in 1965. The Syrian Jews in Brooklyn are possibly the last remaining homogeneous Sephardi religious group in the Unites States. Approximately 15,000 to 20,000 of th' m live in the Ocean Parkway section of Brooklyn. Not only do they tend to live in the same area, but they spend their summer vacations in the same resorts, e.g. Bradley Beach and Deal, New Jersey, where they have built synagogues for summer use. On Shabbat the synagogue

overflows with congregants. A number of Syrian Jewish families have opened businesses in other cities, where they are integrated into the majority Ashkenazi community. When their children are of marriageable age, many return to New York, or rent homes for the summer at the beach resorts mentioned, to insure that their children marry within the group.

While the impact of acculturation had been very strong in other Sephardi communities, it seems that Syrian Jews have maintained their stability. From Bensonhurst, they moved out to better neighbourhoods in Ocean Parkway where they have built four million-dollar synagogues. On Shabbat and holidays they overflow with men, women and young adults, and the streets are cordoned off. They intermingle very little with non-Syrian Jews or with Gentiles. The largest congregation is Shaare Zion, mostly attended by Jews originating from Aleppo. The Syrian Jews from Damascus attend the Ahi Ezer Congregation, a newly-constructed building on Ocean Parkway. In addition, two new congregations, B'nei Magen David, and Congregation Beth Torah, composed mainly of the younger generation, have recently emerged. Yet another congregation is currently being organized on Bedford Avenue, in the Midwood section of Brooklyn. The community supports two yeshivah day-schools that have a full enrollment. Approximately 90% of Syrian Jewish youth attend yeshivoth, either under Syrian-Jewish or Ashkenazi auspices.

The modern trend in Judaism has hardly had an effect on Syrian Jews. Rabbi Jacob Kassin, the Chief Rabbi of the Community, who was interviewed by the author, indicated in examining the questionnaire that it would be superfluous to include the question inquiring about the denomination to which the respondent belonged. He was quite right, since only one Syrian Jew checked the item, Conservative, while all the others checked Orthodox. In contrast, the Jews from Egypt, where there was no other denomination except Orthodox, consider themselves as follows: 30% Orthodox; 36% Conservative; 6% Reform; and 28% Jewish secular. Thus, while Jews, in general, worry about assimilation and intermarriage, the danger of such trends among the Syrian Jews are still quite remote. It is to be noted that during the High Holidays both young and old attend services, and during certain periods of the day one can see hundreds of young people strolling around the synagogues.

Economically, the Syrian Jews are relatively well-off. About 60% of the respondents operate their own business. A large percentage of them own retail stores, or are in the dry goods import and export business.

Some are wealthy enough to own manufacturing plants abroad. In 1965, the average age of the household head was 43 years old, with more than 20% having had some college education and graduate degrees. Only 10% of them indicated that they have any regular contacts with non-Jews.

Approximately 50% of the household heads attend religious services weekly or daily; 50% of the families light candles on Friday night regularly; and 25% occasionally; 100% buy kosher meat, and with one exception, all respondents use separate dishes, while 60% never eat non-Kosher food outside the home; 95% light Chanukah candles, and all of them contribute to Jewish philanthropies and participate in the usual Jewish fund-raising. When we asked the question, where did most of their relatives live, 85% indicated that their relatives live in the same neighborhood, which reflects the high concentration in one single area. Only 13% of the wives of Syrian Jews are Ashkenazim.

In general, we have here an extremely cohesive group of Jews. We believe it will remain homogeneous for a long period to come. There was not a single case of divorce in the sample, although there are known instances of divorce.

Egyptian Jews

While we call this particular group Egyptian, their education is primarily in French. 25% came with an Egyptian passport, while the rest had either a European passport or were stateless at the time they left Egypt. A list of Egyptian Jews, which was not readily available, was arranged through the "pyramiding effect." A total of fifteen Egyptian Jews were requested to list the names and addresses of their relatives and friends, and in turn, these were asked to send similar forms to their friends and relatives. By eliminating duplicate names, we were able to establish a list of 450 families, and random samples were selected from them. 36 Egyptian families were interviewed, and they were compared with the 56 families who responded to the questionnaire, representing a 35% response on the mailing.

We found that there were no significant differences between the two groups, from the economic point of view. Like the Syrian Jews, Egyptian Jews belong predominantly to the middle and upper socio-economic classes. 50% of them spoke English fluently before their arrival in the United States, and had a high level of formal education. About 50% of the total had partial college education, with 20% holding graduate degrees.

They lived mostly in rented apartments, with only 12% owning their homes. 25% indicated that at one time they lived outside New York City. 25% were self-employed; 30% of the wives held full-time jobs. 62% indicated that they had regular contacts with non-Sephardi Jews, and 36% had contacts with Gentiles. It would seem that the Egyptian Jews in New York City have more contacts with non-Jews than the Syrian Jews, despite the latter group's older settlement in the United States. Egyptian Jews are much less observant than Syrian Jews. Only 50% of them buy kosher meat; 32% use separate dishes; 60% eat non-kosher food outside their home. Egyptian Jews tend to reside in Brooklyn and in the Rego Park section of Queens, where they have been able to establish a synagogue, together with other Sephardi groups.

In general, compared with their Syrian Jewish brethren, the Egyptian Jews have not been able to maintain a serious degree of cohesiveness, and do not exist as a community. Since they are spread out in New York City, they have no leadership or synagogue which they can call their own. We feel that, in time, they will be absorbed into the regular mainstream of Judaism. It is to be noted that Egyptian Jews are approximately divided into three groups; those of Spanish origin, Ladino-speaking; those whose families emigrated from Syria early in the century, and are Arabic-speaking; and other Sephardi groups. The *lingua franca* is French among all.

Spanish Jews in Brooklyn

This study of Spanish Jews in Brooklyn was carried out in the Brighton Beach area by David Cohen (1972), the author's student at City College. Cohen's grandfather was the rabbi of Torat Israel, which was founded in 1920. This particular congregation never became affluent. By the time they were able to build a synagogue, their children had passed the age of going to Talmud Torah. As the children marry, they move away from the Brighton Beach area. The study is based on a sample of 25 families, of a total of 125 families who belong to the congregation. In general, Cohen found that the Syrian Jews are more prolific—3.7 children per family as compared to 2.9 children in the Spanish Jewish group. More of the Syrian Jews are native born, 58% and 40% respectively. There was a high incidence of marriage with non-Sephardim among the Spanish Jews. 64% have regular contacts with non-Sephardi Jews, as compared with 30% of the Syrian Jews.

Cohen found that the incidence of intermarriage with non-Jews was 24% for this Spanish Jewish group, which is relatively high. A correct

incidence of intermarriage among Jews in New York City is not available at this time, but in such states as Indiana and Iowa, it was found that the intermarriage rate for Jews is 50%. One might possibly draw the conclusion that the greater interaction of Spanish Jews with non-Jews has led to the increase of intermarriage. As to religious identification, 64% of the Spanish Jews consider themselves conservative. It should be noted that this category was not appropriate for Syrian Jews. 60% of the Spanish Jews buy kosher meat, and 20% use separate dishes.

Thus, it appears that the Spanish Jew in Brighton Beach is more typical of the American Ashkenazi Jew in his religious practice, in that he attends services for the important holidays and keeps the traditions of Passover and Chanukah, but does not observe Kashrut as intensively. Spanish Jews of this congregation have less Jewish education. None have sent their children to Yeshivas or day schools. Of the respondents who reported on married children, 80% indicated no Sephardi daughter or son-in-law. It is thus very unlikely that Torat Israel will remain a Sephardi congregation in the years to come.

Other Sephardi Groups

During the past twenty years, two new groups of Sephardi Jews have been arriving in the United States. Because of fear of persecution, about 100 families from Morocco have settled in New York. They live mostly in the Queens area of New York City, and are making efforts to organize themselves as a group. According to one respondent we interviewed regarding the status of this particular group, most of them are French-educated through the Alliance Israelite, but they have little knowledge of Judaism. It would seem that the Alliance Israelite was more interested in making Frenchmen of Moroccan Jews, than Jews.

Presently, Dr. Jean-Claude Lasry, Research Associate at the Institute of Community and Family Psychiatry of the Jewish General Hospital in Montreal, Quebec, is undertaking a survey of Jews from North Africa who have arrived in Montreal from 1957 to 1970. Over 600 people have been interviewed, and the results are being analyzed. In a personal communication, Dr. Lasry indicated that parallel to this study, he did a statistical research on intermarriage over the last ten years (1,565 marriages). Results on intermarriage are staggering: over the last ten years, 67% of North Africans intermarry with non-Jews, 31% of other Sephardi Jews do the same, as well as 21% of Ashkenazim.

Following Israel's Six Day War in 1967, about 1,500 Jews from Lebanon came to the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Approximately

2,500 went to Israel. Most of the Lebanese Jews in New York, who are themselves of Syrian origin, have been employed by Syrian Jews in New York. It would seem that Lebanese Jews prefer to be engaged in export-import trade than in retailing. They have blended well within the Syrian Jewish community.

Two other studies pertain to surveys of the Sephardi population at large, and not within specific communities. The first was conducted by Dr. Haim Cohen of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, and the results have been published in a paper entitled "Sephardi Jews in the United States: Marriage with Ashkenazim and non-Jews." He sent out 3,000 questionnaires, some to Sephardis who were members of various congregations across the United States. In New York City he selected Sephardi names from the telephone directory. Dr. Cohen found that the Jews of Spanish origin are scattered in many areas in the United States, while the Syrian Jews are concentrated in one area of Brooklyn. He found that 81% of the first generation of Spanish-speaking Sephardi Jews had Sephardi wives; 17% were married to Ashkenazi women, and 2% to non-Jewish women. No differences were found between first, second, and third generation Syrian Jews in their rate of marriage with Ashkenazim. However, with the Spanish Jews, he found the rate to be about 50% in the second and third generation. This group also had the highest rate of intermarriage — 12%. This high rate of marriage outside the group is reflected by the attitudes of the respondents. While 40% of the Syrian Jews would agree to the marriage of their children with non-Sephardis, the rate for the Spanish Jews was approximately 75%. According to Dr. Cohen the Syrian Jews are more observant than other groups, maintain old customs and way of life, and encourage marriage within the community. And, as already mentioned, they like to spend their summer vacation in the same resorts.

A more recent study which is still being analyzed, and will soon be published in the American Jewish Year Book is by Rabbi Marc Angel, from Seattle, who is presently Assistant Rabbi at Shearith Israel Congregation in New York City. His study is being carried out exclusively with Spanish-speaking Jews. It shows that the rate of marriage with non-Sephardis (75%) is as high as the rate found by Dr. Cohen. 11% are married to non-Jews, a figure which is also close to Dr. Cohen's study.

Other findings of Angel's study further corroborate the disintegration of the Spanish Jewish community. Jewish education among Spanish Jews is found to be very poor. To this day, in contrast to the Syrian Jews, they have no day school anywhere in the United States. The com-

munity which has produced the most rabbis is Seattle. A majority do not consider themselves to be Orthodox. Judeo-Spanish as a living language is in its death throes.

Other demographic information provided by Rabbi Angel is that economically the community could only be described as well off. Nearly all Spanish Sephardis of college age are in college or plan to attend college. The birth rate is low, 2.3 per family. It would seem that in two or three generations, this group will be assimilated like those who came 300 years ago.

While there have been many attempts in the past to federate all Sephardi communities in the United States, none has been successful so far. However, in 1973, under the chairmanship of Daniel Elazar, a professor at Temple University, the first national convention of leaders of Sephardi organizations was held at Shearith Israel Congregation in New York, for the purpose of establishing the American Sephardic Federation as part of the World Sephardi Federation. Hopefully, this might represent the beginning of a renaissance of Sephardi life in the United States.

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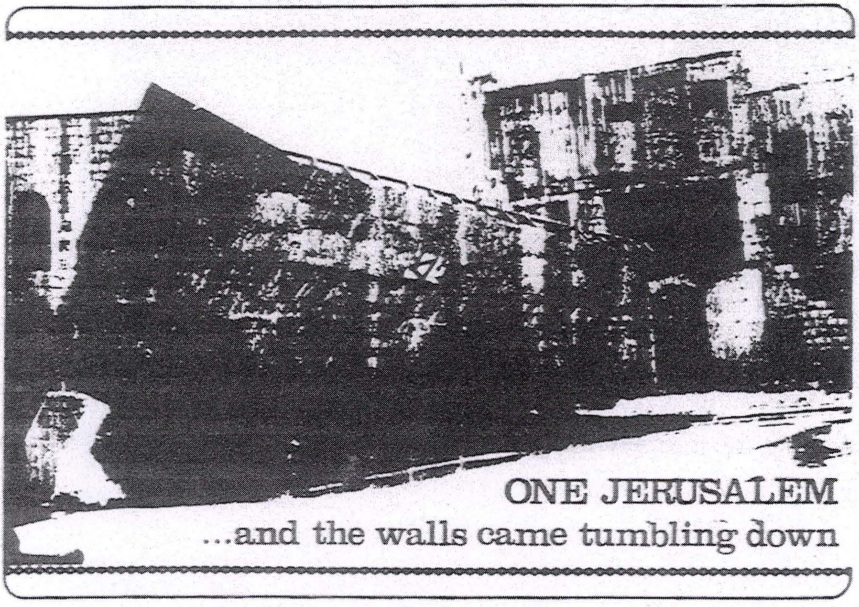

IN THIS EDITION:

- The fight for united Jerusalem
- Offense to President Itzhak Navon
- Provocation and threats against Tunisian Jewry
- The social gap as consequence of deliberate neglect
- Seminars and teachers
- Integrating peace topics into study programs
- The status of the Jewish communities in five Latin American countries

VOLUME 3
ISSUE 8
JUNE 1979

PUBLISHED BY THE SEPHARDI COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM

The status of the Jewish communities in five Latin American countries

by Victor D. Sanua, Ph.D.

During the colonization of South America by the Spaniards and Portuguese, the practice of Judaism was forbidden. However, a number of these colonizers were Marranos who practised the Catholic religion in public but may have followed some Jewish rituals in private. In all Spanish lands the Inquisition haunted them with spies. Since the Inquisition was not established in Brazil in case of detection, secret Jews were sent to Lisbon to be tried. In the New World, however, the Inquisition was active only in countries under Spanish suzerainty. In Lima the usual tourist is shown the headquarters of the Inquisition and the torture chambers with wax victims. An auto-da-fe was held in Lima as recently as 1819, and there are a number of documents bearing the names of the victims who were Jewish. The Inquisition was abolished in 1822 by the South American liberator, San Martin. In general, the surviving Marranos have been absorbed into the general population and have lost almost every trait of their Jewishness. Today many Catholic families claim descent from converted Spanish Jews of the colonial period.

The present Jewish population in Latin America includes those who came during the later part of the 19th century and the 20th century, particularly around the war periods. At the beginning of the 20th century the Jewish population in Latin America was estimated to be 25,000 with the bulk of them living in Argentina. It is to be noted that there is no exact census of the Jewish population in the countries I visited, and therefore, what I obtained from interviewees were simply estimates of the population.

Colombia

It is estimated that there are 11,000 Jews in the whole of Colombia with Jewish communities to be found in Bogotá, Baranquilla, Medellin and Cali. It is believed that the descendents of the Marranos in the Antioquia region have maintained a number of customs which are characteristically Jewish. It is believed that a number of aristocratic Colombians are descendents of these Marranos. Jews started to arrive in the middle of the 19th century from the Carabbean Islands in the port cities of Colombia. However, they later converted and assimilated.

The present contemporary Jewish community was made up first of Sephardi Jews from the Mediterranean and later of Jews from Eastern Europe (mainly Poland). The last group to arrive in the country was the German Jews sho settled in Colombia between the two wars.

The different divisions of the Jewish community of about 7,000 people in Bogotá are organized under an umbrella organization called Federación General de Comunidades, which is affiliated with the World Jewish Congress. It is made up of three congregations, the Sephardi, Ashkenazi and the German congregation, each with its own communal institutions. There is one Jewish school, the Colombo Hebrew School in Bogotá, with 1,000 students. Non-Jews also attend the school.

I visited a new synagogue being built by a new generation of Colombian Jews who are not comfortable with the separation of their elders. I also visited a Sephardi synagogue with a recreational center which shows the affluence of this particular community. Jewish communities in other major cities are well organized. In Cali (3,000), Baranquilla (1,000) and Medellin (1,000).

I was given the impression that cultural life in the Jewish community of Bogotá is not very active. However, there is a strong feeling for Israel. Between 1962-64 about 150 families migrated to Israel. There are two Jewish publications, the 'Menora' and 'Ideal'. Both are Zionist-inspired.

There is little interaction with non-Jews outside business, and the rate of intermarriage is rather low in Bogotá. Participation by Jews in the political life of the country is almost non-existent. On the other hand, the descendents of the Lebanese Christians (about 250,000) are active in politics and have reached high positions in government. During World War II and subsequently, Colombia, inspired by Germans, became a fertile ground for anti-Semitism, but this has not become a common practice of the masses. Jews are known under the name of "Polacos."

Peru

In Peru the Jewish population is estimated to be 5,000, but unlike the situation in the other countries visited, practically every single one of them lives in Lima. Freedom of religion was granted in 1933. Next to Brazil, Peru seems to have the richest Jewish past in South America, probably because Lima was selected as the seat of Spanish power 400 years ago.

The first Jews to arrive in Peru in modern days settled in the middle of the 19th century after the 1848 revolution in Germany. They were from Central Europe, primarily Alsace-Lorraine and Germany. By 1870 they had established the Sociedad the Beneficencia Israelita, which exists to this day. They acquired land for a cemetery which is still being used. However, because of a low birth rate and intermarriage, these original settlers have disappeared. The organization was kept alive however by a new wave of German immigrants. Towards the end of the 19th century a few Sephardi families from North Africa established a community in Iquitos where a rubber boom attracted them. Because of adverse living and economic conditions many left and the rest intermarried.

Before World War I Sephardi Jews came from Turkey and Suria. Between the two wars Jews from Eastern Europe, particularly Rumanian and Polish Jews, immigrated to Lima. They started as peddlers and later branched out into other parts of the country and established communities in provincial capitals; but, as before, these communities died out as there was a return to Lima, where there were greater opportunities for education. Between 1933 and 1943 a large group of German Jews came to the country in spite of the strict immigrations laws. In 1941 no visas were to be issued, but somehow some managed to enter the country. The 5,000 Jews are divided into three communities, approximately 120 Sephardi, 120 German families and the Ashkenazim, which make up the dominant group in number with about 760 families.

These groups have their own synagogues and their own rabbis. They are all under one umbrella organization, the Asociación de Sociedades Israelitas. The Presidency is alternately shared by the three groups. They share the cemetery and manage two old-age homes. In 1946 a Jewish school named after a Marrano, León de Pineto, was opened. There are now approximately 800 children in this school, representing 95% of the Jewish children in Lima. The Jewish community is extremely proud of their school. However, it was indicated that in spite of intensive courses in Hebrew, the youngsters rarely acquire a sufficient command of the language. The Hebraica Sports Club was founded in 1956 by the younger generation. The Jewish community has also published 'Nosotros' (We), a monthly since 1931. Mixed marriages are very rare. Some Jews have become eminent in economics, education and medicine. As in Bogotá, there is some Arab propaganda and expression of anti-Semitism by new leftist groups, particularly in the universities. Relations between Israel and Peru are amicable, but in view of the new autocratic government there is fear for the future. There is a possible threat of nationalization of commerce and industry. A number of families have been leaving for the US, Argentina and Central America.

to be cont. next month

The status of the Jewish communities in five Latin American countries by Victor D. Sanua, Ph.D.

(continued from June issue)

Panama

Panama has an estimated Jewish population of about 4,500. The majority of Panamanean Jews today are of Oriental origin, particularly those coming from Syria and Lebanon. They established the congregation called Shevot Ahim.

At the end of the colonial period (1821) Panama became a province of Colombia and was settled by Sephardi Jews from Jamaica and Ashkenazi Jews from Central Europe. However, in time, because of the lack of a Jewish environment, they assimilated into the general population. A new wave of Sephardi Jews came to Panama in 1867 from St. Thomas, Curaçao in the West Indies, and in 1876 they established the first Jewish community, Kol Shearith Israel. This last group is of particular interest. They claim to be descendants of Spanish Jews from Holland and Portugal who originally settled in Brazil and later went to the West Indies. Because of floods and earthquakes on their islands they decided to leave and settle in Panama. In time their rabbis died, and the group was left with Hebrew books which slowly became incomprehensible to the new generations. When a rabbi from Cincinnati visited Panama in the 1930's he suggested that they use the Union Hebrew Congregation prayer book. As a result, this group of Sephardi Jews identifies itself with the Reform movement. This group is quite fluent in the English language. At the beginning the tendency was to avoid other Jewish groups, but this is no longer so. The rate of intermarriage for this group is quite high. It presently has a reform rabbi from Israel and plays an active part in the Jewish community.

There is a third congregation made up of Jews from Eastern and Western Europe with approximately 100 families from Nazi-dominated Europe. A fourth Jewish community was established by the Jewish Welfare Board to serve military personnel from the U.S.A.

Panama has quite a large Jewish school, the Albert Einstein Institute. It has 800 pupils from kindergarten to twelfth grade, with 25% of them non-Jewish. The school has great prestige among the intellectual and the governing classes of Panama. Except for those who teach Judaic studies, the staff is primarily non-Jewish. Non-Jewish students have to take Jewish history. Jewish teachers are recruited from Argentina and Israel. It is to be noted that there is almost 100% attendance of Jewish children at this school, and they receive an intensive religious education. Those who graduate tend to continue their studies in American universities. The different divisions of the Jewish community are under one umbrella organization called Consejo Central Comunitario Hebreo de Panamá, with a rotating presidency. This organization in affiliated with the Federation of Jewish Communities of Central America.

There is little social interaction between Jews and non-Jews in Panama and, as a result, the rate of intermarriage is very low, particularly within the Oriental Jewish community. It would seem anti-Semitism is almost non-existent. The reason given is that the country is accustomed to a great influx of foreigners who are residents in the country. Some Jews have attained prominence in Panamanean politics. Relations between Panama and Israel are quite cordial.

Guatemala

Guatemala has approximately 1,200/1,400 Jews, mostly in Guatemala City. The Jewish population in 1953-54 was estimated to be 1,800, but a number of families left for Israel and the U.S.A.

In 1848 Guatemala had only two Jewish families, one of them being Lewis Schlesinger, a Hungarian Jew whose descendants have become Catholics. Between 1872-1880 a number of Jews from Germany came to Guatemala. One, Jacob Engel, was instrumental in establishing a Jewish cemetery. Early in the Century a Sephardi Jew from Egypt, L. Sabbagh, settled in Guatemala. However, in the 1920's there was an influx of Jews from Eastern Europe and from the Middle East which made it possible to establish Jewish communities with their institutions and synagogues. Between 1936-1939 German Jews migrated to Guatemala and subsequently moved to the U.S.A. Others came after the war.

At the present time there are about 600 Sephardi, 400 Ashkenazi, and 200/300 German Jews.

In 1923 the Sephardim established the Sociedad Magsen David with the building of a synagogue. In 1828-32 the Polish Jews founded the Centro Hebreo, and the German Jews founded the Sociedad Israelita de Guatemala and Bet-El. These three congregations are under an umbrella organization called Consejo Central, with a rotating presidency. The new generation has been critical of these divisions, and wants to build a homogeneous community and make efforts to contact other Jewish communities in Central America. There are no Jewish publications except for a bulletin published periodically.

Guatemala City has a Jewish elementary school, Colegio Guatemalteco Israelita, with 110 pupils, 80 of whom are Jewish, but with a little less than half from mixed marriages. In recent years there has been a great deal of intermarriage.

Some Jews have attained high positions in government; however, they do not identify themselves as Jewish. It is interesting to note that in Guatemala the label for Arab and Jews, irrespective of background, is "Turcos" while in Argentina and other countries all Jews are called "Polacos."

At the present time Guatemala maintains good relations with Israel. An umbrella association embraces all the Jewish organizations in Central America, and their major purpose is to arrange for a common summer camp in a different country on a rotating basis.

NEW YORK TIMES 7/25/96

Raphael Patai, 85, a Scholar of Jewish and Arab Cultures

7/25/96

Treating Scripture as a window into an ancient people's rollicking psychology.

By ROBERT McG. THOMAS Jr.

Raphael Patai, a cultural anthropologist who turned the stories of the Jewish people into the story of his life as a preeminent scholar of Jewish and Middle Eastern studies, died on Saturday at the home of a daughter in Tucson, Ariz. He was 85.

The cause was cancer, said his daughter, Dr. Jennifer Schneider. Her father, a long-time resident of Forest Hills, Queens, had come to Tucson a week earlier, she said.

A native of Budapest whose father was a prominent scholar, writer and Zionist, Mr. Patai was so fascinated with the folk tales his father helped record and publish that he made the study of folklore the centerpiece of his life as a scholar.

Mr. Patai ranged far afield, specializing in both the life of the ancient Jewish people and the culture of the modern Middle East. He was the author of more than three dozen books on Jewish and Arab culture, history, politics, psychology and folklore.

Among his titles are "Golden River to Golden Road: Society, Culture and Change in the Middle East" (1962), "Myth and Legend of Ancient Israel" (1966), "The Myth of the Jewish Race" (1975), written with his daughter, then Jennifer Wing; "The Arab Mind" (1976); "The Jewish Mind" (1977), "The Seed of Abraham: Jews and Arabs in Contact and Conflict" (1983) and "The Jews of Hungary: History, Culture, Psychology," published this year.

As a scholar, Mr. Patai, whose name rhymes with Hawaii, was well prepared. After studying at the University of Breslau Rabbinical Seminary and receiving a doctorate and a rabbinical diploma from the University of Budapest, he followed his own Zionist impulses and studied at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, where he received the university's first doctorate, in 1936.

He did his initial work in Palestine. But when the war that led to Israel's founding made it difficult for a pioneering anthropologist to find support for his research, he came to the United States, in 1947. He held a series of academic posts, teaching first at the old Dropsie College in Philadelphia and later at the Herzel Institute in New York and Fairleigh Dickinson University in Rutherford, N.J.

Although he was a thoroughgoing scholar whose idea of a vacation in Paris was to hole up in the French national library, Mr. Patai was a storyteller at heart. In his books he told and retold the ancient tales, using the interpretive techniques of modern scholarship to illuminate the lives of ancient Jews.

If some see the stories of the Old Testament, for example, as the literal historical truth and others perceive them as religious parables, Mr. Patai tended to see them as windows into the everyday, often roiling and rollicking life, culture and psychology of an ancient people.

One of his early works on the subject, "Man and Temple in Ancient Jewish Myth and Ritual" (1947), drew a fan letter from the poet Robert Graves, who pointed out similarities between ancient Hebrew and ancient Roman myths.

Not one to let such a notion pass, Mr. Patai engaged Mr. Graves in correspondence and got three books out of it: "Hebrew Myths: the Book of Genesis," a 1964 collaboration with Mr. Graves; "The Hebrew Goddess," Mr. Patai's solo elaboration of their joint thesis that the stories of an ancient Jewish goddess-worshiping sect had been excised from Scripture, and "Robert Graves and the Hebrew Myths," Mr. Patai's 1992 account of their collaboration, including their correspondence.

Although his works were written primarily for other scholars, Mr. Patai knew the value of a catchy title. He called a 1959 book "Sex and Family in the Bible and the Middle East."

After spending his life taking notes on a yellow legal tablet, then painstakingly composing his works on a manual typewriter, he was given a word processor on his 80th birthday. He mastered the new tool and turned out eight books in his last five years, including "Jewish Seafaring in Ancient Times," which is awaiting publication.

He also composed a third of the 1,200 entries for a projected encyclopedia on Jewish folklore that his family hopes to have completed.

In addition to Dr. Schneider, Mr. Patai, who was married three times, is survived by another daughter, Daphne Patai of Amherst, Mass.; his companion, Simone Roy of Forest Hills; a brother, Prof. Saul Patai of Jerusalem, and two grandchildren.

NOTE ON DR. RAPHAEL PATAI

This is the obituary which appeared in the New York Times in 1996 reporting on the death of a well-known scholar, Professor Raphael Patai, a cultural anthropologist who did extensive work on the psychology of Jews and Arabs. About 15 years ago, we became acquainted, particularly that we had similar academic interests. Familiar with my background, Dr. Patai encouraged me to establish THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JEWS FROM EGYPT, and he promised to assist me in its promotion. He died suddenly, when I started on the establishment of the IAJE organization, and thus lost a very good friend.

I am privileged to have edited a book in his honor; Fields of Offerings. The chapter, "A Jewish Childhood in Cairo" which I wrote, is to be found in my book on Jews from Egypt.

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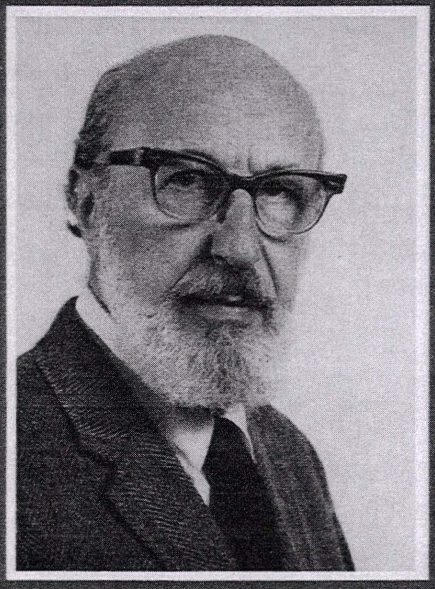
Fields of Offerings

Studies in Honor of Raphael Patai



Edited by
Victor D. Sanua

Preface

The initiative for this volume came from Professor Alexander Scheiber, director of the Rabbinical Seminary of Budapest. Subsequently, an editorial committee was formed with the participation of Scheiber, Professor Dov Noy (Jerusalem), Professor Jacob M. Landau (Jerusalem), Professor Tuvya Preschel (New York), Professor Simon D. Messing (New Haven), and the undersigned. This committee decided at the outset to limit the articles to be included in this jubilee volume to those fields of scholarly endeavor in which Raphael Patai made his major contribution; hence the subjects covered by the section headings Folklore and Literature, Anthropology, Zionism, Israel and the Middle East, and the Ancient Near East.

Three cities were the *loci* of Raphael Patai's life story: Budapest, Jerusalem, and New York. Born in Budapest on November 22, 1910, as the eldest son of the well-known Jewish poet, author, editor, and Zionist leader Joseph Patai, he was educated there (with the exception of one year in Breslau, Germany) at the university and the rabbinical seminary. At the age of twenty-two he went to Jerusalem, enrolled as a "research student" at the Hebrew University, and in 1936 received the first Ph.D. degree to be awarded by that university. He became a teacher of Hebrew and then a research fellow in Jewish Ethnology at the Hebrew University, and in 1944 founded the Palestine Institute of Folklore and Ethnology, serving as its director of research until 1947. In that year he came to New York, where he has lived ever since. He taught at several American universities, and served as director of research of the Herzl Institute and editor of the Herzl Press from 1957 to 1971.

However, what is significant in Raphael Patai's life lies not in its external circumstances, but in the intellectual voyage on which he embarked as a teenager and which he still pursues with vigor in his seventies. While still a student in Budapest he became interested in Jewish folklore of historical and modern times. After he settled in Jerusalem his interest expanded to include Jewish and Middle Eastern ethnology and anthropology. This was followed by a shift toward Jewish mythology, and then toward the social

psychology of the Arabs and the Jews, with side excursions into adjacent fields. In each of these areas he made significant contributions in the form of numerous books and a profusion of articles.

I first met Raphael Patai at a lecture he gave to the Herzl Institute some twenty years ago. He spoke, I still clearly remember, about the culture of the Middle East, and as a young man born and educated in Egypt I was struck by the insights he opened up for me into that ancient culture which I had thought I knew well. I remember especially one point he made to the effect that the Middle East illustrates, as perhaps no other part of the world does, the cumulative nature of culture—the retention of old features while superimposing upon them successively new cultural layers.

Raphael Patai's life work manifests the same configuration: folklore, cultural history, anthropology, mythology, social psychology—each discipline into which he delved became superimposed upon the previous ones, resulting in an ever more comprehensive grasp of the complex phenomena of human culture and psyche, and in more and more significant studies.

I wish to express the thanks of the editorial committee to those institutions and individuals whose generosity made the publication of this volume possible: the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation and its president, Mr. Harry Starr; the Israel Matz Foundation and its president, Professor Milton Arfa; the Louis and Minna Epstein Fund of the American Academy of Jewish Research and its secretary, Professor Isaac E. Barzilay; and Dr. Ezekiel Barber of Union, N.J.

Victor Sanua

A Jewish Childhood in Cairo

VICTOR D. SANUA

What Am I?

More than thirty years ago, I left Egypt to study psychology in the United States. I had been accepted for graduate work at Michigan State University. While I could speak English correctly, being a graduate of the American University at Cairo, I had a foreign accent. Most of the time people I met would ask me about my background. This put me somewhat in a dilemma, since a simple answer would not provide the required information. I would counter by asking what they meant by my background. If they referred to my place of birth, it was Egypt, but in the same breath I would add that I was not an Egyptian. The next question, which was often raised, was the kind of passport I had, and the answer was that I had an Italian passport. But again I had to add that I had never lived for any length of time in Italy. I had simply inherited Italian citizenship from my father. The next inquiry would then be about my family origin. My reply would be that my family had originally lived in Spain, and had left the country in 1492 when the Jews were expelled. Subsequently, my ancestors settled in Leghorn, Italy. While at home we spoke Ladino, a kind of archaic Spanish that served as our mother tongue, technically we could not consider ourselves Spaniards, despite the fact that my parents used to tell me "mosotros somos Espagnolis" ("we are Spaniards"). Another question raised was where did I live during my formative years. My reply was that I had spent eight years as a youngster in Belgium, but my parents never acquired Belgian citizenship. The next question might possibly be about the kind of education I had received. Here there was no doubt that my early education was purely French, and that at times we felt more French than the French themselves. But certainly we could not claim any official affiliation with France. The last question may have been, where was my mother born? To this my answer was that she was born in Istanbul, Turkey. But my mother was not Turkish.

By that time my interlocutors would give up, and, as a final remark of my own, I would add that the only thing I was sure of was that I was Jewish. After I obtained my American citizenship, if the question was raised, I would add that I was an American citizen. Because of my particular background and problems of identity it may not be strange that my areas of research has been cross-cultural, with special emphasis on the Jews, the Arabs, and schizophrenia.

In this paper I wish to present some memories of a young Jew growing up in Cairo, Egypt. Many individuals have expressed interest in how a Jewish family would fare in Egypt between the two World Wars in view of the hostility it would encounter in a Muslim environment, and in the kind of life Jews led in a country that at the time was regarded as underdeveloped. To illustrate how little was known about Egypt, I recall showing an early picture of mine to a well-educated acquaintance. In the picture I was surrounded by trees. My friend expressed surprise at seeing trees, since he had visualized Egypt as being a land of deserts. When I showed him another picture in which I was roller-skating, his puzzlement increased: such modern amenities in a backward country! In fact, Cairo had practically everything a major European capital would offer: an opera, symphony concerts, horse racing, sports, fabulous nightclubs with elaborate shows. The most recent movies from France, Italy, and the United States were shown on Egyptian screens, the latter two with French subtitles. The latest fashions were displayed in Cairo stores.

I was born in a middle-class family which, as indicated above, was shaped by various cultural currents. Both my father and mother spoke Ladino, a medieval Spanish with many Hebrew words as well as French words with Spanish endings. There were no schools in this language for the young generation; it was learned at home. My parents corresponded in Ladino, written in Hebrew characters. Besides Ladino, the other language of communication was French, at home as well as outside the home. In most businesses French was the dominant language. While the French spoken by Jews in Egypt did not sound precisely like that spoken in Paris, it was nevertheless quite correct, and there were numerous newspapers and periodicals published in this language.

Historical Background of Jews in Egypt

The Jews had a long history in Egypt. Alexander the Great built the city of Alexandria with the assistance of the Jews. Philo, the great Jewish philosopher, was one of its distinguished inhabitants. Under Roman rule, tensions and struggles between the Greeks and the Jews increased, much of Alexandria was destroyed, and the Jewish community was virtually annihilated. In the year 638 Egypt was occupied by a Muslim army led by

Amr ibn al-As, who proceeded to conquer the rest of North Africa. Very little is known about the Jews until the tenth century, when they figured in the historical annals. S. D. Goitein pointed out that a converted Jew, Yaʿqub ibn Killis, was instrumental in the founding of el-Azhar, the great Muslim center of learning that still exists today. Toward the close of the tenth century, during the reign of the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim, there was a departure from the policy of tolerance toward non-Muslims. Al-Hakim forced Jews to wear a distinctive garb; they were not allowed to ride horses; synagogues were destroyed. A number of Jews either emigrated or converted to Islam. However, periods of persecution and degradation alternated with periods of relative calm. The great Maimonides (1135–1204), escaping persecution in Spain, found refuge in Egypt.

In 1517 Egypt was conquered by the Turks. Initially, the Jews were well treated. Because of the arrival of Jews from Spain, the standard of Jewish learning in Egypt improved. As a result of the subsequent political and economic decline of the Ottoman Empire and the widespread corruption, the Jews sustained great losses. In many instances Jews who had become ministers, particularly in finance, were summarily executed by despotic rulers. Early in the eighteenth century, Mohammed Ali, an Albanian officer in the Turkish army, slowly developed Egypt into an independent country and founded a dynasty. King Farouk, the last king of Egypt, was his descendant. The number of Jews living in Egypt at the beginning of the eighteenth century is estimated to have been approximately 5,000. During the 1870s, Yaʿqub James Sanua, one of my relatives, was associated with the Egyptian nationalistic movement in spite of his foreign Italian lineage. He was subsequently exiled to France because of his excessive criticism of the Khedive Ismail, a despot who caused great harm to the country with his excesses in modernization. After World War I, many Spanish-speaking Jews from Salonika and Turkish towns settled in Egypt. William Edward Lane, the famous English Orientalist, reporting of his travels in Egypt in the early nineteenth century, gives an eyewitness account on the status of the Jews in Cairo.

> The Jews are detested by the Muslims far more than are the Christians. Not long ago, they used often to be jostled in the streets of Cairo, and sometimes beaten merely for passing on the right hand of a Muslim. At present, they are less oppressed; but still they scarcely ever dare to utter a word of abuse when reviled or beaten unjustly by the meanest Arab or Turk; for many a Jew has been put to death upon a false and malicious accusation for uttering disrespectful words against the Kur'an or the Prophet.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century the conditions of the Jews improved. Several of them, such as the Cattaoui family, became

financiers, ministers, and members of the Parliament. During that period of prosperity many Jews from France, Italy, and the Balkans immigrated to Egypt, and their descendants retained their parents' citizenship, in spite of the fact that many of them had never seen the country whose passports they carried. There was an advantage in maintaining foreign citizenship; in case of litigation with an Egyptian, the case had to be dealt with by the Mixed Courts, since it was problematic that a European would receive adequate justice in an Egyptian court. Such arrangements, which came to be known as Capitulations, were granted to the Europeans in order to attract them to settle in the country. The Mixed Courts were abolished in 1949.

Early Experiences and Education

Because of business reverses that Egypt suffered due to the world economic crisis, my father decided to join his brothers in Belgium prior to World War II. He even worked for a short time in the Belgian Congo, where many Jews from Egypt had gone. The family, however, stayed in Belgium. There I attended schools in which French was the language of instruction. We also learned Flemish as a second language. I recall that my parents suggested that if anyone, particularly other children, inquired as to my religion, I should answer "libre-penseur" (free-thinker). Neither I nor my classmates knew what I was talking about, but apparently, it spared me the agony of abuse. A few years later a combination of increased anti-Semitism in Europe fostered by Hitler, and a kind of nostalgia for Egypt, made my father decide to return to Cairo. This move was certainly a fortunate one in view of the decimation of the Belgian Jews after the German occupation of the country. My immediate relatives were able to leave before the arrival of the Germans. Years later I returned to Belgium and tried to locate some of my friends and the rabbi who had taught me Hebrew. Very few had survived the Holocaust. I also learned that the synagogue where my father used to take me had been used as a stable by the Germans.

My first reaction when, as a young adolescent, I landed in Alexandria with my family was one of disappointment bordering on revulsion. The sight of people walking barefoot, the beggars in tatters, and the miserable conditions of life for the Egyptians was totally strange and unpleasant to me. Egypt presented a stark contrast to the neatness of the cities and the excellent social conditions of Belgium. Our first home in Cairo was near Abdin Palace, residence of the Egyptian kings. Every day I saw the palace guard parade in the large square. On special occasions, when the king had to leave the palace for an official function, the main street would be covered by sand. It looked as if it were carpeted.

Since my father was an Italian citizen, the Italian Consulate suggested to him that I be sent to an Italian school. However, since my father was not sympathetic to the Fascist regime, he declined, and instead enrolled me in a Catholic school.

In 1937, a year after we returned to Egypt, my father died of a stroke, leaving me, an adolescent, the only man of a family consisting of my three sisters and my mother. I was the third of four children. The death of my father was a great blow to all of us. For me, in addition, it meant a new status of responsibility according to the traditional values of the Jewish family, in which the male is supposed to play the role of head and protector.

There were only a few Jewish schools in Cairo, primarily on the elementary level. They were in general attended by children of Jewish families with modest means. The insufficiency of Jewish educational institutions in Egypt may be attributed to two major causes. First, Jews preferred to keep a low profile in a Muslim country; and second, in view of the fact that many Jewish students went abroad for their professional studies, it was more advantageous for them to receive their high school credentials from an institution that was recognized in the mother country.

A good example of our Francophile tendencies was the celebration by the Jews of Egypt of the 14th of July (Bastille Day) with as much enthusiasm as by the French themselves. We all learned to sing the Marseillaise with great gusto. However, the Jews did not limit themselves to French; many learned to speak Arabic, and, depending on the origin of their families, they also spoke Greek, Italian, Yiddish, English, and so on. Because of the cosmopolitan character of the city, an educated person spoke, on the average, four or five languages.

Beyond the elementary level of education, practically all young Jews attended either the Lycée Français, which represented the French educational system in Egypt, or the College des Frères, a Catholic school. It is interesting to note that because of the common French language and culture that most Jews had adopted, one's background was of no consequence. This is why I was somewhat puzzled when I came to the United States and found that here the question of background was of considerable importance. I was often asked whether I was a Litvak or a Galicianer. Obviously, my reponse was, Neither. People were somewhat surprised that, in spite of my Jewishness, I could not speak a single word of Yiddish. It was only when I came to New York that I first heard of the word *bagel.*

My first school in Egypt was the College des Frères at Bab el-Louk. Because of the excellence and strictness of the educational system of the Frères, many Jewish parents preferred this Catholic school to the Lycée Français. My estimate is that more than half of the students in the Catholic schools were Jewish. Fear of conversion did not seem to be a problem,

despite the fact that the study of the Catechism and the New Testament was compulsory. About once every hour the bell range, whereupon there was a short prayer recited by one student while the other Christian students would follow responsively.

During that period I was introduced to the Arabic language, which was studied two hours a week. This was hardly adequate for a language as difficult and intricate as Arabic. In addition, whatever literary Arabic was taught had little relation to the Arabic spoken in the street. Thus many European Jews, because of the limited time devoted to Arabic, never achieved a proficiency in the language of the country, since what they learned in school could not be applied in their daily activities. The literary Arabic taught in the school was even foreign to lower-class native-born Egyptians. Only students who had gone through several years of instruction in it were able to handle its complexities. The little spoken colloquial Arabic I learned was a kind of kitchen Arabic spoken by maids, porters, and day laborers. In all major stores and large businesses, French was the dominant language.

There were six junior high schools of the Catholic Brothers in the city, and their graduates, who expected to continue, had to go to the high school located in the Khoronfish district. Every two months we had to take stiff examinations at Khoronfish so as to be admitted to the high school at the end of our junior high school studies. The results of the examinations were published in the school bulletin. The names of the students were arranged in the order of the points they had achieved. I can recall the names of at least seven Jewish students among the 140 participants who had achieved the highest number of points at one of the examinations. There certainly was a predominance of Jewish boys in academic achievement. Report cards showing our ranking had to be signed by the parents every week. Medals were given weekly to those who were first in French, English, and Arabic. Just before World War II, France and the French language were beginning to lose some of their importance. There was a decided trend toward learning English. At that time it was decided that I should attend the high school attached to the American University at Cairo which, incidentally, was close to my home, while Khoronfish was far away. Because of my limited knowledge of English, I was put in a lower class. But with intensive work I managed to shorten the five years of study to three years, so that I received my high school diploma at the right age (18). By that time going to Europe for further education was out of question since World War II had broken out. It was impossible for me to consider going to an Egyptian university, since I had gone to a French school and later attended an American school, and therefore my Arabic was quite inadequate. The American University in Cairo provided only a liberal arts degree, while I was aiming for a professional degree. This situation prompted many young Jews to start working in business or to take their chances with the Egyptian universities,

in which medicine and the physical sciences were taught in English, and law in French. However, before receiving any diploma the candidates had to prove their proficiency in Arabic.

After the fall of France, English became of paramount importance. My knowledge of English had become a source of income since there was a great need for instructors of the English language. I taught English in a school by day and gave private lessons at night. I hoped that the war would soon end and I would be able to study abroad.

Religious Education and Practices

Religious education and religious practices tended to be limited in the acculturated Jewish circles in Cairo. Very few Jews maintained kosher homes. There were too few kosher butchers. One of my greatest surprises when I came to the United States was to see the inscription *Kosher* in many store windows. Such a sign would have been offensive to the Muslims, and therefore did not exist in Egypt. Religious education for the Bar Mitzvah consisted in general in having a teacher come to the home of the boy for a few months and teach him the rudimentary knowledge required for the ceremony. It is to be noted that all Jews in Egypt belonged to the Orthodox branch of Judaism. There were no other Jewish trends. While religious practices were in general minimal, during the High Holidays synagogues, clubs, and even private homes had services that were well attended. During the Passover the eating of unleavened bread was strictly observed, and the two nights of the Seder were generally celebrated with relatives. There was some irony in the Seder, since God was repeatedly thanked for having delivered us from the hands of the Egyptians and having taken us out of Egypt, while the fact was that we were still in Egypt. It is interesting to note that we learned to sing the Hatikva in Ladino.

Many times during the year the ritual of what was called "meldados" (reading in Ladino, or "Jahrzeit") was observed. The custom was to celebrate it at home. There were several religious men who kept the dates and made a living by conducting such services in the homes. Usually, a few of these men came, just in case there were not enough men to have a "minyan" (a quorum of ten). The men sat around in the house, and between prayers discussed in Ladino passages of the Bible. For the "meldados" some food was prepared and nuts and raisins were distributed. It was customary for the women to cry when the name of the departed was mentioned in the course of the prayers.

There were no funeral homes. If a person died at home, he was prepared for burial right there. If he died at a hospital, the body was brought home for a service. Funerals tended to be elaborate. The coffin was placed in a flower-decked horse-drawn hearse, and men with large wreaths of flowers walked in front and behind it. Members of the family walked be-

hind the hearse for a few blocks, and later went to the cemetery. The body was interred in a shroud. No coffins were used for that purpose, but it was surrounded by brick walls over which a stone slab was fitted.

Social Activities

Immediately after graduating from junior high school a few of us banded together to start a camping club. We rented a run-down basement close to King Farouk's palace, and renovated it. Besides storing our camping gear we used the premises for games and social purposes, such as ping-pong and dances. We called it the Jewish Camping Club. With the outbreak of World War II, and particularly when Italy entered the War and the enemy threatened to conquer Egypt, it was decided to close the club. When conditions became more normal I joined a social club that was originally called Judeo-Espagnol Club, because it was founded by Ladino-speaking Sephardi Jews. In the postwar years, because of the intense xenophobia that swept the country, the name was changed to Judeo-Egyptian Club. Again, dances, ping-pong tournaments, lectures, dramatic productions, and planned excursions dominated the activities of the club. Because of the deteriorating conditions of Jewish life in Cairo, it was not considered appropriate to carry on any discussion of Judaism and Israel. In another section of this paper, we shall see how justified this fear was. During the High Holidays the premises were used for services, but even then there was always some fear regarding our security.

War Years in Cairo

There were three distinct classes of Jews in Egypt. There was a small wealthy upper class whose members had amassed fortunes in industry, banking, and agriculture, particularly cotton. A number of them obtained high positions in the government. For example, Joseph Cattaoui Pasha (pasha was an honorary title bestowed by the king) was finance minister and was in the delegation of Egyptians that had gone to London in 1922 to discuss the details of independence from Great Britain. Then there was a large middle class, which included businessmen and professionals, bank and company employees. A third group of relatively poor, tradition-bound Jews lived in the Harat el-Yahud, the Jewish quarter. Their language was primarily Arabic. They were the descendants of Egypt's original native Jews, whose families had lived in the country for centuries. It was estimated that the total Jewish population, which was highly urbanized, amounted to 80,000 individuals. Today, approximately 100 Jews, all old people, still reside in Egypt. Thus an indigenous Jewish community that had been in Egypt for more than 2,000 years is practically extinct.

Because of my Italian citizenship I was considered an enemy alien. Many

of the Italians were put in concentration camps. However, Jews with Italian citizenship were spared, since it was felt that they had no sympathy for the Axis powers. My Italian citizenship prevented me from working for the British army. However, I was able to get a position with the British Red Cross, which provided amenities to the troops. The Red Cross was independent of the Army and was able to employ me despite my Italian citizenship. It was during that period that Rommel had reached El-Alamein and was poised to conquer Egypt. The British forces were ready to pull out and evacuate the country in that event. In the eleventh hour, British forces, reinforced by troops from the Commonwealth—Australia, New Zealand, India, Canada—and by forces of occupied countries of Europe, such as the Free French and Poles, and by Jewish units from Palestine, counterattacked. The British offensive, under the leadership of General Montgomery, succeeded in throwing the German forces back. During that period I was scheduled to take my vacation. I went to Alexandria, and daily saw the units going to the front, which was about sixty miles to the west. There were a few air raids at night, but they did little damage. As an enemy alien, I had to get special permission from the Egyptian authorities to travel from Cairo to Alexandria.

In those days working hours in Egypt usually started anywhere between 8:30 and 9:00 in the morning and lasted until 1 P.M. Then people went home to have lunch—the homes were never too far away—and returned to work from 4 to 7 P.M. Saturday was also a working day. However, a few firms observed what was called "semaine Anglaise" (English week), letting the employees off after half a day on Saturday. After lunch it was the general custom to take a siesta, but the more hardy souls preferred swimming in the sporting clubs. During that period I was a member of a sporting club situated on a beautiful island in the Nile called Rhoda. By that time many of my friends had married, and I was able to establish new friendships at the sporting club. There were two reasons why marriage was not possible for me. First, I was determined to go abroad to study as soon as the war was over. Second, I had three unmarried sisters, and at that time it was not considered proper for a man to marry before his sisters.

Since the man was considered to be the mainstay and support of the family, and by that time the funds left by my father were running short, I decided to start a dressmaking business. My oldest sister had learned the trade and has had some experience as well. Though it was difficult, we managed somehow to obtain material for dresses despite the general shortage of supplies in the postwar years. Within a short time we were quite successful. Once my family was financially secure, I could think in terms of continuing my studies abroad. Since the war lasted longer than expected, I decided to return to the American University in Cairo, and was able to get my B.A. in the social sciences within two years. During the latter part of the war I obtained employment with the United States Office of War Informa-

tion in its radio division. At the close of the war I was working for the United States Information Service. Since there was no assurance that the position would be permanent, I switched to a business firm, where I was in charge of English and French correspondence.

Because of the large number of soldiers returning from the war and going to school, it was very difficult for foreigners to get admitted to a university anywhere in the Western world. I therefore resigned myself to having to wait for some time before applying for admittance at a university in the United States or England. It was only in 1950 that I took serious steps to come to the United States. When I did, I was fortunate to obtain offers of full scholarship and room and board from no less than three universities.

Postwar Years

During the war, Egypt was a hub of the Allied war effort, and economic conditions in the country were excellent. Fortunes were made by providing supplies to the British army. However, it could be foreseen that after the war and the actual signing of the peace treaty, life for Europeans, and Jews in particular, would not be ideal. The struggle for Egyptian independence had gone on for years and it was felt that foreigners, generally would not be welcome. Because of these misgivings about the future, I registered my family with the American consulate for immigration to the United States. However, the quota for Egypt was very small in 1945, and the waiting time was approximately fifteen years. Since the listing depended upon one's country of birth, my mother had to go on the Turkish quota, which had been a waiting time even longer than the Egyptian. Nevertheless, this move on my part proved to be of extreme and fortuitous importance.

About two years after World War II a new law was introduced in Egypt called Company Law, which provided that firms owned by either Egyptians or foreigners had to have at least 75 percent Egyptians among their office personnel, with at least 65 percent of the salaries going to Egyptians. In factories, 90 percent of the salaries had to be drawn by Egyptians. Egyptians meant persons having Egyptian citizenship. The term *native-born* would not be appropriate, since the majority of foreign subjects were native-born. At the time almost half of the Jewish population had foreign citizenship, and most of the others were considered "*apatride*" (stateless), even if they had been in the country for generations. Not more than 10 percent of the Jews had Egyptian citizenship. Thus employers faced a dilemma: they either had to employ Egyptian personnel, who in most cases would prove unqualified to function in a business enterprise and cause the business financial losses, or had to fire their non-Egyptian personnel so as to achieve the balance required by law. The latter course was generally adopted. Within a short time thousands of Jews found themselves jobless.

Many departed to their country of citizenship and a large number managed to go to Palestine illegally.

Some Jews tried to obtain Egyptian citizenship, but this required a good working knowledge of the Arabic language. Since very few Jews had attended Egyptian schools, it was almost impossible for them to obtain what, in the end, became a highly valued status—Egyptian citizenship. It was a period when it was very difficult for a Jewish firm to obtain export and import licences. Thus many of the Jewish businessmen took Egyptians as partners. In the firm where I was working the newly appointed director was an employee who had worked as the man Friday of the business. For one reason or another he developed an antipathy toward me, and saw to it that I was discharged in 1948 while the war against Israel was in progress. I was fortunate to find employment in an Egyptian firm as office manager, where I was given a great deal of responsibility. On one occasion I felt compelled to make some remarks to the owner's brother-in-law to which the Egyptian took exception. He asked me to pay a fine of three days' work as a penalty. I refused, and he reduced the fine to two days, then he even went farther and reduced it to one days' pay. But I remained adamant. The next day I received a letter of discharge. Immediately I dashed to his office, stating that I would prefer to submit my resignation. I felt, I said, justified in making the remarks, since I was working for the benefit of the firm. He accepted my argument, and thus I have a letter of discharge, and at the same time another letter from the same firm accepting my resignation.

In November 1945 the first anti-Jewish action was initiated by the Misr al-Fatat (Young Egypt), a chauvinistic youth group. Its members wore green shirts patterned after the brown shirts of Hitler's youth groups. Gamal Abdel-Nasser, later President of Egypt, was a member of this organization. The group was under the leadership of Ahmad Husayn. Synagogues, Jewish hospitals, and numerous Jewish institutions and shops were damaged or destroyed. In the process many foreign, non-Jewish institutions were also attacked. These riots, burnings, and occasional killings continued intermittently. During that period Jews had to disassociate themselves from Zionism or bear the consequences. During the 1948 war against Israel, Jewish firms were obliged to donate money to the Palestine Fund, which supported the anti-Jewish Palestinian Arabs. In this period of great anxiety many Jews tried to leave Egypt, but were unable to, since they were required to obtain exit visas. At times a high price had to be paid for such an exit permit. The slightest excuse sufficed to arrest a Jew. Many Jews were accused of being Zionist spies. The situation was especially perilous during the war against Israel, when there were numerous bombings, riots, arrests, and sometimes killings. Carrying a camera in the vicinity of what was considered a military site, or being caught in possession of some Hebrew text was enough to be thrown into jail. I remember vividly that in one of those riots I sat in a cafe where Europeans were set upon and

beaten. I escaped such mishandling by hiding under a table covered by a long tablecloth.

During these riots a French boxer by the name of Gaillard, who had been invited to train the Egyptian team, was killed with an ice pick by the mob. The number of Jews and foreigners who were killed was never revealed.

We had blackouts during the war against Israel, and there were a number of alerts in which we had to be extremely careful not to show lights from the buildings, on pain of being arrested and accused of providing guidance to Israeli planes. One Friday evening there was an alert and, being close to my home, I rushed back to find a group of very anxious neighbors pointing with fear to the light flickering through the blinds of a window. They begged me to turn off the light, which came from the Sabbath candles we usually lighted Friday nights. To my dismay, I discovered that I had not taken the house key with me. Since it would have been foolhardy to take chances, I decided to break in the heavy door. My great fear seemed to provide me with the necessary strength to break the lock with a few well-placed kicks. It was known that most of these alerts were sham alerts, since Israel had practically no air force during that period. However, these blackouts were used for taking the wounded returning from the front to the hospitals. The authorities did not want the people to witness these convoys, particularly since the media reported easy victories.

After the armistice there were parades of the "victorious" troops in Cairo. At the time, a law was introduced dispossessing Jews of their apartments, which happened to be close to military objectives. The vacated apartments were immediately given to Egyptians. The interpretation of what constituted a military object was left very loose, so that even a gasoline station was considered a military objective. An uncle of mine, who lived near the Arab League headquarters, was among those who lost their homes. He moved to our apartment for a short time, and later was able to go to the Belgian Congo. Our apartment was close to a gasoline station and even closer to the Marconi Telegraph Company. We were afraid that we, too, would be dispossessed, but the intervention of foreign consulates terminated the practice just in time. However, meanwhile a lot of damage had been done.

During that period Jewish businesses were sequestered and expropriated. Unscrupulous government officials were given the responsibility of running these businesses, and caused ruin to many of the owners. The compensation a few received never amounted to more than a fraction of the lost assets.

Because of my Italian nationality it was very difficult for me to find employment. For a time I was able to work in a one-man office, run by a representative of the Hungarian government who was trying to reestablish business with Egypt after the war. He was trying to sell heavy machinery. In 1949 I left this job, which was all but promising, to work for the American

Friends Service Committee. The Friends were assigned by the United Nations to care for Arab refugees in the aftermath of the Arab-Israeli War of 1948. Apparently, the conditions of the Company Law were not applicable to international agencies. From today's perspective, it is somewhat ironic to see a Jew working in an agency helping Arab refugees. In those days the problem had not yet become politicized, and the work had philanthropic overtones. However, one of the problems in my position was that, as a Jew, I could not go to the Gaza strip, which contained a large concentration of Arab refugees. My function was to work on the finances in Cairo. During my regular academic high school work at the American University in Cairo, I had carried a dual load with accounting and business courses, which now served me in good stead. Indeed, I was very fortunate to be able to make a living at that time, handicapped as I was by being an Italian citizen and a Jew. A short time afterward the United Nations took over the function, and the United Nations Works and Relief Agency (UNWRA) was established. As a result, I became a United Nations worker. It was from this last position that I left Egypt to come to the United States in 1950.

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE

ELEVENTH WORLD CONGRESS OF JEWISH STUDIES

DIVISION B
VOLUME III

THE HISTORY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE
MODERN TIMES

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JERUSALEM 1994
WORLD UNION OF JEWISH STUDIES

EMIGRATION OF SEPHARDIC JEWS FROM EGYPT AFTER THE ARAB-ISRAELI WARS

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Before the onset of hostilities in 1948 between the Arab countries and the Jewish residents in what was soon to be the State of Israel, it is estimated that close to a million Jews lived in Arabic-speaking lands. The largest numbers lived in Morocco and Iraq; Algeria, Egypt, Syria, and Yemen had smaller numbers.

This paper will deal with the experiences of Jews, prior to their exodus from Egypt, following the Arab-Israeli conflicts starting with the 1948 war with the greatest increase of immigration and deportation following strong demonstration of anti-Semitism during Nasser's presidency.

Jews have been living in Egypt since the destruction of the First Temple and developed a flourishing center of scholarship in Alexandria. In 115-117 C.E., the community came to an end after its revolt against the Roman rule. A slow revival took place under the Fatimids (964) until the Mamelukes (1171) took power. It was during those centuries that the Geniza documents accumulated in Cairo. In 1798, Egypt was conquered by Napoleon, and while the French occupation was short-lived (1798-1801), it left a strong imprint on the Westernization of the country. Later Mohamed Ali, a former Albanian officer in the service of the Turks, destroyed remnants of the Mamelukes, ruled the country from 1805-1848 and established his own dynasty. King Farouk was his great-great grandson. Farouk was forced to abdicate in 1952 after a military coup under the leadership of Mohammed Naguib and Gamal Abdal Nasser. Mohamed Ali's decision to modernize the country led to the influx of foreigners who provided the necessary training for his army. A greater influx took place when De Lesseps started to build the Suez canal, opened in 1869. However, because of Khedive Ismail's excessive expenditures for modernization and his indebtedness to foreign powers, the country was occupied by the British in 1882, and the shares of the Suez Canal were used to pay the debts. This brought again greater prosperity for the Jews, who were involved in commerce, banking and railroads. Both cotton and sugar-cane processing became the dominant exports of Egypt.

Egyptian Jews included the following: The indigenous Jews who spoke Arabic and a sizeable number lived in a secluded area called Haret el Yahoud (the Jewish quarter); the

European Jews of Sephardic origin (about 40,000) who were dominant, and conducted their business of banking manufacturing, and real estate and business in French, while many of them used the Ladino language which continued to be spoken after the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492. Jews also spoke the language of their country of origin, Greek, Italian, Iranian, etc.

A relatively small group of Ashkenazi Jews (6000) had fled the pogroms of Russia, and had arrived poverty stricken, but very shortly they were able to participate in the economy of the country. There was a fourth group called Karaites (3500), a sect established in the eighth century, which accepted only the authenticity of the Bible and rejected Talmudic writings. By 1947 Jews in Egypt reached their highest number. It was estimated that the total was approximately 80,000. In spite of their low percentage in the total population (0.4%), their contribution to the economy of the country was considerable.

The French culture, which was introduced subsequent to Napoleon's conquest of Egypt, dominated the intellectual and social life of most Jews. Most of them attended either religious schools, particularly those run by the Catholic Brothers, or secular schools subsidized by the French government. There were a few schools under Jewish auspices.

In Egypt, prior to World War II, Jews and basically all Europeans prospered. However, historical events took place, when Jews felt quite insecure about their status in the country. For a number of years there was a movement towards independence from the British occupation of Egypt. The arrival of European Jews in Palestine and the subsequent bloody riots of Arabs in 1921, 1929 and 1936 in Palestine encouraged by Hajj Amin el Hussein, the Mufti of Jerusalem, caused a great deal of concern to Jews living in the country. The conflict between Arabs and Jews started with the Balfour Declaration of 1917 made during World I, which promised the establishment of a National Home for Jews in Palestine. Other events gave the Jews a feeling of disquiet. The 1936 riots were more serious and continued well into the Second World War in 1939. Jewish immigration to Palestine was seriously curtailed by the British White Paper (1939). In 1936 the Anglo-Eyptian Treaty was signed. It provided Egypt with some independence of its own diplomatic affairs, while Britain was able to maintain a garrison in the Suez Canal Zone. A year later another treaty was signed closing the mixed courts and ending what were called the Laws of Capitulations. These laws originated with the Ottoman Empire for the protection of foreigners. Egyptian politicians started to give support to the Arabs against the Jewish settlers in Palestine. This trend naturally made Jews from Egypt quite uneasy.

Prior to World War II, in April of 1938, there were anti-Zionist demonstrations in Cairo and Alexandria, which were basically anti-Jewish. These were taking place following the long discussion on the partition of Palestine headed by Lord Peel. During the war period, while Rommel was in El Alamein, there were Egyptian expressions in favor of the Germans. Berque (1967) pointed out that the majority of the population was in favor of Rommel. It was during this period that Jews feared serious retribution from the mobs, if Rommel entered Alexandria and Cairo. During that period, the Muslim Brotherhood, a fundamentalist group under the leadership of Hassan al-Banna, was fostering hatred of the Jews. During 2-3 November, 1945, mobs of youths later joined by a large number of workers roamed the streets of Cairo, started to destroy Jewish property and looted on a wide scale. The most significant event during that period was the burning of the Ashkenazi synagogue. The mob set on fire the prayer books and some Torahs. An old age home close by was also attacked. A number of the respondents in my study have vivid memories of this incident and stated that this unfortunate event influenced their decision to leave the country. There was an attempt by the mob to enter the Jewish quarter. The entrances were blocked and the attack was repulsed by young Jews who had already trained for self-defense. The Goshen (March 1987), a publication of Jews of Egypt in Israel indicates that 10 Jews were killed and about 350 were wounded during that period.

On November 29, 1947, a vote was taken at the United Nations establishing a Jewish and a Moslem state. From that time on, there was a decided increase of tension and firing of Jewish employees who were either stateless or of a foreign nationality. In July, 1947, a new law was enacted that required all companies to include in their office staff 75% Egyptians and 90% in their factories. Thus many Jews lost their means of support since a relatively small percentage of employees had Egyptian citizenship. When on May 14, 1948, Ben Gurion declared the establishment of Israel as a new state, martial law was declared in Egypt, and within a short time (the exact number is not known) approximately 2000 young men were placed in concentration camps, one at Huckstep, previously an air base of the American army outside Cairo and some in Aboukir, close to Alexandria. Women were interned in the prison of foreigners in Cairo. While most of them had participated in Zionist and Communist activities and lists were available to the secret police, a few were arrested who had no political history. While Laskier (1922, p. 126) provides the figure of 2000, I obtained from my respondents a wide range of estimates of the individuals who were imprisoned. During the hostilities between the Arabs and the Jews, a large number of Jewish businesses were sequestered.

Jews living in sensitive areas such as communication centers, the palace of the King, the Headquarters of the Arab League, etc. were evicted from their homes. Huckstep also became the home to large numbers of members of the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as

Egyptian communists since the latter were considered as a threat to the State. A general finding in my interviews is that the internees in 1948 did not suffer as much as those of 1956 when Nasser was President.

On June 20, 1948, homes in the Jewish quarter owned by Karaites were bombed, and about 20 Jews were killed and 41 wounded. On September 22, 1948, several buildings and homes in the Jewish quarter were likewise bombed, and another 19 Jews died and 62 were wounded. It is reported that the police tended to be somewhat passive and allowed the mob to take over the streets of Cairo. There was some censorship of the news of these events as well as complete censorship of the defeats of the Arab armies at the front. Subsequent events that led to the disappearance of the vibrant Jewish community in Egypt include the following. In 1956 approximately 4000 Jews were expelled from the country, some barely with one suitcase and a very small amount of money. They had to renounce their rights to their property. In 1960, several synagogues, orphanages, rest homes, and schools were forced to close. The Jewish hospital was taken over by Egyptian authorities and the medical staff arrested, In May and June of 1967, all Jews occupying official positions were fired. 500 of them including rabbis were arrested and some even tortured; and again some were expelled with few personal belongings.

The entire history of these unfortunate events has not been judiciously documented. The present paper is a meager attempt to reflect this unhappy episode of Egyptian Jewry which unfortunately is rarely mentioned in current events while the problem of the Arab refugees from former Palestine remain a sore spot in international politics. While claims are continually made on the property left by the Arabs, there is no such discussion of the quite extensive property left by Egyptian Jews, the value of which cannot be estimated. The same applies to the Jews from other Arab countries.

An effort has been made in this research study to get a collective impression about the unpleasant experiences endured by Egyptian Jews during their critical periods which started at the end of World War II. Approximately 50 individual interviews were conducted in Israel and France with the help of a questionnaire. The same questionnaire was sent or given to interested individuals in both countries, and were returned to the United States. Approximately 75 questionnaires were returned. All the names of the Egyptian Jews were obtained by asking personal friends residing in those countries to provide names of other friends. Many of these personal interviews were tape recorded, and in some cases videos were taken. All interviews were conducted in French.

I shall discuss two major areas which were sources of anxieties; one has to do with the internment of about 2000 mostly young men, and the hardships incurred at the customs in Alexandria prior to boarding the ships taking Egyptian Jews to other countries.

Internment of Jews in Egypt

Many Zionist activities were going on among Egyptian Jews particularly with the young. This was fostered during World War II when Palestinian Jewish soldiers joined the British Force as a Jewish brigade to fight the Italians and the Germans on the Western front. Since many of these Jewish soldiers were invited in Jewish homes of local Jews, they were able to influence the young with Zionist ideology. However, it must be stated that Zionist thinking could be traced to a regular newspaper called Israel edited by the two Mosseri brothers, which was started in 1920. After 1945, when the war was over, a number of shlichim were sent to Egypt from Palestine to help in the organization of these Zionist activities. In the past, the Egyptian government allowed such activities as they were perfectly legal. Their legality made it possible for the authorities to obtain the lists of the memberships. In view of the impending conflicts between the Arab States and the possibility of the establishment of the State of Israel, members of the Zionist clubs were aware that in case of war, they would be jailed. Many had already prepared small suitcases. One respondent indicated while he and other leaders knew that they would be arrested, they eliminated from the list the second echelon of leaders and included a large number of youngsters who would be too young to be arrested. As anticipated, in the middle of the night, the police arrested those who were on their list. It is to be noted that a number of young men who were communists in ideology and even anti-Zionists were also arrested.

The prisoners in Cairo were first taken to a Jewish school in Abassiah (near Cairo) where they were held for a period of 2-3 days. During those days, bus loads of young men were brought to the school, all carrying bundles of clothing. The school had only a few rudimentary beds. The luckier ones were those who were brought in earlier, the rest had to find a clear spot to lie down or lean their backs against the wall. The situation tended to be confusing for everybody. No one had any idea of his final destination. They were aware that a war was going on between Israel and the Arab countries. They had no contacts with their families, except that at times, someone from the street called from under a window asking if "X" or "Y" was with the group. After all the young men in the list were rounded up, the whole group was taken to Huckstep Camp. During the early weeks, the situation seemed to have been chaotic and rather unpleasant for the internees particularly with respect to food and sleeping facilities which were quite primitive. But in time they organized themselves and started to do their own cooking. One internee who had a construction

business before his arrest was able to get building material into the camp which made the facilities of the camp more tolerable. A Jewish doctor who had been arrested provided medical care for the internees and was able to help the guards at times. From the several comments received, there was no evidence of cruelty or physical abuse perpetrated on the prisoners. During the internment, anyone with expertise in any areas or skills conducted classes. Lectures, concerts and serious discussions were held regularly as well as religious services and Friday night special dinners were served. Internees served in rotation as waiters. Some of my respondents indicated that the camp experience had a positive influence on them because of the intensive intellectual activities.

A large group of members of the Moslem brotherhood and Communists were also interned close to the Jewish camp. There was also a group of Palestinian refugees residing in the area. It seems that the Jewish group was in danger of being attacked. At one point when the Jewish group believed that they would be attacked, some got iron bars which they were planning to use in self-defense. Fortunately, the camp commandant managed to intercede and probably prevented a massacre.

The Soviet Union was one of the first to recognize Israel. As a result, the Jewish communists who were anti-Zionists changed their attitude. It seemed that the leader of the Jewish communists, Curiel, who was later murdered in France had written a statement to the effect that Israel should be accepted as a viable state. One of my respondents indicated that the Egyptian government was more fearful of the Moslem communists who tended to be militant trouble makers and followed closely their ideologies of overturning the government. The Egyptian authorities seemed to be aware that Jewish communists were in general ideologues and would not act on their beliefs. The authorities tended to be more lenient towards them.

A few months after their internment, a group of 50 Jews were selected to be transferred to another camp in the Sinai desert called El Tor. The camp had been used in the past as a quarantine station for pilgrims coming from Saudi Arabia. The condition of the camp was extremely primitive. It was extremely hot during the day and freezing during the night. The selection of Jewish internees and the reason for their transfer was purely arbitrary. The explanation for the transfer was that the authorities wanted to keep vocal members of the Moslem Brotherhood and Communists away from inhabited areas. The 50 Jews were included in the list for internment at El Tor as a kind of camouflage that they were punishing both Moslems and Jews. A letter written by the Jewish internees was sent out describing the horrible conditions under which they were living, and reminding the world of the injustice inflicted on them and demanding their freedom. A few months later, they

were returned to Huckstep Camp. Internees were slowly freed, some of them by their consular representatives for those who had foreign citizenship. The others were allowed to stay with their families for a while, but had to leave the country; others were taken to the ships with handcuffs. Shiploads of Jews were leaving the country of their own free will but dispossessed of their assets, others were deported and arrived in European ports. Fortunately, they were taken care of by Joint Distribution Committee or Israeli representatives. Many families were taken directly to Israel where conditions were extremely difficult and many had to live in tents for a while. Some of the young people who landed in France were sent to camps for training for agricultural work. This would become later an asset for them when transferred to Israel.

HARDSHIPS IN LEAVING EGYPT

The hardships that our respondents incurred in leaving the country varied tremendously, from those who were able to leave without any unfortunate incident to those who underwent a lot of suffering because of internment, separation from their families, loss of their homes and assets and the problems in leaving the country particularly at the customs in Alexandria. Many Jews in leaving the country were subjected to indignities and arbitrary treatment. Suitcases were overturned and checked thoroughly and bundles opened or slashed to make sure that there were no hidden jewels or valuable objects. At one time immigrants were only able to carry one suitcase, at other times, there was no limits as to the number of suitcases they could carry with them. They were allowed to take a lot of clothing. One respondent indicated that he purchased huge suitcases for the purpose of making shoes. Immigrants were allowed to take out of the country the amount of 20 Egyptian Pounds. ($54.) However one respondent indicated that a custom official refused to let him go with the 20 Egyptian Pounds. He managed to have a friend who accompanied him to purchase some clothing before his departure.

Immigrants, male or female, were physically searched in their most intimate parts to make sure that they were not hiding jewelry. More than one respondent indicated that there was a type of Mafia functioning at the Customs in order to deprive the immigrants of their jewelry which they carried openly such as watches, rings and necklaces. The customs official would suggest that they could sell their jewelry to individuals at the customs who took advantage by buying those valuables at ridiculous prices with the probability that the customs official would get his share. It was also indicated that some of these customs officials helped themselves to objects found in the suitcases. Many felt that protesting at this critical period was not wise.

One of the questions raised during these interviews was whether the immigrants had carried with them some documentation. Some had a few old pictures, school records and a few letters. During these critical years, departing travellers had to go to a censorship office with any printed material. The purpose was to make sure that any material which could have strategic value to Israel would not be taken out of the country. Sometimes innocuous material was taken out of the bundle of papers, the rest was packed and sealed, so that it could clear the customs without any problems. However in spite of such a rule, the bundles were opened by the customs officials. Because of the fear of dealing with the censorship, many preferred not to get involved with the censorship office and preferred to leave with no documentation at all.

It is hoped that some day a complete book will be devoted to the documentation of this whole episode of the exodus of Egyptian Jews and how they adapted to life in the various host countries around the world.

JUDAISM
A QUARTERLY JOURNAL

Issue No. 170 / Volume 43 / Number 2 / Spring 1994

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The Vanished World of Egyptian Jewry

VICTOR D. SANUA

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I WAS BORN IN CAIRO IN 1920 INTO A MIDDLE-class Jewish family. My father, too, was born in Cairo, and my mother, born in Turkey, was brought to Cairo as a teenager. Both of my parents were of Sephardic origin. However, my father had acquired Italian citizenship from his father, which made me legally an Italian citizen as well. This seeming anomaly was the result of an agreement, arrived at approximately one hundred years earlier, whereby the rulers of Egypt accepted arrangements for all foreigners and their children to derive their legal status from the consul of the country of their origin. This system of foreign protection came to be called the Laws of Capitulations and originated under the Ottomans. Capitulations were treaties of commerce guaranteeing that the interests of foreigners immigrating to Egypt would be safeguarded by their own consuls, and they would not be taxed. However, since this led to a chaotic legal situation, so-called Mixed Courts were established in 1885 to handle litigation between a foreigner and an Egyptian. It is understandable why foreigners living for several generations in Egypt maintained the citizenship of their country of origin. In many instances, Jews were able to obtain foreign citizenship; foreign powers did not mind having a larger representation of persons bearing their own passports. The Capitulations were eliminated in 1937 (in the Treaty of Montreux) and taxation was imposed on foreign businesses. Individual taxation came later.

While my family claimed Italian citizenship, their first language was French. French influence dated back to Napoleon's conquest of Egypt in the latter part of the eighteenth century and to the later establishment of French schools throughout the Middle East, including Egypt. My family was also fluent in Ladino, a type of archaic Spanish which included many French, Turkish, and Hebrew words with Spanish endings. Many of the old-timers wrote Ladino in Hebrew (Rashi) script. This was not a language which was systematically studied like French but was acquired in the home and used with family members and friends of similar background. Most of the Jews in Egypt spoke Arabic at different levels of competence, but very few learned literary Arabic, which required years of study and was not used in common communication. Colloquial Arabic was used primarily with service people, such as maids, waiters, and shopkeepers.

Prior to the arrival in Egypt of foreign Jews during the middle of the nineteenth century, there was a small number of indigenous Jews (*Musta'arbin*) who had lived in the country for centuries and whose mother tongue was Ara-

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bic. They were considered *dhimmis*, that is, protected people under Islam, a kind of second-class citizenship. Christians were subject to the same status. *Dhimmis* had to pay heavy taxes called *jizya* and were exempt from military service.

Prior to the destruction of the Second Temple, Jewish civilians and mercenaries had settled on the island of Elephantine in the Upper Nile and had formed a frontier garrison for the protection of the Pharaohs against outside invaders. In later centuries, following the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great, Jews became prominent in Alexandria. The community was strongly Hellenized but maintained its Jewish faith. Its members participated in and contributed to Greek cultural life. This was the time when the Bible was translated into Greek (the Septuagint) and when Philo wrote his philosophical treatises. Later, under the occupation by the Romans, the enmity between the Jews and Greeks led to a revolt, and the Romans destroyed the Jewish community (115-117 C.E.) The revolt was instigated by Christian Greeks who conducted a number of pogroms. Jewish life in Alexandria subsequently disappeared.

In 640, Egypt was conquered by Arabs from the Arabian Peninsula under the banner of Muhammad, who established a new religion, Islam. Little information about Jews in Egypt in the years between that conquest and the end of the tenth century is available. In 960, the Fatimids (Shi'ite Muslims) conquered the country and a period of relative but inconsistent prosperity followed. The Fatimids relaxed the Laws of Omar, but some rulers were less tolerant than others. The Laws of Omar consisted of a series of acts of degradation, such as wearing signs indicating Jewishness and prohibitions against riding horses and bearing arms. During the Fatimid period there was some intellectual activity until the time when the Mamelukes assumed power (1250). The following centuries saw the social improvement of the Egyptian Jewish community (as recorded in the Geniza documents). A number of Spanish Jews expelled from the Iberian peninsula in 1492 alighted in Egypt, but most of them settled in the Ottoman Empire.

One of the illustrious leaders of the Cairo Jewish community was Maimonides (1135-1204), who was born in Cordova, Spain, but fled from the Almohadic (Muslim) persecution. The Mameluke rule was followed by persecution of both Jews and Christians and continued until 1517, when the Ottoman Turks conquered Egypt. Early in their occupation, at the height of their power, the Turks tended to be more tolerant. Most of the finances of Egypt were in the hands of Jews, who were appointed as *chelebi* (gentlemen). However, the decline of the Turkish Empire, with its wars against Russia, correlates with the decline of the Jewish community. Many *chelebi* were executed by Turkish governors either because of slander by their entourage or because of jealousy of the Jewish wealth.

In 1798, Egypt was conquered by Napoleon, and while the French occupation was short-lived (1798-1801), it left a strong imprint on the Westerniza-

tion of the country. Shortly thereafter, Muhammad Ali, a former Albanian officer in the service of the Turks, took over the reins of power. He ruled the country from 1805-1848 and established his own dynasty; King Faruk was his great-great-grandson. Faruk was forced to abdicate in 1952 after a military coup under the leadership of Muhammad Naguib and Gamal Abdal Nasser. Muhammad Ali's decision to modernize the country led to an influx of foreigners, who provided the necessary training of his army to defeat the Turks at a later period. A greater influx took place during the building of the Suez Canal in the 1860s, under Said and later under Khedive Ismail, the grandson of Muhammad Ali. Because of the latter's excessive modernization programs and indebtedness to foreign powers, Egypt was occupied by the British in 1882, and the shares of the Suez Canal were used to pay the debts. This brought greater prosperity to those Jews involved in commerce, banking, and railroads.

At the turn of the century, there were approximately 25,000 Jews living in Egypt, divided into four groups. The first, the indigenous Jews, spoke Arabic and lived in a secluded area in Cairo called Haret el Yahoud (the Jewish quarter). The second group, European Jews of Sephardic origin, were dominant and conducted their businesses of banking, manufacturing, and real estate in French, although many of them also spoke Ladino. This group included Jews from Italy and Corfu, as well as North Africa and the Levant. The third group was relatively small; it consisted of Ashkenazi Jews who had fled the pogroms of Russia and arrived in poverty, but who very shortly were able to participate in the economy of the country. Some had come from Palestine during World War I, forced out of the country by Turkey, Germany's ally. In Cairo they maintained their separate rabbinate; Yiddish was their principal language. In other cities Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews were under one rabbinate. The Sephardic rabbi in Cairo represented all Jewry to the Egyptian government. The fourth group were the Karaites, a sect established in the eighth century, which accepted only the authority of the Bible and rejected rabbinic writings. By 1947, Jews in Egypt reached their highest number. It is estimated that the total was approximately 80,000, 96 percent residing in the two major cities, Cairo (64 percent) and Alexandria (32 percent). In spite of their low numbers in the total population (0.4 percent), their contribution to the economy of the country was considerable.

Most of the Jews in Egypt received their education in foreign schools, primarily French secular schools (*Lycées Français*) and schools established by the Collège des Frères, a Catholic order. Professional training and higher education were obtained abroad. Few Jews of European origin were able to attend the Egyptian universities; since they had not mastered written Arabic, they could not be admitted, in spite of the fact that English and French were widely used, particularly in the sciences, medicine, and law. I myself attended the Collège des Frères, where almost half the students were Jewish. The language of instruction for all courses was French. Arabic and English were taught as

second languages two to three hours a week. There were a number of elementary Jewish communal schools, but only children of modest means attended them. In these schools, too, French was the dominant language, with Hebrew secondary. In Cairo there was also a small afternoon school (Talmud Torah) attached to the main synagogue, teaching Hebrew and Bible. Talmudic academies did not exist. Those seeking further religious education or rabbinical training had to go to the island of Rhodes, which was part of Italy before World War II. The influence of French education had the tendency to detach young Jewish people from their Arab environment.

Life for Egyptian Jews was quite comfortable. Practically all could afford to keep servants and to vacation regularly at the resort beaches in Alexandria and Port Said. There were also recreational clubs like the Union Universelle de la Jeunesse Juive and the Judéo-Espagnole (later changed to Judéo-Egyptienne). I and a group of friends from the Collège des Frères organized a boys' club called the Jewish Camping Club; we would go on weekend trips to places like the Pyramids, Meadi, Helwan (Spa), Suez, the Mokattam mountains, and the Fayyum oasis south of Cairo. Most Jews, except for those living in the Haret el Yahoud, considered themselves secular Jews. Jewish learning was minimal; bar-mitzvah preparation, for instance, consisted of a few months of instruction by a private tutor.

Most of the large department Egyptian stores were owned by Jews, with names like Cicurel, Oreco, Chemla, Gattegno, Ades, Cohenca, Simon-Artz, Morums, and Benzion. A notable exception was the Sednaoui store, which was owned by Christian immigrants from Syria but whose employees were largely Jewish. Most of these names are still to be found gracing Cairo storefronts, despite the fact that today the Jewish community in Egypt is almost extinct.

In the '20s and '30s, when I was growing up, we rarely personally experienced any anti-Semitism. To be sure, we knew that anti-Jewish feeling was part of the Egyptian historical legacy and could, at any time, break out again; but in general, Jews felt secure under British rule. However, once the British were forced out of the country (in 1954), this sense of ease evaporated. Even before the British evacuation, I saw the writing on the wall and, during World War II, registered my family at the American Embassy for purposes of immigration to the United States. At the time this was not considered a wise move on my part.

The first serious inkling of things to come occurred on November 2, 1945, the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration. Some minor anti-Jewish agitation had broken out in 1938, but in 1945, members of the youth organization Young Egypt and of the Moslem Brotherhood attacked the Jewish quarter in Cairo, resulting in many casualties. They set fire to a synagogue, demolished a Jewish hospital, an old-age home, and other Jewish institutions. It was the beginning of the end of the Jewish, as well as the foreign, communities. A combination of factors led to their demise. With industrialization, a new Egyptian social class

had developed, causing tension between them and Jews and Christians in the country. While Zionist activities were tolerated in the past, the defeat of Arab armies during the Israeli-Arab wars was instrumental in exacerbating anti-Jewish feelings. Moreover, Muslim fundamentalism contributed substantially to the prevailing xenophobia. After each war, Jewish property was confiscated and Jews were imprisoned in concentration camps or forced into exile, leaving behind their assets. Regular travel abroad became a problem since exit visas were required.

In 1947, the Company Law was enacted, mandating all business enterprises to maintain a majority of "Egyptian nationals," 75 percent of all salaried employees in offices and 90 percent of all workers in factories. The term "Egyptian nationals" was often interpreted to mean only Muslims and the law even discriminated against the indigenous Christians, the Copts. Since a large number of enterprises were controlled by foreigners, many found themselves forced to fire their non-Egyptian employees. In 1948, in spite of the fact that I was working for a Jewish firm, I was discharged because of my Italian citizenship. Some Jews tried to obtain Egyptian citizenship, but this was difficult since it was necessary to prove that one's parents and grandparents had been born in the country, and many, of course, did not qualify.

Now began the new exodus of the Jews from Egypt. Following the 1948 Israeli-Arab war, 20,000 to 30,000 Jews, who could no longer obtain employment, left the country. Because foreign businesses and institutions were exempt from the Company Law, I was able at first to work for a business representing the Communist government of Hungary; later I joined the staff of the American Friends Services Committee, which was involved in helping Palestinian refugees in Gaza. I remained there until 1949, by which time the refugee question changed from a humanitarian problem to one of a political nature. In 1952 Nasser came to power. Egyptian nationalism intensified, and the decisive blow to Egyptian Jewry was struck in 1956 when Israel, France, and England attacked Egypt after the country had nationalized the Suez Canal. There were mass arrests, sequestrations, and ill treatment not only of Jews but also of French and British citizens. Within a few months, another 40,000 to 50,000 Jews left the country; all their assets, including property, were confiscated. In 1967 there were about 3,000 Jews left. By the 1980s the number had dwindled to about 200. At the present time it is estimated that only 100 or so old people still remain in Egypt.

The Egyptian Jewish emigrants scattered throughout the world. They settled in Israel (35,000); Brazil (15,000); France (10,000); the U.S.A. (9,000); Argentina (9,000); and Great Britain (4,000). A few very rich Egyptian Jews and non-Jews managed to become residents of Switzerland. Thus, within the space of a few years, the Egyptian Jewish community, which had been in existence for 2,500 years, in effect ceased to exist. I myself had already left Egypt in 1950.

Following the signature of the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt in

1979, a number of Egyptian Jews were able to return to Egypt for visits. There were many reports of poor social conditions in Egypt and the deterioration of services since the departure of the foreign communities. Almost thirty years of hostilities against Israel and the excessive military expenditures had seriously affected the infrastructure of the country. Visitors to Egypt were told they could not drink the water because of pollution, and that only bottled drinks were safe. In my day there was no such problem. Cairo then was a relatively clean and well-ordered city, with a population of 2,250,000. The number has since grown to 14 or 15 million, with all the consequent urban deterioration.

I was reluctant to visit the city of my birth and would have preferred not to disturb my memories of Cairo as it was in the 1920s, '30s, and '40s. However, not long ago, my daughter was attending the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and while I was visiting her, she expressed a desire to see Egypt and asked me to accompany her. When I balked, she announced that she would go anyway, but that without me the trip would not be as meaningful. Her argument was convincing.

I did not expect us to meet any Jews I had known from before, since all were gone, but I looked forward to visiting the synagogue where I had my bar mitzvah and which I used to attend frequently with my father. During the two days we spent in Cairo, we went sightseeing during the day and at night visited the familiar places of my youth. On the first day we set out by bus for the Pyramids, driving slowly past village after village. We were in heavy traffic all the way and the trip took almost two hours. I remember that as a teenager, I used to ride my bicycle out to the Pyramids; the trip then, non-stop there and back, could be accomplished in only one hour.

We visited the street where I was born, Sharia (Street) Tursina. The street sign, covered by years of grime, was hardly visible. The elevators in my old apartment building were not functioning; a person coming down the stairs told us that the elevators had not been working for years. We also paid a visit to the Catholic school of my early education. Nothing in the building had changed. The familiar playground was still in its old location, but it was much smaller than I had remembered. Unlike in my day, Arabic was now the chief language of instruction, and there were very few foreigners in the school.

Next we visited the American University in Cairo, where I did my undergraduate work. The school was housed in a former palace and was sufficient to accommodate all the academic needs of the day. Now the old palace was being used as the administration building. A whole new campus had grown up in the surrounding open spaces in the meantime, with many new buildings. The student body, of course, had grown accordingly. No surprise, since the American University is the only place in Egypt where it is possible to obtain a liberal education.

Many of the streets of Cairo had been named after illustrious citizens who bore noble titles of Turkish origin, like Pasha or Bey. Such titles were

eliminated with the establishment of the Egyptian Republic after the departure of King Faruk. Most of the street names were then changed to reflect the new conditions. For example, I used to live on Sharia Malika Farida, named after Faruk's first wife. When he divorced her, the name was changed to Abdel Khalet Saroit Pasha. Now, dropping the title, it is called simply Abdel Khalet Saroit. The main street of Cairo, Sharia Fuad I, named after Faruk's father (all the names of the royal family began with *F*), was changed to the Street of the 6th of July, to commemorate an important date in modern Egyptian history. Suleiman Pasha, another major Cairo thoroughfare, also had undergone a transformation. Originally named after a French officer in the army of Muhammad Ali, a converted Christian who rose to eminence in Egyptian politics, the street was now called Sharia Harb.

On Sharia Fuad there used to be, as I recalled, a famous pastry shop, Tseppas, which was one of our favorite spots for cake. I was pleased to see that the shop was still there under its old name. A scion of the Tseppas family had been a classmate of mine at the Collège des Frères, and I therefore asked the pastry-shop attendant if there were any Tseppases still around. He told me, with a smile, that they had left the country a long time ago. Sharia Fuad was also the location of two favorite ice-cream parlors and restaurants called "A l'Américaine." The establishments were still there, under their old name, but their former sparkle, at least to me, was no longer in evidence. For old-times' sake, I took my daughter to Groppi's, a combination pastry shop, restaurant, and nightclub owned by Greeks. In its heyday it was the major meeting place of the then jet set; now it is a run-down café where people drink tea or coffee and play backgammon.

Our visit fell over a weekend and on Saturday morning my daughter and I went to the Sha'ar Ha-Shamayim synagogue, commonly called Temple Ismailiah, where I had my bar mitzvah. To my surprise, given all the changes, most for the worse, that I had seen so far, the synagogue was as beautiful and resplendent as when I had left Egypt in 1950. We were told that the synagogue had become the recipient of a handsome donation by Nissim Gaon, a rich Swiss businessman born in the Sudan, for the purpose of renovation and upkeep. I entered the sanctuary with great emotion, for this was where my father used to take me on Sabbaths and holidays. I remembered very clearly the beautiful singing of our cantor, who was originally from Czechoslovakia. I also recalled the sermons of our rabbi, Haim Nahum Effendi, who served between 1925-1961. He was totally blind and a *shamash* (beadle) always had to remind him when to call a halt to his sermon, since he habitually lost track of time.

There were only six old men present in the synagogue. They were waiting for the necessary *minyan* before they could start the service. My daughter sat down next to me, and one of the old men gestured to her to go sit on the other side of the main aisle, to preserve the traditional separation of the sexes. The upper balcony, suitably curtained, the usual women's section, was empty.

Finally three (male) tourists arrived, one by one, and now, with the requisite number of ten men in place, the service could begin. This certainly contrasted with the days when if we were late, there would be standing-room only. The synagogue was without a rabbi, the last one having left in 1972. The octogenarian conducting the service was almost blind and seemed to be reciting the text more from memory than with reference to the prayerbook. I was deeply gratified when I was offered an aliyah and called to the Torah.

After the service was over, I approached the gabbai and inquired about the Jewish cemetery called Bassatim, where my parents were buried and whose graves I wanted to visit. The gabbai only spoke Arabic, but we somehow managed to communicate. I was made to understand that it would be very difficult to locate the graves, since most of the marble memorial slabs had been taken away and used for construction. He discouraged my going to the cemetery, since it would be impossible to identify the graves. Reluctantly, I conceded that he was right.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE ARRESTS OF YOUNG JEWISH MEN AT THE OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL ON MAY 15, 1948

The following text was derived from an audiotape used in an interview with an Israeli, Egyptian born. He reports on the chaotic moments of their arrest and proper actions taken by the internees when one of the members of the group learned about the death of his father

We were sent first to the Jewish schools at Abbassiah (suburb of Cairo) where we stayed for 2-3 days. During those days, scores of our friends of the youth movement, Jewish and non-Jewish,were brought in bus loads to the schools. There were some rudimentary beds, boards of wood on trestles of iron. The luckier ones were those who came earlier since they had some place to sit and lie down. The others, carrying their bundles or small luggage, walked around to find a place to sit on the floor with their backs against the wall.

Every few hours there were arrivals of trucks from different police stations and from the central railway station with their human cargo. In the hallways, police called up names to deliver luggage. They were mostly Cohen, Levy, Azouli, Harari, Sasson, Bensimon, etc. Suddenly, they call me (identity hidden) without mentioning my first name. I go towards the door and gave my name. They gave me a suitcase, which was not mine. I opened it and it took me some time to realize that this suitcase belonged to my brother. The family had time to pick up a few clothes and toiletries for him. An hour later, my younger brother sad-looking. My other brother was arrested 15 days later, and we were all interned with some of the notables of the Jewish community.

We tried to organize ourselves as best we could while waiting for events to develop. No one had any idea about our final destination. One sure thing was that we would not remain in Cairo in the school buildings. There were too many of us, more than a thousand. The only thing we knew was that there was a war going on between Egypt and Israel. We had some ideas as to where the fighting was going on, but no notion of the development of the events. We had no contacts either with family, press or even with the street. Pardon me, we had some vague contact with the street. Parents calling under the windows asking if "X" or "Y" was with us, and we likewise worried about the fate of absent friends living in different parts of the city. In such conditions, that someone calls from the street if Mr. X. was with us. When we provided an affirmative answer, we were asked to inform him that his father, who was very sick at the time of the arrest, had died and that he had to say "Kadish" (prayer for the departed) and go into mourning. We were taken aback as we were not in normal conditions. At this time we go in touch a young man from the Cairo Jewish Quarter who was better versed in the religious rituals. While Mr. X. was in the middle of the room with his head covered, some of the elders recited Kaddish, and with our full heart, we repeated after him. When one of the elders requested a hardboiled egg, everyone went looking for one. After five minutes of search, someone returned with a hard-boiled egg. It seems that a good mother had the bright ideas to include an egg in a package of food with the clothing hastily put together, bundled with a string.

Because Mr. X. was in shock at the news of his father's death, he did not want to eat the egg, but he was urged to do so, following the tradition. The man who carried on with the ceremony added the "Kryah" (traditional tearing of the collar of the shirt), which is to remind Jews of the destruction of the Temple and the mourning thereafter. Mr. X. was asked to wash his face and was told to forego the mourning ritual of sitting "Shiva" because of the conditions we were in. This is how the mourning ceremony was carried out in the Jewish school of Abbassiah with all the internees present.

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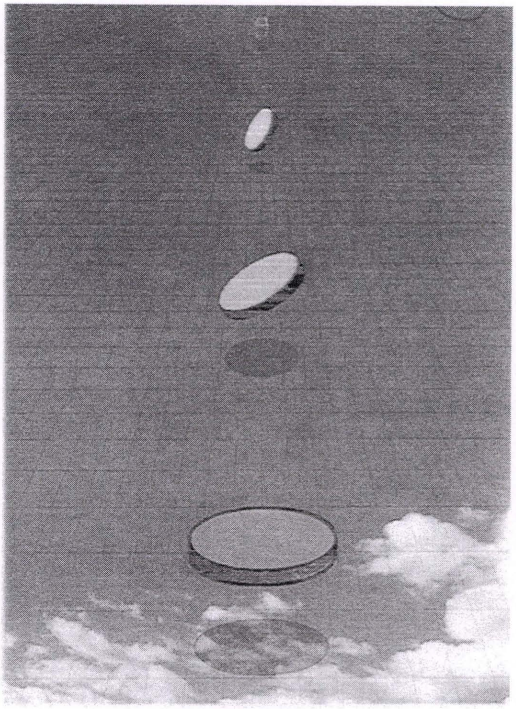
Roswith Roth, Sandra Neil (Eds.)

A Matter of Life: Psychological Theory, Research and Practice



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REMINISCENCES ON MY TRAINING AS A CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST

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In 1950, almost half a century ago, I started my graduate studies in the United States. I thought that at this time, it would be a good idea to share my experiences in the training that I have received, the development of this training and the changes that have taken place since I started my studies. Psychology as noted by German scholar, Hermann Ebbinghaus (1850-1909), a pioneer in experimental psychologist, "has a long past, but only a short history" (Boring 1950). The past is illustrated by the efforts of philosophers, like Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates when questions and speculations were made concerning the nature of the universe and man, while the short history is attributed to the efforts to make psychology a scientific discipline in which empirical methods are used to study systematically the behavior of living systems. Thus from a definition of psychology being the study of the soul, it became the study of behavior. However prior to this empirical approach, similar questions posed by philosophers were raised again during the Renaissance period. Among the several problems addressed, there was the famous question as to the nature of the mind-body relationship. Descartes was the first of the modern philosophers who felt that knowledge can be attained through reason. He is well-known for his statement illustrating his basic principle, "Cogito ergo Sum" "I think therefore I am."

Prior to World War II, psychology tended to be primarily an academic discipline. However, there were some efforts around the beginning of the 20th Century when academically trained psychologists introduced experimental methods in solving the problems of school children. The experimental method in psychology was introduced in Germany by Wilhelm Wundt in the latter part of the 19th Century. Most of the dominant psychologists in the USA had obtained their degree under Wundt. They found him to be most authoritarian. Sanua (1982) has reviewed what Wundt's former students wrote about him after his death. "Professor Wundt, we like thee not!"

Lightner Witmer established in 1896 the first psychological clinic in Philadelphia. His colleagues did not show any enthusiasm and support for his ideas. A great impetus to this effort was the use of the Binet-Simon Scale of intelligence.

Another outstanding psychologist was G. Stanley Hall who edited a journal on the practical contributions of psychologists. In 1909, he had invited Sigmund Freud at Clark University' twentieth anniversary of its founding. Freud played an historic role in introducing psychoanalysis in the United States. He had admitted that his ideas seemed to have been welcomed in the USA while they were not too successful in Europe.

With this short historical introduction, I shall now discuss my experiences. I started my graduate studies two years after the Boulder Conference held in 1948. During that Conference, representatives of the university training programs, and other mental health professionals including representatives of the American Psychiatric Association passed a number of resolutions which had a definite impact on the training of clinical psychologist. The Conference adopted the principle that a clinical psychologist should be a scientist-practitioner. The reason for this decision was that of all the mental health disciplines, only psychology was traditionally oriented towards research. However, experiences has shown that very few clinical psychologists go into research after completing their training.

Some efforts were made after 1948 to keep the principle of the scientist-practitioner in mind. However, departments of psychology, in the past had been reluctant to training clinical psychologists, but they were softened by the large amounts of money which were made available through the Veterans' Administration. I came into the picture around that time between the transition of a primarily academic discipline and the development of the profession of clinical psychology. Having been in academia for the past 50 years, I have been a very close witness to the changes that took place during that period.

At this time, allow me to write about myself and how I came to select psychology as a profession. Many of you are quite aware that I was born in Egypt but I always indicated that I am not Egyptian, a concept that is very difficult to understand in the USA. The following is the nutshell of my background. While born in Egypt, my formative years took place in Belgium and as an adolescent I returned to Cairo. We were educated in French schools, spoke French at home and Ladino which is a medieval Spanish with foreign words attached particularly Turkish and French with Spanish endings. This is a language which is learned at home, and no one takes lessons in Ladino. My ancestors were in the Exodus of 1492, went first to Italy and later to Turkey where my parents were born. In Istanbul for centuries they spoke Ladino. The earliest tombstone of a Sanua that I was able to find in Istanbul had the date of 1670. During 1850, because of the decline of Turkey as a power and the development of Egypt with its rich cotton production and the opening of the Suez canal, my grandparents decided to settle in Egypt, a move that was quite easy since Egypt in those days was part of the Ottoman Empire. In all those years, we maintained Italian citizenship, a status whose origin is very complex to explain.

When the time came for me to go to high school, the French language as an international language of communication had weakened prior to World War II, and English had become more important. As a result I attended the high school attached to the American University in Cairo. At the age of 15, English was for me a new language, and early in the game, I had difficulties to learn the language and to know that words of similar sound were spelled differently. Of course the fact that the British spelled a number of words differently from the Americans led to a bit of confusion. The transition from a language which was precise with strict rules of grammar to a language that had a lot of variation and complicated syntax was not easy for me, but somehow I learned to speak English and the fact is that I am able to address a distinguished audience in that language.

I would like to provide you a couple of instances where language learning presented some problem for me. On the liner taking me to America, as far as I know planes travel was a rarity, there was a group of young people telling jokes on deck and at one time the punch line of a joke was the 4-letter word. The whole group burst into laughter. However, I did not understand the significance of the words and innocently I asked the group what it meant. At that time, there was a stronger series of laughs. I assumed that they could not believe that someone speaking fluent English could not know the meaning of the 4-letter word. Of course, my professors at the American University did not provide me with the full command of the language. Later while visiting Chicago, I went to a vaudeville show and while the jokes were similar to the ones I knew in French sounded extremely vulgar when they were told in English. Thus at the American University, I only learned proper English and it took me some time to use sparingly those words that are part of USA life.

Just before disembarking from the ship, I asked a young lady if she wanted to go out with me. The word date was not in my vocabulary. I spent two nights in New York before taking the train to the University in the Middle West. The first night, I had dinner with the young lady at the Copacabana Club. I had heard about this famous club in Egypt and wanted to see their show that night. The main feature was Joe Brown, famous for his song, "Me and my shadow". At one point during the conversation, I said to the young lady that I was planning to write to my family that I was at the Copacabana Club which would be a big hit for them. She responded, "I shall be quite a sensation when I shall tell the girls in the office that I had dinner at the Copacabana Club!" The price I had to pay for that dinner would represent a regular monthly salary of an office worker in Egypt. The second night I went to see the Rockettes. I went up the Empire State building. I started a conversation with a gentleman who was aware that I was not a native-born citizen. He asked the question when I came to America. I looked at my watch and I said, "Two hours ago". His response was that he had been living in New York for the past thirty years and it was only on that day that he visited the Empire State building.

While in Egypt, I sent application to 5 universities including Vassar. Of course I did not know that this was a girls' school.

Now that you know about my multifarious background, and my language problems, the next topic is why I selected Psychology. There were three possible influences leading me to it. First and foremost, I took an introductory course of psychology and we used a book by Woodworth. The chapter that engrossed me was the fact that intelligence could be measured, this possibility had become more salient in my mind since I was able to retain easily what I had read. The French system of education was very rigid and it still is until today. There were serious penalties if you failed the numerous examinations. You were ranked in your class every week and parents had to sign the reports. I brought with me my report card, in case anyone is interested to have a look at it. Every morning students stood in line at the Catholic school I attended for an oral examination by the teacher. He was questioning on the study assignment. If the answers were correct, the student was graded, but if the student failed to answer, he had to stay after class, study and take the oral examination again. I usually did my own reading when I was in line. When I had a feeling that I could not make it, I went to the end of the line. It certainly caused a great deal of distress to the pupils who had difficulties taking those tests. Private tutors was the answer. I felt quite happy that I did not need one and even assisted other students. This probably why I became a professor and did not select business as a career. Children and adolescents in France who do not do well in their examinations are deprived of certain privileges, a far cry to what is happening in the USA system of education. Another factor which influenced my decision was the fact that I started reading Sigmund Freud in French. As a youngster who had not developed his full libido, I had difficulties understanding. I realized that there was something interesting there that mental disorders could be treated with talk. An earlier experience of visiting a mental institution reinforced in me the desire to help people. During my studies, a professor took us to a mental hospital at Abbassiah, which had the same connotation as Bellevue in the USA. There I witnessed a treatment session with metrazol which had a great impact on me. This was the time before psychotropic drugs had been discovered. The patient went into terrible convulsions with a terrified look and blood dripping from his mouth biting a piece of wood which supposedly prevented him from cutting his tongue. I was told that some patients break their bones at times. That sight probably explains my opposition in later years to shock treatment and the use of psychotropic drugs used by psychiatrists on mental patients. My opposition to these drugs became even stronger when a small group at APA started to advocate "prescription privileges" or "prescription privileges" (Wiggins). I am planning to discuss this development in psychology later in my presentation.

At the end of the treatment session at Abassiah, I innocently asked the psychiatrist if they were doing any research on mental disorders. He could only smile and say that in this hospital with thousands of patients, there were

only 6 psychiatrists. It was then that I was determined to become a psychologist and help people by talking to them instead of drugging them. I learned that the only training at that time in psychology was to become a physician after the method of English training. Egypt was still under the influence of the British educational system. I attended a premedical course at the British Council in Cairo and realized very early on that what I was learning had no relationship with my ultimate plan. I learned that it was possible to get a Ph.D. in America in Clinical Psychology and medical training was not needed. I opted, therefore to come to the USA in 1950, having been accepted at 5 different universities to which I had applied. When I told a French teacher that I was going to America to study psychology, his prompt remark was what would I be doing after studying philosophy. In his own mind, psychology was philosophy. Of course, before psychology became an independent discipline in the United States, psychology tended to be part of departments of philosophy. France was rather late in adopting fully the experimental method in training psychologists. During a Fulbright year in France 1965-1966, I was able to get a sample of examination questions on psychology. One of them was, "Is it possible to test the existence of God by the experimental method." or for a four-hour exam, "What is the difference between love and passion". (Sanua)

I was accepted in a graduate program in spite of the fact that I had not been a psychology major. There was no such a thing in Egypt. My professor at The American University in Cairo was a pioneer in the country. My conclusion is that, you do not need to major in psychology to do graduate work in this field. Of course, the point is debatable.

Before going into the kind of courses taught in graduate school, I have to comment about the male/female ratio of graduate students. There were only three females out of a student body of approximately graduate 100 students. This presented a problem for me in my dating efforts. I managed to date a student in the school of social work and thus I got an education in two professions for the price of one. This experience was of great use to me when I started teaching research methods in two schools of social work years later. In a faculty of about 30 members, there were only two women. I do not believe that the situation today is exceedingly better since males dominate the faculties of psychology.

The emphasis in the department at Michigan State University was highly experimental. We were given three courses in learning theory, primarily reinforcement of rats. We had plenty of discussions about the salivation of Pavlov's dog. This was the time of great controversy between Tolman and Hull's theories of learning and if my understanding is still correct, the findings were the same but the interpretation was quite different. During my graduate studies, Rokeach, well-known for his work on authoritarianism of the left, was teaching a course in social psychology. However, I felt the need to go outside the department with its experimental emphasis, and I decided to go to the Department of Sociology and Anthropology where I took a few courses including

Social psychology. The course was an eye opener for me since the approach was so different. While psychology seemed to be still under the influence of the social psychology of McDougall where personality factors count a lot in human behavior, social factors dominated the thinking of the sociologist. I learned two major concepts, status and role where environmental factors were crucial. Many times in the course of the discussion, I found myself arguing with the rest of the students and even the professor. My courses in anthropology likewise had a great impact on me. As a result of this exposure, many of my later papers started with the phrase, "The sociocultural aspects of (any disorder)". In psychology, we had to be very familiar with the books by Woodworth. One professor seemed to have a sadistic pleasure in asking questions about some point which could only be found in the footnotes. We had three courses in statistics and we had to plough through Boring's book on the history of psychology, we also had a couple of courses on perception. I attended seminars arranged for the students to present findings on their dissertation. I must confess that their topic of choice were mostly experimental and at that time, I felt what they were trying to prove that the white horse was white.

Now I shall describe some of the courses that I took which were supposed to be practical courses. We had a female professor who had just gotten her degree in Chicago from Carl Rogers and the course was on client-center therapy. To me it represented a completely different point of view than the mechanistic empiricism which dominated the thoughts in my other courses. This was a course with an extremely humanistic approach and basically we learned that psychotherapy was consisted in reflecting the patients' feelings. However, there was some scientific aspect to client-center therapy since sessions with patients were tape recorded and thoroughly analyzed and we had to note the changes in self-image as the therapy evolved, somewhat of a tedious task. I do not want to minimize the contributions of Carl Rogers since his work had tremendous impact on clinical psychology in general and we could identify the method as being introduced by a psychologist. At that time psychotherapy was primarily introduced by other professions. We also had a general course in psychotherapy which was given by a psychiatrist coming every Friday night. All of us resented taking a course on Friday night since so many social activities were going on at the university. My feeling was that at that time, the department of psychology was not confident to have a regular psychology professor competent to teach the course. On the other hand we had excellent courses in Rorschach and intelligence testing. Rorschach was taught by Prof. Albert Pabin and had seminars with Marguerite Hertz and Aaron Beck.

We learned that a student who had applied to the program had specifically stated that he wanted to become a psychotherapist, and thus veering away from the Boulder model mentioned before. He was asked to take counseling in the school of education. It was in my fourth year that I had one term practicum

during which I had to do psychotherapy with a 10 year old, while a co-student saw the mother and my supervisor was a psychologist whose doctoral dissertation was on the phi phenomenon. I must confess that handling a 10 year old problems in therapy became a challenge in view of my little experience. Because of lack of psychiatrists in Veterans Hospital, as a post war development, many of the graduate students had positions in such hospitals with handsome salaries who were able to drive their own cars. I could not work in a VA hospital because of my foreign citizenship. Since it was not possible to receive money from home because of exchange restrictions, I had to work very hard. I emptied freight cars of machinery and transferred them to trucks, or deliver furniture. Sometimes the weather tended to be nasty with sub-zero temperature. When jobs were not available I waited on tables. The VA had arrangements with the departments of psychology that some of their professors should visit the hospitals in order to supervise their students. Their stipend for the day was $50 which was a lot of money in those days. This increased my resentment since I could only earn $1.50 an hour. In Egypt that amount of earnings required a full days work. During this period I became more and more disenchanted because of my dream to help people did not materialize even towards the end of my training. My internship put a seal on my good intentions.

There were two interesting events that could be highlighted in this otherwise dreary training. The department of psychology was able to invite the Swiss psychologist, Piaget, to give a lecture. Since he could not give a lecture in English, he had an interpreter who translated periodically his points. During the question and answer period, questions of course were raised in English were translated into French, the answers were given in French which were translated into English by the interpreter all of which tended to be somewhat a tedious. I raised my hand and asked the question in French to the Professor. Of course, the professor's face lighted up and he jumped into the answer immediately, but then I heard a few of the students raising their voices, "What is the question?", "What is the question?". The interpreter obliged and we went through the same process. As a result of my asking the question in French, I became very popular with my fellow-student and the department was very pleased with my performance. Subsequently I had a very friendly chat with the professor, and of course he was interested to know why a French-speaking student was studying psychology at an American University.

The second highlight in my training was the requirements of taking an examination in two foreign languages. I do not believe that this requirement exists anywhere. The rule was that students had to take two foreign language examinations. Usually it was French and German. Of course the student could not be examined in his native language. I was in Egypt, technically Arabic was my language, Italian, because of my passport and Spanish, because of my ancestry. I must confess that my skills in these languages tended to be limited and not adequate at all for any kind of scholarly translation. Arabic was the language I knew least since in Egypt only classical Arabic is taught in the

schools. The colloquial language of Arabic is quite different from the classical one.

So the two foreign languages I presented were English and French which I knew very well. During the French exam, a passage by Piaget had to be translated into English. While my co-students carried a number of dictionaries, I did not carry any. I finished my translation in about 20 minutes and the rest of the students were amazed that I had finished so early. They were given 1 hour and a half to translate the text. The time had come to be tested the other foreign language, English. I had to take an oral exam in the Department of foreign languages. A professor of German started to talk to me and he discovered that I was quite fluent, and with a slight expression of anger, he told me that this was a farce for me to take a test in English since I was quite fluent in the language. He suggested that I should take a German exam. As a professor of German, he could not be objective in his evaluation. I told him quite brashly that everything in German, particularly Sigmund Freud was translated into English. Somehow I got away with it. Studying German adequately would extend the time of my training.

One of the requirement before any one could go on for the Ph.D. degree, was that all students had to take what they called prelims. It consisted taking 5 hours of examination for 5 days in the five major field. General, History, Statistics, Perception and clinical. It required a most grueling effort on our part and was filled with terrible anxieties since this was the only way to separate those who were very qualified and marginal students. This was a method to see whether they were able to integrate what they have learned in various classes. Students were only allowed a second trial and they fail again, they were not allowed to continue. I recall one student had a nervous breakdown and another failed in spite of the fact that he had excellent grades in individual classes. We had a world authority in perception, Dr. Bartley, who had written many books on the subject. At one meeting I boasted to another professor that I had one of the best scholars in the world to teach perception. He did not seem to be impressed, since he indicated if he is such specialist on perception, how come that he has problems seeing golf balls!

The time came for me to select a topic for my dissertation. Having lived as a Jew in different cultures, I was interested to find out the psychological adjustment of Jewish adolescents. When I spoke about the topic to my major professor, he was a little puzzled since he felt that this kind of study was not worthwhile, Jewish kids are like any other kid. Of course this was his opinion, but what was more puzzling to me is that the specialty of that professor was anti-semitism. Thus while he spent all his efforts on personality analysis of the anti-semites, he did not think that it was appropriate to study the object of that anti-semitism.

In 1955, I started looking for an internship in psychology and I sent applications to three hospitals in New York, Payne Whitney Clinic of Cornell University Medical School, Mount Sinai Hospital and New York University Bellevue Hospital. The Department of Psychology at Mount Sinai was headed by a

pital. The Department of Psychology at Mount Sinai was headed by a well-known psychologist, Fred Brown, whose specialty was personality evaluation. While he was impressed by my credential, he could only offer me $25.00 a month. There was no possibility of a psychologist doing psychotherapy at Mt. Sinai. At that time there was strong opposition by psychiatrists accusing psychologists of practicing medicine if they use psychotherapy with their patients. Payne Whitney Clinic could only offer a stipend of $150 a month and it was taboo for psychologists to do psychotherapy. Reading a yearly report by the Chief Psychiatrist, it was indicated that while the psychologists administer the tests, only the psychiatrists are responsible for the interpretation. While the stipend was relatively high, I was not willing to work in such a reactionary institution. The saving grace in this institution is that psychologists could walk around in white coats like the doctors. While outsiders were impressed, psychologists had no standing within the institution. Two years later, I worked in their social psychiatry department to conduct research and this work will be dealt later in this paper. The third institution that selected me was New York University Bellevue which at that time tended to be psychoanalytical in philosophy, weekly seminars were provided for the staff, but they still had bulwarks of organicity like Lauretta Bender, whose seminars I attended, and who at that time prescribed electro-shock for schizophrenic children (Sanua, 1980). When I went for my internship at New York University Bellevue hospital, my department at Michigan State University wanted to make sure that the psychological services were directed by a psychiatrist, again another example of the lack of confidence of a psychologist running a clinic. As an employee of the Bellevue University Hospital, I could take 8 credit of courses a term. One of the major course I took was David Wechsler's course in psychopathology. He was able to provide from the wards examples of the various manifestations of mental disorders.

At Bellevue Hospital, I had to fill a form and indicate the languages I spoke. I wrote Spanish, but I was aware that my Spanish was 15th Century Spanish. At that time I had no realization that the word "Spanish" would have had such an impact on my career. The hospital was quite pleased to know that I could speak "Spanish" and they decided to refer to me Puerto Rican patients during the whole year of my internship. Obviously in the course of my first interviews I had problems communicating, but in time by looking at patients and seeing no reaction to specific words, then I realized that it could not be understood. The whole concept of positive and negative reinforcement which I had learned so well at Michigan State University played an important role in this setting. In time I was able to understand the patients, but I had to learn new Spanish words, like "parkear" (to park), and eliminate Ladino words like "paras" which is a Turkish word for money. Thus by the end of my internship I could speak modern Spanish relatively well.

At the end of my internship, the hospital being pleased with my work wanted to keep me to work with Puerto Ricans. They were able to get a substantial

grant for me for the purpose of conducting research on the rehabilitation of Puerto Ricans. However, there was a problem regarding my student's status. I had to return to Egypt after my training, and the hospital was offering me a position. Through legal action on their part, I was able to receive preferential immigrant status since it was difficult for them to have a Spanish speaking psychologist.

In the course of my research on Puerto Ricans, a new division of Social Psychiatry was established at the Payne Whitney Clinic to investigate the relationship between social class and mental disorders. The research was headed by men well-known for their scholarly work, Alexander H. Leighton (Canadian Psychiatrist). He took over after the untimely death Thomas Rennie, the psychiatrist who initiated what came to be called "The Midtown Manhattan Study", Leo Srole (sociologist, well-known for his studies on ethnic groups in America), Marvin K. Opler (An anthropologist with philosophical interests) and Thomas Langner (sociologist, specialist in methodology).

In today's psychiatric thinking, to relate poverty to mental disorders is anathema since mental illness is explained by a "disturbed molecule" which could only be treated with medication. During the early years of the National Institute of Mental Health, Directors tended to be public health minded psychiatrists, while for the past 30-40 years, directors of the National Institute of Health were and are pure organicist, where 100% of the resources are used to study the organic causation of mental disorders. Albee (1997) has discussed these changes in the leadership of the NIMH. Since the anthropologist, Marvin K. Opler was doing research with Puerto Ricans and I was doing research at Bellevue, N.Y.U. with the same group, I went to see him to discuss our common interests. In time while my work was winding down at Bellevue, he offered me a position on the project with a salary higher than I would get as a regular practicing psychologist. As my desire to help people had almost vanished by this time since both my training and research activities were more attuned to an academic career, I accepted the position given to me by Marvin K. Opler.

One of my major responsibilities was to analyze blind batteries of tests that were already given to various groups of individuals of different social classes and ethnic backgrounds. Opler had complete life histories of the individuals tested, and I had the psychological, all projective techniques, and we exchange ideas about the them based on the data we had. At that time, culture and personality studies were very popular in the field of anthropology. See Sanua (1954) for a review of the literature on the subject. This approach was initiated by A. I. Hallowell in the study of the Chippewa (or Ojibwa) Indians. Rorschach, Thematic Apperception Test, and the Draw-a-Person Test were administered and life histories taken. This approach was adopted to the metropolis of New York. On the basis of our findings, we jointly wrote a book. Two earlier books had already been published and the third would be Opler's and mine. However, it seemed that the administration of the hospital did not want to publish the third book since Opler did not disguise sufficiently the identity of the interviewees,

some of them being very well known in the community. Thus rather than take a chance of lawsuits, the manuscript was not printed. While I was quite disappointed for this development, it was compensated by the fact that Opler included a chapter on my dissertation in his book.

SOCIAL PSYCHIATRY (SANUA)

As the study was winding down, Opler, prior to a staff meeting, told me "Victor, do you want to go to Harvard", My reply was "of course". He had received from the department of social relations research fellowship offers for psychologists who were interested in the social science of medicine. He would strongly recommend me. I got the Harvard research Fellowship which gave me Faculty status. It is at this time that I became acquainted to the stalwarts of psychology and other social sciences, to name a few, Boring whose book I had studied, Robert White, the head of the Department of Social Relations, I was quite familiar with his book, The Abnormal Personality, Kluckholm, Parsons (well-known theoretical sociologist), Gordon Allport who was the most gentle person I ever met. He introduced me to Viktor's Frankl therapeutic philosophy, Logotherapy, Henry A. Murray of the Thematic Apperception Test. I had become for some time his assistant. He was trying to devise a projective technique that combined both features of the Rorschach and Thematic Apperception Test. However, it seems that he gave up the idea later. I had also the pleasure to meet B. F. Skinner while he was conducting his research on reinforcement teaching pigeons how to play ping-pong. All the Fellows worked in a kind of Think Tank house on the campus. It was certainly a most interesting experience to be among such luminaries in the social sciences.
It was during that period that I developed great interest in the causation of schizophrenia. My earlier interest in the history of psychopathology, my exposure to social psychiatry at Cornell University Medical school, and my own cultural background led me to study the sociocultural aspects of the disorder. I could also add that as an undergraduate at the American University in Cairo, we had a requirement to select a topic and carry on review of a topic. I selected hypnosis. It is during this research that I became quite familiar with the old methods of treatment of mental patients and my experience in Abbassiah reinforced my desire to study this very serious disorder schizophrenia. While I was attached for a short time to the Massachusetts Mental Health Center, formerly Psychopathic Hospital, which was part of the Harvard Medical school, I decided to visit mental institutions for the purpose of interviewing schizophrenics. This was the time when psychotropic drugs were used frequently with mental patients. I was distressed to find that these medications did not make patients more accessible to interviews, but rather dulled their senses. What was also distressing was that most of the psychiatrists in the hospitals were physicians, general practitioners trained abroad and with no

concept of psychotherapy who were working as psychiatrists. Because of the unavailability of native-born candidates in psychiatry, the government accepted to have foreign doctors in the mental institutions. First, we could say the same thing about native-born physicians, they had no experience in a humanistic approach to mental disorders and could only prescribe medication and furthermore, their command of the English language was so poor that I had problems understanding them. To let such linguistically inadequate individual treat mental patients whose basic needs were to be understood but receiving no psychological support was unconscionable.

At that time I was working on the theories that were provided by some psychiatrists, one of which was that the schizophrenogenic mothers were responsible for schizophrenia in their offsprings. What I noted was that such findings were based on private patients seen by psychiatrists in their own offices, which of course was a highly selected group. Psychiatrists did not work in regular mental institutions which I indicated before were manned by foreign doctors. It seemed that many psychiatrists who owed their training to public funds preferred to go into private practice. Subsequently, I wrote a long review on the sociocultural aspects of schizophrenia which was published ultimately in Psychiatry, The Journal of Interpersonal Relations (Sanua, 1961). While I was at Harvard, I became quite friendly with Dr. Robert White, the Chairman of the Department of Social Relations, and we decided to submit a joint application to National Institute of Mental Health to study the causation of schizophrenia from the sociocultural point of view. I had written an extensive review. NIMH turned it down, my association with the Chairman of the Department and himself an expert of schizophrenia did not help. I recall the psychiatrist who interviewed me saying, "If we psychiatrists have problems diagnosing schizophrenics, how could psychologists possibly diagnose the disorder."

During that period of time, State Associations of psychology which were primarily made up of psychotherapists worked very hard through legislation to obtain a licensing law for psychology which would permit them to practice psychotherapy privately. The grandfather clause, which freed the psychologist to take a licensing exam, was the need of 5 years of experience for Ph.D. psychologists and 7 years for M.A. psychologists. I had only 4 years and nine months experience which eliminated me from having the right of the grandfather clause and therefore I had to take the exam. This was the time when I was to go to Harvard and at that time, Massachusetts did not have a licensing law. However after a stint of two years at Harvard, I decided to return to New York where I had a dual position to teach research methods at Yeshiva University, in the School of Social Work, and work in the graduate school training clinical psychologists. I also had to teach one a course a term. I was primarily involved in supervising doctoral dissertations. The license was primarily needed by those who were in private practice. Professors did not need to have a license in order to teach. However, it happened that in my class there

were M.A. students who had obtained the license because they had the seven years experience who went back to school to get a Ph.D. They could identify themselves as "psychologists" in public, but I could not. I could not tolerate this discrimination and therefore decided to take the examination, but by that time I was supposed to take it, I had almost been 6 years away from clinical work and was fearful that I might not be able to pass the exam. While I considered my responses in clinical psychology rather weak since my experience was extremely limited, I compensated in elaborating the research question. I passed!

I was given the position of Associate professor, and one of my responsibility was to develop Jewish research among the social work students. Doing Jewish research was not really a popular pursuit at that time. I interviewed a few sociologists who had conducted research on Jews in order to set up an inventory of the areas which needed to be researched in view of my new position at Yeshiva University. When I interviewed Leo Srole with whom I had worked in the Midtown Manhattan Study about my plans, he told me, "I am sorry Victor I have to discourage you, but there is no money in this kind of research." I did not accept his pessimistic outlook, but he seemed to be right since my efforts to get funds for such type of research was fruitless. Today ethnic studies tend to be rather popular. In spite of this lack of encouragement by granting agencies, I pursued studies on Jews with the assistance of my students and published quite a number of articles on the subject, particularly a yearly review of studies on Jews.

With the rising cost of living, a relatively low salary and the funds needed to keep two children happy being insufficient, I decided to accept a position at City College where the salary was almost double of the one I was getting from Yeshiva University. I taught research methods to student of school psychology. Because of the financial crunch at City College and the fact that many of the professors' privileges were taken away, I decided to take an academic position in the school of social work at Adelphi University. They had just initiated a new doctoral program. I taught there for 5 years. At one time, clerical support was taken away from the professors because of financial difficulties I chose to teach at St. John's University in their department of Psychology. Thus during the early part of my career I taught research in schools of Education and social work, I finally taught in a department of my own discipline, Psychology. I taught courses in social psychology, research methods, and psychopathology. The publication of the DSM III reinforced the medical model in mental disorders in spite of the fact that the authors of DSM III, all psychiatrists claimed that their book was atheoretical. In my lectures I presented some of the work conducted in the Midtown Mental Health study, and thus introduced to my students social and cultural factors in mental disturbances.

To counteract the effects of the medical model which by that time had become quite prevalent, I decided to write a book and gave the title of J'ACCUSE! A PROTEST AGAINST THE REMEDICALIZATION OF PSYCHIATRY, in which

I had become quite critical of the frequent use of psychotropic drugs and documented its negative effects. The book was submitted to a large number of publishers with no success. I even submitted to APA which at that time started thinking in terms of seeking prescription privileges for psychologists. The major thrust of my manuscript was not a popular one. About the same time, I started writing a number of articles on infantile autism with the concept that the literature had not provided enough evidence to show that autism is a biological disturbance. Both proponents of the organic model in schizophrenia and infantile autism have failed to make their points to an individual knowledgeable in research methods. When APA started to devote their resources to obtain legislation to enable psychologists to prescribe, I started a series of articles against this change of direction of psychology. In spite of all these efforts, the prescription privileges train may have left the station but cannot go anywhere. Not a single legislation across the country has approved the use of psychotropic drugs by psychologists. Any one interested in this topic, please get in touch with me and will send you some of those articles critical of the medical model and APA's efforts to use a great deal of its resources in this hopeless pursuit. It seems that in the last decade, no A.P.A. president could be elected unless he approved of prescription privileges. The latest note on the subject was written by Henry Seaman, editor of the National Psychologists. In the July/August 1998 issue of the periodical, there is the following headlines, "Psychology told to put its 'house in order' before seeking prescription privileges." What has been discouraging legislators is the stand of the American Association of Applied and Preventive Psychology, whose former president, Dr. Steve Hayes has been in the forefront of this fight well assisted by Dr. Elaine M. Heiby, head of the Department of Psychology at the University of Hawai. In a nutshell AAAPP'S opposition to prescribing privileges is that psychologists are not medically trained and have no business being allowed to prescribe medication. A step further of my own conviction, even physicians and psychiatrists should not prescribe medication because of their negative effects. Breggin has labelled the treatment with psychotropic drugs as "chemical lobotomy". What is distressing to many psychologists is the fact that the recent setbacks with state legislation, offers, "a reality check for those advocates who have been preparing themselves for prescription privileges by entering educational tracks believing legislative approval would be just around the corner." (Saeman, 1998) There are two major psychologists who have been in the forefront to train psychologists for prescription privileges, Dr. Pearlman, who points out that his organization Psychologists for Prescription Privileges inc. is the second largest psychological organization in the United States. Its members take courses in psychotropic drug by correspondence, and weekend workshops. About two years ago, one of the editors of the Psychiatric News, organ of the American Psychiatric Association called me and asked if Dr. Pearlman was receiving funds from the drug companies. At that time, while I suspected that this was the case, I claimed that I did not

know. The fact is that in the last few issue of his newsletter, there are large ads of drugs as found in journal of psychiatry. Since there are only 40,000 psychiatrists in the USA and a potential of 100,000 psychologists, the drug companies would like to be on the ground floor when prescription privileges are accorded which would boost their sales enormously. I often ask myself, how does The Psychiatric Association feel about the drug companies, on whom they depend so much for their income through their ads in their journal, feel about them encouraging psychologist to prescribe. There is another development in psychology which is distressing to me and that is the election of Pat de Leon as President of APA. For many years, he has been the darling of State Associations luncheons and dinners promoting prescription privileges for psychologist. Sanua has analyzed his statements for the past decades, and he found that his decision to pursue prescription privileges for psychologists is not based on science but on political and economic reasons. He has been assisted by former APA presidents in his efforts. He certainly is not the person to have psychology put its "house in order".

I have come a long way from my innocent years in Egypt to the big fights against the medical models in autism and schizophrenia, bereavement in Israel, sociological and psychological studies of Jews and the Arab-Israel conflict. I have only included here the major themes of my research.

I must admit that I have had a rather varied and an exiting career in psychology. I do not think that I am an experimental psychologist, nor a clinical psychologist, but a strange hybrid dealing with socio-cultural-economic and political factors. I believe strongly that the neglect of such factors make psychology an incomplete science. To make more valid conclusions of the forces of human behavior, psychologists should become familiar primarily with sociology and anthropology. Both of these disciplines study human behavior from different facets and ignoring the other facets is like the blind men who try to describe the elephant.

APPENDIX

Vignettes at the Customs in Alexandria
Door No. 6
The following vignettes were obtained from interviews and correspondence with Jews from Egypt
(Translated from French)

Then comes the turn of a young couple with two babies. The wife has a gold ring and the husband has a watch.

Official: Do you have the authorization for these jewels?
Response: We were not told that we needed such authorization.
Official: Why didn't you ask? Those jewels must remain in the country.
Response: We have no one to whom to give the watch and the ring.
Official: This is none of my business.

He calls a couple of Arabs who were close to the door.
Question by one of the Arabs: Mister, if you would like to sell these objects, we are ready to buy them. We pay in French francs. The wife to her husband who is hesitating: Come on Jack, what is the use of hesitating. The Arab here is 2000 francs for the watch and 1000 francs for the ring. And who knows, maybe they are not genuine. We are here to be of service.

The "service" is made and the couple goes away in tears.
One of my respondents labeled this type of activity as the "Mafia" approach having had a similar experience at the Customs in Alexandria.

In Alexandria Custom's Door 6

An old grandmother who has among her luggage a small mattress.

The customs' official: What are you hiding in this mattress?

Response: Nothing, effendi, it is an ordinary mattress. (Master, Sir, a Turkish word, more a sign of respect for a state official)
Official: But you can hide all your fortune and you believe we shall let you go through? He takes a knife and tears the mattress searching if there is a treasure. He does not find anything.
Official: Take it back.
Response: Now that it cannot be used. What shall I do with it, She asked further in tears. "I needed this for my husband who suffers from arthritis so that he should not sleep on the deck of the ship. We are poor and sleep on the deck."

Vignettes or extracts form statements made by a Respondent leaving Egypt with his wife and 3 young children on their experiences at the Customs in Alexandria.

Memories of our last day in Egypt

Before getting on board the ship, we had to fill for the customs a declaration in which I mentioned that had with me the amount of 50 Egyptian Pounds (E.P. = about $3) which we were able to take with us according to the prevailing regulations. Each

individual had the right to take out 10 Egyptian pounds. Since we were *5* persons to leave the country, we had the right to carry the amount of 50 Egyptian pounds. I was quite surprised when the customs' official told me that am not allowed to take out the 50 Egyptian pounds. The following is approximately the exchange that took place.

My question: What shall I do with the 50 Egyptian Pounds?
His reply: Throw them in the sea!
My question: To-day, the law permits every traveler to take 10 Egyptian pounds and this rule has not been rescinded, We are *5* people and therefore we have the right to take with us 50 Egyptian pounds.
His reply: We decide about the law and we also decide to withdraw it.
My question: If had bought clothes for the amount of 50 Egyptian pounds, isn't it my right that I could take them with me?
His reply: Yes, but now you have no right to get out of the customs.

I was fortunate to have a friend at the Customs and told him to buy an expensive overcoat and bring it to me as soon as possible. When he brought it, the customs' official had to let us go on board. I cannot forget the last moment spent on Egyptian territory and am very happy that left.
Descriptions of the Customs

Received from Australia

Excerpt from letter, dated Jan. 29. 1992:

"After graduation in *1945* (from the American University at Cairo), I went to pursue my medical studies at the American University at Beirut. From the very first day in Beirut I contracted dysentery so severe that I could not do any homework. I could not help myself but to go to bed very early in the evening only to wake up too late next morning to miss out on my first lecture. Still weak from dysentery I joined the family business--manufacturing goldsmiths for generations in Cairo. It was a successful business with a very high reputation for honesty--an essential ingredient for goldsmiths. The first couple of years my health was still suffering from that dysentery and I hated the unclean surroundings of the factory. As my health improved gradually, I began to contribute my share of efforts to the business, which continued to improve very fast. We thought it would be wise to invest in new and modern machinery. I made three trips to Europe and we were quite optimistic. How wrong we were!! The political atmosphere was getting worse, and we were being 'targeted' by the opportunistic army officers. Every time Israel dealt a humiliating blow to the Egyptian forces my father was interned and threatened. Finally, they ended up taking not only our business but also our private assets. I migrated to Australia in November 1963.

Bitter, penniless and helpless, I struggled till I landed as a casual science teacher. Only in 1970 did the government finance a course for graduate, casual teachers, leading to a Diploma (in) Education. After completing the course I was appointed as a "permanent." In December 1983 I retired at the age of sixty. Even though I am struggling to enjoy my hobbies: photography, silver jewelry and landscaping. (End of story)

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My Visit to Alexandria

by Victor Sanua, Ph.D.

On January 8, 2001, I received an e-mail from Racheline Balassiano, a 22 year old young lady from Alexandria, Egypt. This was unexpected since I had assumed that individuals still living in Egypt would be, in general, quite aged. Dr. Paola Mieli, whose parents were born in Alexandria, visited the rabbinate in Alexandria. She provided Mr. Victor Balassiano, who worked in the rabbinate, with a copy of my newsletter which he showed to his daughter Racheline. In general, she expressed interest in knowing how Jews from Egypt lived before their departure following the Arab-Israeli wars, and also was interested to report on the present status of Jews still remaining in the country. The e-mail reflected her sense of isolation, with the hope that some day she and her family would leave the country.

A few years ago, a documentary about Alexandria was shown on French and Canadian television. Interviews were conducted with Mr. Joseph Harari, as the president of the Alexandria Jewish Community. He was first interviewed in his haberdashery store, and it was indicated that he was the last Jewish business man in Alexandria. Later on, we see him in his office with his assistant Mrs. Lina Mattatia, both were advanced in age. The French interviewer asked Mr. Harari to invite as many Jews as possible for a Saturday morning service at the Bene Daniel synagogue. Only four men appeared including Mr. Harari. The others were too ill to attend. Since there was no minyan, they prayed separately. At the end of the prayers, one of the gentlemen who was interviewed, expressed his distress with tears about what would happen to the Synagogue after they die. About a year ago, I learned that Mr. Harari had been hospitalized and the feeling was expressed that he was too advanced in age to return to his duties as the President. Mrs. Lina Mattatia seemed to have taken the administrative responsibility for the rabbinate.

On June of 2001, I took a cruise on the SS Rotterdam which was making one stop in Alexandria, Friday, June 29. I was accompanied by my sister, Mrs. Odette Benjamin, and both of us, after 50 years, looked forward to revisiting Alexandria, which was the nicest and most opulent resort and entertainment center in the country.

> "...he said that (the status of the Jewish community of Alexandria) was the 'best and the richest in the world!'"

This was an opportunity to visit the rabbinate and become acquainted with Racheline. When I called her at home and spoke also with Mr. Victor Balassiano, he suggested that I should be at the Custom's gate No.10 of the port that Friday morning at 9AM.

On June 29, 2001, after a long walk under a torrid sun, we reached gate No. 10, and we were pleased to meet Mr. Victor Balassiano and his family, Mrs. Balassiano, Racheline 22, and Esther 20. They were waiting in their Fiat. They managed to borrow another car so that we were quite comfortable. I was of course very happy to meet Racheline. All of them spoke English, as well as French, so there was no problem of communication. Racheline expressed her great joy to meet, for the first time, Jews who lived in Egypt a long time ago. She is presently at the University majoring in Arts.

Mr. Balassiano took us to the well-known "foul" (beans) restaurant, close to the Ramleh station, named originally BENIAMINI, under Jewish ownership and patronized by Europeans. Now, it is called the Pyramid of Alexandria, Mohammed Ahmed Restaurant, 17 Shakour St, Ramleh Station. Visitors can get in touch with the restaurant through the internet, www.alex-guid.com.foul-moh-ahmed, Tel: 203 483-3576. For those who have some nostalgia, following is the description the different ways "foul" can be served: with Tehina or Humus, fried eggs, foul Eskandarani "Topped with finely chopped salad and Tehina," with corn or olive oil or butter, with fried garlic, with tomato sauce. Of course the usual falafel was included in the menu. As a desert, they had "Mahalabia pudding". Subsequently, we were thrilled to see the names of two establishments that brought pleasant memories of the past, Patisserie TRIANON and ATHINEOS, where we used to dance, were still in existence only in name. Names of well-known establishments, particularly department stores, have not been changed.

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Subsequently, we were taken to a hotel at El Mamura, a beautiful resort beach close to El Montaza grounds, formerly a palace of King Farouk. After a long trip along the Corniche, we arrived at the Eliahou Hanabi synagogue on Bene Daniel Street, a very imposing building. There were a number of Jewish tourists visiting. When I told them I was born in Egypt, they started asking questions and then, I saw myself giving a lecture about life in Egypt half a century ago. Next Mr. Balassiano invited us to the Office of the Rabbinate and introduced us to Mr. Joseph Harari, who probably was recently discharged from the hospital. He looked a bit wan and emaciated. In a short conversation with him regarding the status of the Jewish community of Alexandria, he said that it was the "best and the richest in the world!" They derive their funding from rentals of Jewish buildings and sales of assets. For example, he spoke about the properties left by a rich Jew, Baron Menasce. When I asked him, where was Baron Menasce, his response was that he does not know whether he is dead or alive. He complained that 100,000 Egyptian pounds were stolen from him. When I asked about the archives, he had some problems understanding what I had in mind. He reacted appropriately when I asked him what I should do if I want to get the marriage date of my grandfather! He hit the table with both hands and in a very animated way stated that they should remain here. This brings to mind the effort made by Jews from Egypt living in Brooklyn who devoted a lot of effort and expense to arrange for the transfer of Sifrei Torahs out of the country and his refusal to release them. This reminds me also of a statement made by an official of the Rabbinate in Cairo who stated the Pyramids should remain in Egypt in spite of the fact that there are no Egyptians now!

In the course of the conversation, Mr.Harari stated that only an Egyptian like himself could be president of the Jewish community. Mrs. Lina Mattatia could not be president since she did not have the Egyptian citizenship. Birth in Egypt does not necessarily mean that you are a full citizen of the country. A large number of Jews never acquired Egyptian citizenship. Mr. Harari indicated that there are many Jewish women married to Moslems and Christians and they do not seem to care about their Jewishness. Their children maintain the religion of their fathers. According to Mr. Balassiano, the finances of the rabbinate are handled by a former dentist, Dr.Max Salama, assisted by a local accountant.

He stated that there are only four adult Jewish males in Alexandria. I surmised that the other three Jews who were in the synagogue in the documentary mentioned earlier had probably passed away. My understanding is that while Mr. Balassiano is the youngest of the group, while working at the Rabbinate, he does not seem to have executive power of any significance. He showed me some archives in his office, and some more in an abandoned room. Mrs. Mattatia has also archives, but she does not show them. Unfortunately because of time, we could not stay much longer since we had to be on the ship at 5PM before its departure.

Mr. Balassiano drove us down the Corniche which is still beautiful, while the side streets were neglected. The beaches were crowded on that day because of Friday. Men were wearing shorts, and most women, in spite of the great heat, had their head covered with tight fitting scarves and wore long dresses mostly in dark colors. During that ride we were pleased to see the magnificent building of the Catholic School, St. Marc, as well as the Lycée Français, which were notable schools attended primarily by Europeans half a century ago. We also saw the wall of the new Alexandria library and the Qaitbay fort built 500 years ago on the spot of the Pharos Lighthouse destroyed by an earthquake. Stones and statuaries of this lighthouse have been discovered under the waters in the bay. When we reached door No.10, Racheline begged the police, almost in tears, to allow them to take us to the ship by car since it was a long walk. For security reasons, he refused. However, we were lucky to find a horse-drawn carriage (arabiah Khantour). The owner promised to take us to the ship. However, he was stopped at one point by the police but we asked them if he could take us further. They graciously accepted our request. He had to stop about 300 yards from the ship.

We left Alexandria with a great deal of reluctance, since we did not see enough of the city and because we had established a very warm relationship with the Balassanio family. We sensed their sincere sadness in seeing us leave. This was a unique experience in our lives. We expressed the hope that we shall meet again. We must admit that our stay in Alexandria was too short for us to evaluate fully the present situation of the rabbinate and the remnants of the Jewish community. Our conclusion is that there is very little in the way of strong and adequate leadership to handle the present financial and archival resources of what remains of this beautiful community which is on its last few gasps of breath. ■

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE EXPULSION OF THE JEWS FROM EGYPT FOLLOWING THE ARAB ISRAELI WARS

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Presented at the International Research Conference on THE JEWS OF EGYPT IN MODERN TIMES, Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel, January 12-14, 2004

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ABSTRACT

This report is based primarily on questionnaires, and personal, audio taped and videotaped interviews with Jews from Egypt in Israel and France. Included in this report are several accounts of hardships endured by Jews from Egypt following the outbreak of hostilities between the Arab nations and the new state of Israel. They are as follows:

1) On June 15th. 1948, hundreds of Jews were arrested and interned. This was a chaotic period when Jews whose names appeared on a list were taken from their homes and imprisoned in schools in Abassiah.

2) Many Jews were subsequently interned at the Huckstep camp near Cairo, while Jews from Alexandria were interned in camps at Aboukir.

3) On January 29th. 1949, fifty internees from Huckstep were transferred to El Tor, a small isolated village at the tip of the Sinai desert. The conditions in this camp were deplorable. Because of this hardship incurred by the Jewish group who were kept incommunicado, it managed to get out of the camp secretly a report on their treatment to inform the outside world of their predicament.

4) The fourth report details the experiences of Moise Sanua on his way out of the country, going through passport and customs control in Alexandria.

5) Moise Rahmani. writes about unpleasant memories, but mostly reflects a deep nostalgia for his childhood in Egypt.

In spite of the unpleasant experiences incurred by Jews from Egypt during their departure, with the possible exception of those who were interned, they show little bitterness, and a large number have become nostalgic about their life prior to 1948.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE EXPULSION OF THE JEWS FROM EGYPT FOLLOWING THE ARAB-ISRAELI WARS

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This report is based primarily on questionnaires, and personal, audio taped and videotaped interviews with Jews from Egypt in Israel and France. Jews from Egypt in general lived comfortably for decades until the beginning of the conflicts between the Jews and Arabs in Palestine in 1948. The Jews became quite uneasy about their future when protests and riots erupted after the Balfour Declaration of November 1917, announced by Britain, promising the establishment of a "National Home" for the Jews in Palestine. Every year on the anniversary of the declaration, riots took place in Egypt, and in 1945, they got out of hand in Muski (an area in Cairo) and resulted in the torching of the Ashkenazi synagogue, the prayer books and the Torahs.

This report includes accounts of hardships endured by Jews from Egypt following the outbreak of hostilities between the Arab nations and the new state of Israel, whose existence was acknowledged by the United Nations in 1947. They are as follows:

1) On June 15th 1948, hundreds of Jews were arrested and interned. This was a chaotic period when Jews, whose names appeared on a list prepared by the secret police, were taken from their homes and confined in schools in Abassiah. Some apparently had their bags ready, as they expected to be arrested following the outbreak of the war.

2) Many Jews were subsequently interned at the Huckstep camp near Cairo, while Jews from Alexandria were interned in camps at Aboukir. Those with foreign passports were slowly released with the intervention of their consuls. Those who had Egyptian citizenship or were *apatrites* (local subjects without a nationality) remained interned for a longer period of time.

3) On January 29th. 1949, fifty internees from Huckstep were transferred to El Tor, a small, isolated village at the tip of the Sinai desert, which had been used originally as a way station for pilgrims going to Mecca, but was later turned into an internment camp for criminal recidivists. The conditions in this camp were deplorable. The authorities included in this transfer 200 members of the militant Muslim Brotherhood Association, interned at Huckstep The Muslim Brotherhaood had become illegal and many of its adherents had been imprisoned close to the Jews. The hardship incurred by the Jewish group who were kept incommunicado at el Tor, prompted them to smuggle out of the camp, a report on their treatment to inform the outside world of their predicament. This plea was found among the papers of the late Moise Sanua, who worked in the Cairo Rabbinate as a secretary to the chief Rabbi Haim Nahum Eff.

4) The fourth report is about the experiences of Moise Sanua on his way out of the country, going through passport and customs control in Alexandria. He wrote about the hard times given to departing Jews by Egyptian officials, and about his own experiences in the form of dialogues he had with them. Included in this section, are two vignettes sent to me by close friends, confirming the arbitrariness of these officials.

5) I shall also finally report on the experiences of Moise Rahmani, editor of Los Muestros, a newsletter on Sephardic Jews, which includes articles in Ladino. He writes about unpleasant memories, but mostly reflects a deep nostalgia for his childhood in Egypt.

In the years after 1948, large numbers of Jews were deported or left voluntarily without any of their assets. Those with foreign citizenship could not find employment when the "Law Company" was enforced compelling businesses to have a staff of 75% Egyptians and 25% foreigners. Thousands of Jews were fired from their jobs and unable to make a living as a result of the enforcement of the law, which usually tended to be loose, since the definition of an Egyptian was not formalized.. During the 1956 war, when England and France invaded Egypt because of Nasser's seizure of the Suez Canal, most citizens of those countries, Jewish and non-Jewish, were either imprisoned or forced to leave within a short time. They could take only 20 Egyptian pounds per person out of the country. Buildings, stores, bank accounts, and all properties were seized. Many refugees headed for France, England, Italy, Australia, Brazil, and elsewhere, . and many planned to settle in Israel after they reached European shores. Naturally no Jew would admit that he was going to go to Israel, since the word was taboo in the Arab world (Instead of using the word Israel, people preferred to use the words "*chez nous*"!,(At our place, roughly translated in French). Jews leaving from Egypt appeared to have the most unpleasant experiences at Gate No.6 in Alexandria because of the arbitrariness of the custom officials. .

(1) The Initial Internment of the Egyptian Jews on May 15th 1948

It is only when open warfare broke out in Palestine that the status of the Jews became quite precarious. Large groups of men and women were interned in schools at Abassiah and later in Camp Huckstep, a former abandoned American air base near Cairo. In Alexandria the Jews were interned in camps at Aboukir, east of Alexandria. Women were interned in the prison for foreigners. The justification for their internment was that they were active Zionists and presented a threat to Egypt.

The following text was derived from an audiotape of an interview with an Egyptian-born Israeli. He reports on the action taken by the internees when one of the members of the group learned about the death of his father:.

> We were sent first to the Jewish schools at *Abbassiah* (a suburb of Cairo), where we stayed for two-three days. During those days scores of our friends in the youth

movement, Jewish and non-Jewish, were brought in busloads to the schools. There were some rudimentary beds, boards of wood on trestles of iron. The luckier ones were those who came earlier, since they had some place to sit and lie down. The others, carrying their bundles or small suitcases walked around to find a place to sit on the floor with their backs against the wall.

Every few hours there were arrivals of trucks from different police stations and from the central railway station with their human cargo. In the hallways police called names to deliver luggage. They were mostly Cohen, Levy, Azouli, Harari, Sasson, Bensimon, etc. Suddenly, they called me without mentioning my first name. I went toward the door and gave my name. They gave me a suitcase, which was not mine. I opened it, and it took me some time to realize that this suitcase belonged to my brother. The family had time to pack up a few clothes and toiletries for him. An hour later, my younger brother appeared sad-looking. My other brother was arrested 15 days later and we were all interned with some of the notables of the Jewish community.

We tried to organize ourselves as best we could while waiting for events to develop. No one had any idea about our final destination. One sure thing was that we would not remain in Cairo in the school buildings. There were too many of us, more than a thousand. The only thing we knew was that there was a war going on between Egypt and Israel. We had some idea as to where the fighting was going on, but no notion of the development of the events. We had no contacts either with family, press or even with the people in the street. Pardon me; we had some vague contact with the street. Parents called under the windows asking if "X" or "Y" was with us, and we likewise worried about the fate of absent friends living in different parts of the city. At one point, someone called from the street to ask if Mr. X. was with us. When we provided an affirmative answer, we were asked to inform him that his father, who was very sick at the time of his arrest, had died and that he had to say "k*adish*" (a prayer for the departed) and go into mourning. We were taken aback as we were not in normal conditions. At this time we got in touch with a young man from the Cairo Jewish Quarter who was better versed in the religious rituals. While Mr. X. was in the middle of the room with his head covered, some of the elders recited *kadish*, and with our hearts full, we repeated after him. When one of the elders requested a hardboiled egg, everyone went looking for one. After five minutes of searching, someone returned with a hard-boiled egg. It seems that a good mother had the bright idea to include an egg in a package of food with the clothing hastily put together and tied with a string.

Because Mr. X. was in shock at the news of his father's death, he did not want to eat the egg, but he was urged to do so, following the tradition. The man who carried on with the ceremony added the "*Kryah*" (The traditional tearing of the collar of the shirt), which is to remind Jews of the destruction of the Temple and the mourning thereafter. Mr. X. was asked to wash his face and was told to forego the mourning ritual of sitting "shiva" because of the conditions we were in.

This is how the mourning ceremony was carried out in the Jewish school of *Abbassiah* with all the internees present.

(2) Transfer of the Cairo internees to Huckstep

The prisoners were taken later to the Huckstep camp. While the initial moments were difficult, in time the internees managed to organize themselves. They were able to arrange for their own cooking, According to some of our interviewees, the internment had some positive influence on their intellectual development, since anyone with particular skills and professional know-how could conduct classes, which were attended by the internees. They were even able to observe Shabat, with some of them alternatively acting as waiters. Of course, they were able to get some assistance from the outside world. The soldiers in charge of the camp were usually poor and uneducated, tended to be complaisant, the usual *baksheesh* they were receiving helped. . Some were given the left-overs from the food cooked by the internees. There was no evidence of cruelty or physical abuse during that period.

Moise Rahmani provides in his book **The Forgotten Exodus: Jews from Arab Countries,** a report on the treatment of the Jews in Egypt, Syria Lebanon, and Iraq. The situation in 1956, unlike 1948, was most unpleasant. The prisoners who were jailed in Tourah, a prison outside Cairo, the Barrages, Abou Zaabal et al. sustained physical abuse, and many were subjected to sadistic treatment. Rahmani starts his book with this poignant statement: "I am also a refugee. The world talks about Palestinian refugees and feels sorry for them. They are often confined to camps and are subjected to ill treatment and vexations in their host countries." The book was published in 2003 at an opportune time when the major stumbling block to peace between Israel and the Palestinians is the status of Palestinian refugees insisting on their right and the right of their children and grandchildren to return to their towns and villages now in Israel, which mostly no longer exist.

(3) The Transfer of 50 Jews from Huckstep to El Tor

On January 20th 1949, the Egyptian authorities ordered at dawn and without any warning 50 Jewish Huckstep internees to be ready to leave immediately for their transfer to El Tor with 200 internees of the Muslim Brotherhood Association. who had been arrested and interned at Huckstep The following are extracts of a written report, discovered among the papers of the late Moise Sanua, written in French by a group of internees:.

> To describe the general dismay and the profound pain of all the internees at Huckstep is impossible. Nothing justified this worsening of conditions for the Jewish internees. There was an armistice between Egypt and Israel. No Jew could be considered to be a terrorist… All the other internees provided us with what they could spare from their limited resources, money, food, medicine, etc."

The two groups were taken first by train to Suez and had to board a small craft, *The Aida* which sailed at night towards El Tor. When the boat departed, they were given a piece of bread with some *halva* (Middle Eastern sweet) for dinner. The dust and the dirt in the ship added to their discomfort. During the boat ride while the guards were below deck, the members of the Muslim Brotherhood were planning to attack the Jewish internees, but the latter were able to offset the attack

El Tor had a few old, ramshackle huts. The toilets were at some distance. It was freezing cold at night and terribly hot during the day. It was particularly tragic for the old, the handicapped and the sick. The internees were in constant danger because of the inadequacy of the food, the lack of warm clothing at night and of protection from the sun during the day, and the unavailability of medical supplies. Whatever resources they had originally were used up within a short time. The report ends up with the following plea:

> The Jewish internees send an urgent call for help. They have been held for nine months without indictment or judgment. They denounce the dire injustice that has been inflicted on them. They were sent to El Tor camp without any reason and close to Muslim terrorists, when it is very clear that they are the first to condemn terrorism. They protest profoundly this infamy of the authorities. They denounce these inhumane conditions of their internment, conditions which put their life and health in jeopardy. They ask to be brought back to Cairo immediately to be freed. The Authorities have no justification to continue to deprive them of their liberty. **Help the Jewish internees of El Tor. Proclaim and insist on our immediate return from El Tor and the freedom of all the Jewish detainees**. (Text translated from the French)

I was told that the reason 50 Jews were selected was to show that both the Jews and the Muslims should receive equal treatment. Marcel Simon, a close relative, provided the author a full story on video on the conditions in El Tor. Simon was expelled and brought to a ship handcuffed from his interment camp without a chance to say good-by to his family. I have recorded all of his experiences from Huckstep to El Tor on videotape. He said he suffered back pain as a result of his internment at El Tor.

(4) Passport and Customs Control in Alexandria

The following report is based on the experiences written by Moise Sanua on his departure from Alexandria. He was at one time Secretary to the Chief Rabbi of Egypt. I found among his papers a long report written in French about these experiences. Moise Sanua died in 1986.With the assistance of his widow and his son Itzik Sanua, they made available numerous manuscripts of great interest to Egyptian Jewry. Perhaps he wanted to publish his experiences and those of other travelers at the Alexandria Customs Control, but never managed to do so. Apparently for a while he had to do physical work in a farm in Israel, but later managed to get job in Beersheva as an inspector for the beautification of the homes and buildings in the city.

Moise Sanua writes that upon arrival by taxi at Customs, Gate No.6 in Alexandria, the taxi driver doubled the fare. When Mr. Moise Sanua protested, the driver's response was that the price on the meter was for gentlemen, but not for *"yahoudi"* (Jews). Since this was no time to have an argument, he paid the double fare, carried his two heavy suitcases and a briefcase strapped around his neck. The following is a dialogue exchanged between him and the passport control official checking his papers. The latter was sitting on a chair in front of a small table covered with a black tablecloth on which there was a box.

Official: *Your passport.*

(Sanua hands over the passport to the official, who opens it up and looks for the name).

Official: *You are Italian?*
Sanua: *Yes.*
Official: *Yahoudi? (Jewish ?)*
Sanua: *The religion does not appear on the passport.*
Official: *I am not asking you to tell me what is and what is not in the passport. Tell me, are you Jewish, yes or no?*
Sanua: *You see very well that my first name is Moshe. Are there any Moshe that are not Jewish?*

(The official looks again and reads the name of the family)

Official: *Sanua. But you are married, and you have two children. Where are they?*
Sanua: *My wife will join me later with the children.*

(The official has in front of him a big wooden box that has 500 cards alphabetized. He looks under "S" for the name Sanua).

Official: *Good.* (He stamps the card, and the passport is returned with the card after he writes *Yahoudi.*)

During all this time, Moise Sanua profoundly distressed was wiping the sweat off his forehead with a large handkerchief. He received the passport with a visible relief. "Ouf !". He looked toward the sky as an expression of his gratefulness. After receiving his passport, he took a painful walk towards the large hall of the Custom's Control. Many people were coming and going with their heavy luggage. Others stood before the tables where the officials were searching the contents of their suitcases. They were emptied onto those tables.

Ahead of Moise Sanua in line was a young couple with two babies. The wife had a gold ring, and the husband, a watch. Their exchange with the official follows:

Official: *Do you have authorization for these jewels?*
Response: *We were not told that we needed such authorization.*

Official: *Why didn't you ask? Those jewels must remain in the country.*

Response: *We have no one to whom to give the watch and the ring.*
Official: *This is none of my business.*

He called a couple of Arabs who were close to the door.

The Arabs: *Mister, if you would like to sell these objects, we are ready to buy them. We pay in French francs.*

The wife to her husband who was hesitating: *Come on, Jack, what is the use of hesitating.*

The Arab: *Here are 2000 francs for the watch and 1000 francs for the ring. And who knows? Maybe they are not genuine. We are here to be of service.*

The "service" is made and the couple leaves in tears. One of my respondents having had a similar experience at the Customs in Alexandria, labeled this type of activity as the *Mafia* approach.. Next in line was an old lady with her husband who appeared to be handicapped. In their luggage they had a small mattress. The following is an exchange with the customs official.

Official: *What are you hiding in this mattress?*
Response: *Nothing, effendi (master, sir- a Turkish word, a sign of respect for a state official). It is an ordinary mattress.*
Official: *But you can hide all your fortune, and you believe we shall let you go through?* (He takes a knife and tears the mattress searching for valuables. He does not find anything.)

Official: *Take it back.*
Response: *Now that it cannot be used. What shall I do with it? She said further in tears. I needed this for my husband who suffers from arthritis so that he could sleep on the deck of the ship on a mattress. We are poor and sleep on the deck.*

The following is another vignette with the next traveler after his suitcase is opened.

Official: *You have too many ties. Are you going to go into business with this?*
Traveler: *These are gifts for my family in Marseille.*
Official: And all those bed sheets- are they also gifts?
Traveler: *I have many children*
Official: *They all wear ties? They are not even used.*
Traveler: *If you like one of them....*

Official: *I like all of them, but I am going to take only three. And what is this?*
Traveler: *This is my camera.*
Official: *It is forbidden (putting it aside). You could claim it where you go.*

When Moise Sanua's turn comes, he shakily opens his suitcases with his keys.

Official: *What do you have there?*
Sanua: *Personal clothing, suits, and a bournous (bath robe).*
Official: *And what is this?*
Sanua: *Bed sheets, a blanket, and an overcoat.*
Official: *Did you put any documents in your pocket?*
Sanua: *None. All the papers can be found in this briefcase that I am ready to open.*

(The official checks the contents and finds something hard in a box. Opening it, he sees wedding pictures, baby pictures, some empty envelopes, glass marbles, a baby shoe, and a broken pencil.)

Official: *What is all this?*
Sanua: *These are souvenirs of my wife and children.*
Official: *Where are they?*
Sanua: *They will join me later.*
Official: (Finding more papers in files) *What is this?*
Sanua: *Letters, work certificates, and some books that I gave to the censorship in Cairo. You can see the seal attached to the packet.*

(The official takes the package with a string, which has been stamped at the censorship office.)

Official: *Where's the wax? If it was censored, there must be wax.*
Sanua: *This is the way I got it. There were more documentation and books. What was returned to me is probably the third of the content. I had literary works and newspapers.*

(The official asks his colleague for his knife, cuts the string, and opens the package. He opens one folder where there is a work certificate and a report from the Rabbinate of Cairo.)

Official: *You were working for the Chief Rabbi?*
Sanua: *Yes, seventeen years.*
Official: *Why are you leaving?*
Sanua: *I have family abroad and I am joining them.*
Official: (Question in Arabic which I cannot identify)
Sanua: *No, I am Italian and I am going to go to Italy.*

(The official takes a book, opens up)

Official: *It's in Hebrew.*
Sanua: *I am Jewish. This is my prayer book.*

(The official and his colleague look at the books with curiosity.)

Official: *Is this your Koran? How do you call it among Jews?*
Sanua: *We call it the Bible, but this is a book of daily prayers.*

(The official turns the pages and notices remarks written in pencil or pen.)

Official: *Why do you have this writing? (Turning to his colleague) I believe that is English or French.*
Sanua: *Yes, sometimes a word that I do not know I translate it in order not to forget the meaning.*
Official: *And why this date? 8th of May 1948 and 15th of May 1948?*
Sanua: *That's the date when I did the translation.*
Official: *All right.*

(He returns the books. Then he picks up an album with newspapers in Arabic with pictures and drawings.)

Official: *What is this?*
Sanua: *This is a newspaper that was edited by one of my relatives Cheikh Abou-Naddara. He was an Egyptian patriot exiled because of his anti-British sentiments. From Europe he published many brochures that he clandestinely sent to Cairo.*
Official: *I see. Are you his grandson?*
Sanua: *No. I am one of his grand-nephews.*
Official: *It is funny, but we never heard of him. Was he Jewish?*
Sanua: *Of course.*
Official *Why does he wear koufie and a turban?*
Sanua: *Because he was a great friend of the Muslims. He studied at el Azhar, and he received the title of Sheikh.*
Official: *This is very interesting, but this material must be sent to the Alexandria library and must not stay in your brief case. I am confiscating it.*
Sanua: *But ya effendi, there were three of these publications, and in Cairo they took away two of them. This is the last one that I have. This is the only thing that I am carrying from my homeland where I was born and that you can be certain I profoundly loved.*
Official: *I said no. If you would like to postpone your trip, I may make a request to the custom's director who will answer you.*
Sanua: *This is unfair to deprive a man of what he considers very dear. But I do not despair to return someday and retrieve what is so sacred to my family.*

(Sanua has tears in his eyes. He closes his briefcase slowly.)

Official: *Hurry up, Jew.*

With a great feeling of sadness at the injustices and humiliation at the hands of the customs officials, Moise Sanua slowly and sadly walked to the ship but with some relief from his ordeal.

It was reported to me that women in particular were physically searched if they carried jewelry. Some had their genitals checked. While women were doing the search, the curtains hiding the procedure were not adequate, and women had to endure embarrassing moments.

An emotional moment this author witnessed was aboard the SS Esperia on his way to the U.S.A. on September 3, 1950. There were hundreds of refugees on the bridge. Once the ship was in international waters, all of them started singing in unison the *Hatikva* (Hope, national Jewish anthem) with great gusto. These people had gone through agonizing periods of ill treatment prior to the time they left Egypt. It was only when they reached international waters that they felt liberated from the pall hanging over them and were able to express their sense of relief and hope by singing the *Hatikva*.

There was another serious hurdle before leaving Egypt. Anybody who needed to leave the country that was not physically expelled had to go to a special office of the *governorate* (ministry) to obtain an exit visa. Even this simple request was rife with anxieties, since the officials tended to be overbearing and sometimes obnoxious, and one had to be obsequious to obtain a visa. Since most Jews attended European schools, many of them never mastered properly an adequate knowledge of Arabic, which is a very difficult language, and they feared speaking it improperly would jar the nationalistic feelings of the officials.

Another hurdle was to go to the censorship office to have all papers checked. When approved, they were wrapped in paper bags with string and sealed with wax. Because of the fear of being accused of carrying important documents useful to Israel, they preferred to eschew this step. This is the reason Jews from Egypt lack documentation and personal pictures in particular. This writer took a chance and was able to get hundreds of pictures out of the country. They regularly appear in the newsletter of the International Association of Jews from Egypt, and some can be found on our website. The following vignettes of experiences of two of my correspondents certainly confirmed the experience of Moise Sanua customs.

A Letter Received from Israel - Memories of the Last Day in Egypt

Before boarding the ship, we had to fill out a customs declaration in which I mentioned that I had with me 50 Egyptian Pounds (E.P. = about $3, at that time), which we were able to take with us according to the prevailing regulations. Each person had the right to take out 10 Egyptian pounds. Since there were five of us (my wife and three children) leaving the country, we had the right to carry 50 Egyptian pounds. I was quite surprised when the customs' official told me that I was not allowed to do so. The

following is the approximate exchange that took place.

My question: *What shall I do with the 50 Egyptian pounds?*
His reply: *Throw them into the sea!*
My question: *Today the law permits every traveler to take 10 Egyptian pounds, and this rule is still enforced. We are 5 people, and, therefore, we have the right to take with us 50 Egyptian pounds.*
His reply: *We decide about the law, and we also decide to withdraw it.*
My question: *If I had bought clothes for the amount of 50 Egyptian pounds, isn't it my I right that I could take them with me?*
His reply: *Yes, but now you have no right to get out of the customs.*

I was fortunate to have a friend who accompanied me at the customs and told him to buy an expensive overcoat and bring it to me as soon as possible. When he brought it, the customs' official had to let us go on board. I cannot forget the last moment spent on Egyptian territory, and I was very happy to leave the country.

Here is an excerpt from a letter received from Australia from a Karaite, a classmate from the American University in Cairo: Dated Jan. 29, 1992,

> After graduation in 1945 (from the American University in Cairo), I went to pursue my medical studies at the American University in Beirut. From the very first day in Beirut, I contracted dysentery so severe that I could not do any homework. I could not help myself but went to bed very early in the evening only to wake up too late the next morning, so I missed my first lectures. Still weak from dysentery, I joined the family business. We had been manufacturing goldsmiths for generations in Cairo. It was a successful business with a very high reputation for honesty--an essential ingredient for goldsmiths. The first couple of years my health was still affected by that dysentery, and I hated the unclean surroundings of the factory. As my health improved gradually, I began to contribute my share of efforts to the business, which continued to improve very fast. We thought it would be wise to invest in new and modern machinery. I made three trips to Europe, and we were quite optimistic. How wrong we were!! The political atmosphere was getting worse, and we were being 'targeted' by the opportunistic army officers. Every time Israel dealt a humiliating blow to the Egyptian forces, my father was interned and threatened. Finally, they ended up taking not only our business but also our private assets. I migrated to Australia in November 1963.
>
> Bitter, penniless and helpless, I struggled till I landed a job as a casual science teacher. Only in 1970 did the government finance a course to graduate casual teachers, leading to a Diploma in Education. After completing the course, I was appointed as a "permanent." In December 1983, I retired at the age of sixty. Even though I am still struggling, I enjoy my hobbies: photography, silver jewelry and landscaping.

In a video interview of my former classmate, he recalls leaving Egypt with his wife and their new baby. At the customs he was told that he had to leave the baby behind because he was born in Egypt! After some argument the customs official let him leave with the baby.

(5) Remarks by Moise Rahmani on His Departure from Cairo and the Nostalgia over leaving Egypt.

Moise Rahmani remembers vividly the blackouts and the deafening sirens in Cairo during the first Israeli war. It was assumed that Israeli planes were flying over Cairo. People had to place very heavy curtains on the windows and turn off the lights during alerts. It was very unfortunate if a beam of light could be seen during the night. They could hear the words, *tafi el nour, yahudi, ibn kalb (*turn off the light, Jew, son of a dog).

Regarding the extreme fear that the light would be seen through the curtain reminds this writer of his personal experiences. One Friday night when he was returning to his home, there was an alert. This was an indication that Israeli planes were flying over Cairo (Israel did not have an air force at that time!) He could not find his keys. There were lighted Shabbat candles in the apartment, and he could hear shouts from the street shouts *(tafi el nour).* Fearing that he would be branded a Zionist spy, he was able through blows to the door with his foot to break it open and immediately put out the candles. Fear gave him tremendous strength.

The following is an extract of a statement from Moise Rahmani, which appeared in full in issue No.# 6 of the Newsletter of the International Association of Jews from Egypt.

In spite of the unpleasant experience leaving the country, Rahmani who left as a child at the age of 10, has fond memories of his youth in Egypt.

> Almost like a ritual my dad, holding my hand with great tenderness, would go to Mansourah (a well known restaurant in Cairo) weekly to eat *foul.* But what *foul!* With hard-boiled eggs and a salad and torchis (pickled turnips), Papa would take a beer and authorize me to sip this drink for adults. We would continue with *taamia (Egyptian falafel)* and some *baklava* and *konafa* (Middle East deserts). Then we went to buy Parisian newspapers, *Ici-Paris, France-Dimanche.* Ah! What I would give to relive those Sundays.

Mr. Rahmani reflects in his statement some of the more pleasant aspects of life in Egypt prior to the political events of the day. While some Jews from Egypt want to forget about the past, others have deep nostalgia for their pleasant life. Perhaps those who were interned and ill-treated physically became bitter following their unpleasant experiences. Others who had less unfortunate experiences look back fondly on the pleasures of their lives in Egypt.

Quite a number of Jews settled in Israel, but early on they had a difficult time adjusting to the economic and social conditions after the establishment of the state of Israel. They had to learn a new language-Hebrew. In time, because of their knowledge of many languages, they were able to find jobs in banks, travel agencies, airlines and all types of white-collar positions. While they were not able to attend universities, their children were able to enter regular professions. In a book recently published by Levana Zamir, 2003, Succes et contributions des Juifs d'Egypte en Israel pendant 50 ans, 1948/1998. Tel-Aviv, Achdut, she refers to the early difficulties of the Jews from Egypt living in *Ma'abarot* without the usual amenities they were accustomed to in Egypt, but their children made large social and scientific contributions to the state of Israel and remember these early hardships with humor. Zamir points out that delinquency among Egyptian Jewish adolescents was zero. Egyptian-born Jews excelled in the following areas: aeronautics, finance, Israeli Defense Force, nuclear physics and astronomy, business and hotel management, industry, airlines and shipping, medicine, et al. Politics was the only domain in which the Jews of Egypt have not been very active. (Issue #7 of the newsletter of the IAJE provides details of such accomplishments.)

Jews in France seemed to have a much easier time initially despite encountering some anti-Semitism. They had no problem with the French language, since most of them attended French schools in Egypt. However, they missed in Paris the warm relations they were accustomed to in Egypt. Albert Oudiz in his memoirs *"Je viens d'un pays qui n'existe plus"* (I come from a country that no longer exists) writes the following:

> Le contact avec les Parisiens est décevant. Tout le monde est presse, inattentif a ses voisins et son entourage, plongé dans ses problèmes et sa petite existence d'ou il exclut ceux qui l'entourent. Ou donc sont la jovialité et la familiarite envahissantes peut être, mais combien chaleureuses des gens d'Egypte? Nous souffrons, ma femme et moi, de cette sorte d'isolement ou, nous, les gens d'ailleurs, sommes confines.

In spite of the horrendous experiences incurred by Jews from Egypt prior to their departure, most of them show little bitterness, and many have become nostalgic about their life in Egypt prior to 1948. Bitterness is possibly found among those who were interned, while in others, the unpleasantness of their departure seemed to have receded in their memories or has even been forgotten.

Family Stones

Victor Sanua mourns the desecrated Jewish cemetery of Cairo — where his parents lie buried.

In a driving rain, Victor and Stella Sanua stand over the gravestones of kin, chanting memorial prayers. Their voices are echoed by Jews the world over, the living bowing their heads to the departed, during the Days of Awe.

For Victor, honoring the spirits of two sisters and a nephew in the Sephardic section of the United Hebrew Cemetery in Staten Island last Sunday, the annual visit is particularly wrenching. He is thinking of the city of his birth, Cairo.

WRITER'S BLOCK
TOBY AXELROD
STAFF WRITER

There, in a Jewish cemetery 1,200 years old, lie his father, David Sanua, who died in 1935, and his mother, Marie (Shimon) Sanua, who died in 1951 — days before she was to join her son in America.

For all Sanua knows, his parent's graves in Cairo's nine-square-mile Bassatine Cemetery — one of the oldest known Jewish cemeteries on the planet — are no longer identifiable. Their marble markers may have been used, like so many other stones in that cemetery, by people desperate for building material.

In contrast, his family name is found on undisturbed stones centuries old in Istanbul, Turkey, where Sanuas sought haven during the Spanish inquisition 500 years ago.

"I have found centuries of ancestors from the 16th and 17th centuries, but I can't go to my father and mother in Cairo today because the cemetery is desecrated," says Sanua.

He is grateful for the Egyptian government's recent efforts to preserve the cemetery, by creating a bridge over it instead of building a planned road through it. A wall also is being built around the sacred site.

"It is a very good feeling we have that the Egyptian government is doing something about it," says Sanua. "But whether I will be able to locate my family is another matter."

With such thoughts weighing on him, Sanua one year ago helped found The Historical Society of Jews from Egypt, which aims to preserve the monuments and heritage of Jews from Egypt. Sanua has helped arrange lectures and is coordinating an international conference for 1997, directed by Jane Gerber of the Institute of Sephardic Research at the City University of New York.

With Egypt's protection of the cemetery, a major stride already has been taken in preservation of Jewish monuments.

The struggle to save the cemetery began some five years ago, when, with the assistance of members of the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate, Egyptian-born New York businessman Clement Soffer convinced Egyptian authorities it was in their best interest not to build the road as planned. A single bone disturbed would be a desecration, said Soffer, whose grandparents repose there along with Jews of several centuries, buried in tiers.

Now, Soffer, a vice president of the newly formed historical society and head of its Sites Committee, said he is grateful for Egypt's decision to build the bridge instead. To his knowledge, this is the first time Egypt has consulted with halachic authorities before such an undertaking.

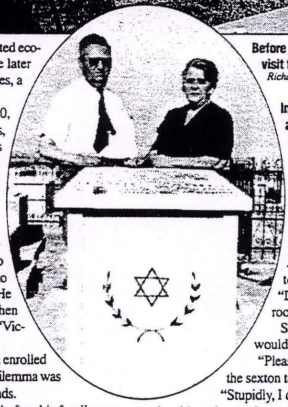
Since then, Soffer — president and owner of Joujou and Dollhouse fashions — has become a guardian angel for Jewish cemeteries worldwide, from Egypt to Belarus, from Germany to Cochin, India.

The Cairo rescue is a sign of hope for Sanua, who has "such pleasant memories of Egypt. Jews lived beautifully there."

His family's odyssey begins with an escape from Spain 500 years ago. In Turkey the family's Spanish roots thrived; in Brooklyn, they are withering. "In my house, we spoke Spanish for 500 years, until today," says Sanua, vice president of American Jewish Friends of Turkey. "With me, it's over."

Sanua's grandfather left Turkey for Egypt in 1850, when the Suez Canal was under consideration. Europeans were invited to participate in Egypt's expected economic boom. Sanua's mother came later with her family from the Dardanelles, a string of islands off Turkey.

Before Yom Kippur, Victor and Stella Sanua visit the Staten Island cemetery.
Richard Levine



In a 1952 photo, Victor's Uncle Nissim and Aunt Rosa pose at the grave of his mother Marie, in Cairo.

Sanua was born in Cairo in 1920, one of four children. Like many Jews, he attended Catholic schools. He was so good at catechism that "the inspector told me, 'Maybe you should go into the priesthood.' I said, 'No thank you, I am a Jew!'"

Sanua studied at the American University of Cairo and in 1950, after failed attempts by the family to emigrate to Israel, was accepted into Bowling Green University in Ohio. He planned to return a year later. But then arrived a telegram from his family: "Victor, don't come. We are coming."

To extend his student visa, Sanua enrolled in Michigan State University. "My dilemma was solved," he recalls, clapping his hands.

The relief was not to last. Days before his family was to arrive, "They called me long distance while I was taking my finals," he says. "I was in a telephone booth. They told me, 'Your mother is dead.' I cried my heart out."

Guilt had accompanied Sanua since the day he left Cairo. "You know Jewish mothers: 'If you leave, I'll die.'

"Maybe it was because of heartbreak," Sanua muses. "My feeling is that she thought she would be a burden to the rest of the family. Subconsciously, she wanted to die."

Sanua helped his sisters settle in New York. Of his three sisters, two have passed away.

Sanua made a name for himself in social psychology. His teaching career has included stints at Harvard, Yeshiva University and Adelphi University. Since 1980, Sanua has been with St. John's University in Queens.

He married Stella, who comes from a Syrian Jewish family, in 1956 and they have been "happy ever since," he says. They have two children — David, an attorney, and Marianne, an historian — and two grandchildren.

For all his happiness here, Sanua has not forgotten his roots. There were 80,000 Jews in Cairo before the 1940s. Today, only about 100 Jews are left in Egypt, said Sanua, and most are at least 80 years old.

He took his daughter there 15 years ago. "In the synagogue where I was bar mitzvahed, there were six Jews and they had to wait for Israeli tourists to start a minyan," he says. "During my youth, there was standing room only."

Sanua told the synagogue sexton he would like to go to the cemetery.

"Please don't go. It will break your heart," the sexton told him.

"Stupidly, I didn't go," says Sanua. "I would not be able to locate the tombstones. They had been defaced or removed."

Cairo has changed in another way since Sanua left. The population has grown from 2.5 million in 1950 to 15 million today.

"Where you had gardens, now there are skyscrapers. When I was young, I could take my bicycle from Cairo to the pyramids [at Giza], going and coming in one hour. Today, it takes two or three hours by car."

Crowding is so bad, says Sanua, that people have moved into Jewish and Moslem cemeteries. "I heard there are people living inside the mausoleum of Rabbi Nachum [Haim Nachum Effendi], next to his tomb, cooking and cleaning," he says. According to Soffer, the police have cooperated in evicting such squatters.

That sand-swept cemetery is a world away from the rain-soaked grounds of the cemetery in Staten Island, where Sanua prays before the newest family stones. He sings loud, says Stella, "so people can hear him" far and wide. "That makes the minyan," she says.

One day, perhaps, Sanua's voice will be heard again over the stones of his mother and father in Cairo. □

First International Conference on The Jews In Modern Egypt ***From the Ottoman Period to the Present: Reflecting on the Second Exodus 1948-1998***

Thurs. Dec. 4, 1997, 9:00-5:45 pm, Middle East Institute, Columbia University

1) **Ada Aharoni, Techion**: *The Culture and Heritage of the Jews from Egypt as an Element in the Promotion of Relations Between Jews and Arabs*
2) **Joel Beinin**, Stanford University: *Economic Role of the Jewish Business Class in 20th Century Egypt*
3) **Jacques Hassoun**, Psychiatrist, Paris: *The Diversity and the Demise of the Egyptian Jewish Community*
4) **Emanuel Marx**, Tel Aviv University (former Director, Israeli Academic Center in Cairo): *Dealing with the Jewish Community in Egypt*
5) **Yoram Meital**, Ben Gurion University: *The Development of the Jewish Community in Cairo*
6) **Yaacov Meron**, Ministry of Justice, Israel: *The Common Denominator of the Expulsion of the Jews from Egypt and Other Arab Countries*
7) **Jean-Marc Oppenheim**, Middle East Institute, Columbia University: *Anglo-French Cultural Imperialism and the Jews of Modern Egypt*
8) **Victor D. Sanua**, St. Johns University: *A Short History of the Expulsion of the Jews from Egypt and Their Adaptation in Israel and in France*
9) **Sasson Somekh**, Tel Aviv University (Director, Israel Academic Research Center, Cairo): *Egyptian Novelists Remembering Their Jewish Neighbors*
10) **Albert De Vidas**, Editor, Erensia Sefardi and Amicale Alexandrie: *The Immigration of Spanish Jews to Egypt*
11) **Walter Zenner**, SUNY Albany: *Egypt as a Destination of Jewish Immigration*
12) **Zvi Zohar**, Hebrew University: *Halachah, Suicide, and Social Policy: Analysis of the Responsa of Egyptian Rabbis*
13) **Mara Leichman**, *A Comparison of Jews from Egypt and Morocco in Israel*

FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JEWS FROM EGYPT

Columbia University ***Friday, Dec. 5, 1997***

THE JEWS IN MODERN EGYPT:

From the Ottoman Period to the Present

REFLECTING ON THE SECOND EXODUS, 1948–1998

WELCOME: Reeva Simon, Ph.D., Acting Director,
Middle East Institute, Columbia University

WELCOME: Victor Sanua, Ph.D., Research Professor,
Dept. of Psychology, St. John's University

Dr. Victor Sanua of St. John's University spoke about the reasons and the urgent needs for establishing an International Association of Jews from Egypt for the purpose to document our history which has been neglected. Time is of an essence, since in a decade or two, the witnesses of such events would have passed away.

Dr. Jean Marc Oppenheim of Columbia University was Chairman of the local arrangements of the Conference, and we are indebted to him for a well-organized meeting.

First Session

"The Origin of Jews in Modern Egypt"
Chair: Victor D. Sanua Ph.D. St. John' University

1. *"The Immigration of Spanish Jews to Egypt,"* ***Albert de Vidas, Ph.D.****, Editor, Erensia Sephardi and Amicale Alexandrie.*

After the expulsion of Spanish Jews from Spain in 1492, a number of them managed to arrive in Egypt while Mamelukes who were not friendly to Jews ruled the country. With the conquest of Egypt in 1517 by the Turks, who were quite tolerant of Jews, the Sephardic immigration increased sharply. Dr. de Vidas analyzed the customs and traditions of the Sephardim in Egypt. Hispanic language and traditions were described within the context of the family, religious ceremonies and life style. He

introduced in his presentation anecdotes of his personal experiences as a Spanish Jew in Alexandria.

2. *"Egypt as a Destination of Jewish Immigration,"*
   ***Walter Zenner, Ph.D.**, Dept. of Anthropology, SUNY Albany*

Prof. Zenner remarked that Egyptian Jewry was made up of indigenous Jews who lived in the country for centuries, and Jews coming from Europe and other countries of the Middle East. On the basis of his own analysis, it would seem that Egyptian Jewry quickly assimilated into a culturally European society at the same time that they were separate from the large native-Egyptian Arab Muslim. This paper stitched together hints of this, especially with regards to Jews from Syria.

3. *"The Development of the Jewish Community in Cairo,"*
   ***Yoram Meital, Ph.D.**, Dept. of History, Ben Gurion University, Israel*

Dr. Meital focused on Cairo's Jewish community during 100 years between mid 19th and mid-20th centuries. There were two types of intertwined levels of Egyptian Jewry. The first relates to the communal division within the Jewish population, Sephardic, Ashkenazi and Karaite. The other division relates to economic, social and cultural identity. He examined the history of the local Jewish population in different parts of Cairo, the Egyptian capital, Haret al Yahud (Jewish quarter), al-Abasiyyah, and the City Center. He showed some slides of the main synagogues of the Haret al Yahud before and after the 1948 events. His recent slides taken in 1993 showed the serious disrepair of these synagogues.

Second Session

"Religious, Economic, and Cultural Development"
***Chair: Jacob Landau, Ph.D.**, Dept. of Political Science, Hebrew University; Visiting Professor, Princeton University*

1. *"Halacha, Suicide, and Social Policy: Analysis of the Responsa of Egyptian Rabbis,"*
   ***Zvi Zohar, Ph.D.**, Institute for Contemporary Jewish Studies, Hebrew University.*

Dr. Zohar spoke primarily about Rabbi Raphael Ben Shim'on who was Chief rabbi of Cairo for 30 years (1891-1921). During this challenging period of community growth and rapid change, Rabbi Ben Shim'on toiled to create fitting halakhic responses to emerging modern Middle Eastern realities. He dealt with the issue of youthful suicides. Halakha takes a very negative position towards suicide, and denies regular burial rites for the individual. While rabbinic custom was to try and "explain" self- inflicted death as a

"tragic mistake" caused by momentary insanity, Prof. Zohar presented and analyzed Rabbi Ben-Shim'on's reasoned justification in rejecting such explanations.

1. *"Economic Role of the Jewish Business Class in 20th Century Egypt"*
   Joel Beinin, Ph.D., *Dept of History, Stanford University, USA*

Following the 1977 Camp David accords, Egyptian nationalists were apprehensive that normal economic relations with Israel would undermine Egypt's national economy and allow Israelis to establish a privileged position in Egypt similar to the historic Egyptian Jewish community as "economic parasites, usurers and rapacious capitalists" According to Prof. Beinin's analysis, there was not a unified bloc of Jewish capital or a Jewish bourgeoisie with a common set of economic interests defined by ethnic identity. The behavior of Jewish business elite was not a function of their real or imagined cultural attributes and certainly not of their Zionist sympathies. Prof. Beinin has just published a book, The Dispersion of Egyptian Jewry: Culture, Politics, and the Formation of a Modern Diaspora, University of California University Press, Berkeley. 1998. The book examines the history of the Egyptian Jewish community after 1948, focusing on three major areas: the life of the majority of the community which remained in Egypt from 1948 Arab-Israeli War; the dispersion and reestablishment of Egyptian Jewish communities in the United States, France and Israel, and contested memories of Jewish life in Egypt since President Anwar al Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in 1977.

2. *Anglo-French Cultural Imperialism and the Jews of Modern Egypt"*
   Jean Marc Oppenheim, Ph.D.,
   Middle East Institute, Columbia University

Despite an official British presence, Egypt was overwhelmed by French influence. This manifested itself through the myriad French mission schools that existed throughout the country and which were less exclusionary than English mission schools, the numerous French-language media publications, which outnumbered English-language media publications by ten to one, and the diverse forms of cultural activities that were prevalent in Cairo, Alexandria, and most of the Delta and the Canal cities. The net result made French the lingua franca of all the foreign resident communities but especially of the Jewish community.

3. *The Diversity of the Demise of the Egyptian Jewish Community"*
   Jacques Hassoun, M.D., *a Psychoanalyst living in Paris and well known for his work on Egyptian Jewry.*

Dr. Jean Marc Oppenheim read his presentation in French

Egypt's Jewish community was largely composed of Jews whose roots were in the Mediterranean basin, and who originally came from foreign areas. There were also Ashkenazim and Jews from the Arabian Peninsula. Tension existed within and among the various groups. This was due to linguistic heritage, ideological diversity, and class differences. However, when the community came under the threats of Islamism, Egyptian nationalism, and pan-Arabism, it overcame its traditional differences to present a common front, a response that did not alter its ultimate fate: the self-liquidation of one of the oldest Jewish communities.

Third Session

"The post-1948 Experience"
Chair: Albert de Vidas, Ph.D.

1. *"The Common Denominator of the Expulsion of the Jews from Egypt and Other Arab Countries"*
   ***Yaacov Meron, Ph.D.**, Ministry of Justice, Israel*

Dr. Meron examines three possible common denominators: Nationality, extortions and bribery, and violence. He concludes that violence against Jews was decidedly the common denominator of the expulsion of the Jews from Arab Countries.

2. *"The Cultural Heritage of the Jews from Egypt as an Element in the Promotion of Relations Between Jews and Arabs,"*
   ***Ada Aharoni, Ph.D.**, Technion, Haifa, Israel*

Dr. Aharoni expresses her belief that the "Second Exodus" of the Jews from Egypt could be a potential factor of reconciliation that may contribute to the promotion of peace in the Middle East. The Jews of Egypt can understand and appreciate the culture of their Arab neighbors, and they could make for a significant bridge of understanding between Arabs and Jews. Hopefully Jews from the "Second Exodus" could help towards a stable reconciliation.

3. *"Egyptian Novelists Remembering Their Jewish Neighbors,"*
   ***Sasson Somekh, Ph.D.**, Dept. of Arabic Literature , Tel Aviv University; Director, Israeli Academic Center, Cairo*

Dr. Sasson feels that in the Arabic literature, the discussion of the contributions of Jews to the economy and cultural history of their country was less than objective, and the general hostility of the writers towards Zionism tinted their discourse. However, in recent years, he came across writings dealing with the former Jewish inhabitants of Egypt which

are more positive. He mentioned in particular two writers, Ihsan Abdul Quddus, who wrote several short stories on his Jewish neighbors, and Samir Raafat who wrote a volume, ***Meadi*** (1904-1990) a suburb of Cairo, which was originally established by Jews.

4. *"Dealing with the Jewish Community in Egypt,"* ***Emmanuel Marx, Ph.D.,*** *Dept. of Anthropology, Tel Aviv University; Former Director, Israel Academic Center, Cairo*

During 1992-1995 when he was the director of the Israel Academic Center, the Center collaborated with the Jewish community in collecting the Judaica scattered in various locations. He reported that if the relations between Egypt and Israel improved, there would be much going back and forth of Israeli entrepreneurs. However this is possible only if properties and institutions would be reactivated. He feels this is necessary not only on practical grounds, but also because he considers it to be of vital interest of Israel to maintain Jewish communities in the Arab world.

5. *"A Short History of the Expulsion of the Jews from Egypt and Their Adaptation in Israel and in France,"* ***Victor D. Sanua Ph.D.,*** *Research Professor, Dept. of Psychology, St. John's University, Queens, NY*

Dr. Victor Sanua reported on his interviews with Egyptian Jews in France and Israel. He videotaped those interviews. Many reported on their experiences in leaving Egypt and the problems of adaptation in the country they were accepted. There was one important comment made by a well-known scholar. He never believed that there would such a big break between Egyptian Muslims and Egyptian Jews. He felt, and other like him that the conflict would be a passing phase, and that normal life would be reestablished.

6. *"A Comparison of Jews from Egypt and Morocco in Israel,"* ***Mara Leichman,*** *Student in Anthropology in Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island.*

Her conclusion was that Moroccan Jews fitted best as a whole in the original pioneer mode of Israel. They came to Israel from a more modest background and were influenced by "true Israeli" hard working pioneer convictions. The Jews of Egypt were accustomed to a more comfortable way of life and European culture. The majority of them has adapted to the middle and upper class way of life and often speaks about Egypt with some nostalgia.

All the lectures have been video taped and it is hoped that at some future time, it will be possible to transcribe all of the presentations.

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The Origin of the Cairo Bassatine Cemetery

Among the many papers I found after the death of my cousin Moise Sanua (1993), who served as the secretary to Chief Rabbi Haim Nahum Effendi of Egypt, I discovered a draft of a paper in French, which describes a mythical story of the origins of the Jewish Bassatine Cemetery. The following is a translation of the French text by Dr. Victor D. Sanua.

The Egyptian authorities have succeeded in completely eliminating from their territory one of the most flourishing Jewish communities of all time, one whose history is close to the history of the Egyptian people. There is now a new chapter in that tragedy – the destruction of the Jewish cemetery at Bassatine, which was established centuries ago. Because of its ties with medieval and modern Egyptian history it is one of the best known in all of the Middle East. It seems that the government of Colonel Sadat has not found another appropriate spot for the construction of military garages than this vast, isolated spot in the desert, which did not present any military, archeological or even agricultural value. *

At the time it was decided to establish a Jewish cemetery, Egypt was governed by the Fatimid Caliphate (969-1171). Its rulers surrounded themselves with wise and devoted advisers, and many were Jews who were noted for their good deeds. Egyptian history during the Fatimid period is filled with stories of Jews who were personal physicians to the Caliphs.

One of these sovereigns, whose name is not given, was said to be suffering from an illness that was almost incurable. He was saved only because of the care he received from a Jewish physician. According to the story, the ruler summoned the physician before him since he wanted to express his gratitude by offering him as a gift any piece of land in Cairo that he might choose. At first, the physician refused, but the sovereign insisted, as well as other members of the Jewish community who heard about the offer. At that time a few hundred Jewish families were living in the area of Bnei Foueila (later called the Haret-al-Yahoud). They decided that they would choose a piece of land taken from an area that had become arid because of inadequate maintenance and was known by the improbable name of El Bassatine (Gardens). All the Jews wanted was an adequate piece of land to bury their dead. Until then, Jews had been buried in empty fields close to the homes of fanatical Muslims who tended to throw stones during burials and funerals.

The distance between the Jewish quarter and the new cemetery necessitated the transportation of the dead on camels, while the rest of the people, related to the departed, rode donkeys. This reduced the chances of the funeral procession being attacked, particularly that the funeral could be arranged at night.

A story about this transfer has been passed from one generation to the other in the course of centuries. Important Arab historians, like Al-Makrizi, have repeated in their work the tale of the famous and wise Jewish physician. When the sovereign asked the physician how much land he wanted for the future cemetery, the physician answered that he would be satisfied with a piece of land that could be covered by the single hide of a bull or a cow. The answer intrigued the sovereign so much that he answered he would do so without any discussion, at the same time wondering how the beneficiary could arrange such a state of affairs. The physician insisted that the promise of this donation come with an official and legal firman (so that it could never be revoked). The physician arranged for the hide of a cow to be brought to him. To specialized workers, he ordered that the hide be cut into hundreds of fine strips of the thickness of ordinary sewing thread. Attached end to end they could form a very long cordon that could circle a large piece of ground. At that point, the sovereign embraced the physician and granted him the firman that he wanted. The cordon happened to cover the surface of 1400 "hectares" (2.47 acres per hectare), which came under the jurisdiction of the Jewish community and came to be the Bassatine cemetery.

If any of our readers have heard or read about this fascinating story, please contact the editor, Victor Sanua.

*A large section of the cemetery was spared.

Note: The following text was written about 20 years ago for the purpose of applying for foundation financial support to conduct a large scale research in Israel to study the social and psychological problems of Jews from Egypt who came to Israel. Most of their assets were expropriated before their departure and they had problem of adaptation since they had little knowledge of Hebrew. I saw it fitting to include this research proposal in this book hoping that in the future, it will be possible to pursue this effort before the demise of the entire Egyptian Jewish immigrants in Israel.

THE ADAPTATION OF EGYPTIAN JEWS WHO IMMIGRATED TO ISRAEL AFTER THE ARAB-ISRAELI WARS

Before the onset of open hostilities in 1948 between the Arab countries and the Jewish residents in what was soon to become the State of Israel, it is estimated that close to a million Jews lived in Arabic-speaking lands. The largest numbers lived in Morocco and Iraq; Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen had smaller numbers. In Egypt, there were about 70,000 Jews, principally living in Cairo and Alexandria (96 percent). They included a variety of communities according to their country of origin and their social class; these were the "Musta'rabin", (Arabized Jews of local origin), "Sephardim", (Ladino-Spanish speaking Jews) who had come from Spain around 1492, as well as the descendants of the exodus from the Inquisition who had lived for centuries in the Ottoman Empire, Turkey, Greece, the Balkans, Syria, etc., and who relocated themselves to Egypt during a period of modernization of Egypt particularly with the opening of the Suez Canal. In addition, other Jews in Egypt had come from Central and Eastern Europe who were called "Ashkenazim," following the pogroms in Russia. The French culture which was introduced subsequent to Napoleon's conquest of Egypt dominated the intellectual and social life of most Jews. Many of them attended non-Jewish religious schools, particularly those run by the Catholic Brothers, and secular schools subsidized by the French government. There were a few schools under Jewish auspices but the language of instruction was French and the instruction of the Hebrew language was minimal. Very few attended government schools since a good knowledge of Arabic was required and this was not their home language. The religious affairs of the community were handled by the Central Rabbinate headed by a Chief Rabbi who was the spokesman for the group. Thus while Egyptian Jews maintained their Jewish identity, it was not expressed in religious terms.

In 1948-1949, because of their precarious political situation, a mass immigration began which later intensified after each conflict. According to the German historian Krämer (1989) who provided an extensive documentation on Egyptian Jewry, in 1956 there remained 50,000 Jews in Egypt. By 1967 their number had dwindled to 2500. Soon, the Jewish community in Egypt ceased to exist. At the present time, there may be approximately 200-300 elderly Jews still living in Egypt. Two synagogues are still in operation but regular services are not possible owing to lack of a quorum, a "Minyan." Sometimes, services are delayed to wait for visiting tourists to enable the start of services.

About 40,000 Egyptian Jews settled in Israel. 15,000 settled in Brazil; 10,000 made their way to France; 9,000 to the United States; 9,000 to Argentina; and 4,000 to Great Britain. It would be most important to document systematically from the historical and sociological point of view, what one author (Aharoni, 1983) has called "The Second Exodus from Egypt." Practically all of the Egyptian Jews were in business and white-collar workers with a few professionals while Israel, as a pioneering country, required manual and agricultural workers. Many immigrants were placed in hastily constructed transit camps (ma'abarot). It is believed that many of these Egyptian Jews encountered difficulties of adaptation which was accentuated by their lack of knowledge of Hebrew.

An unusual fact in the Arab world is that some Jews were appointed to the Egyptian parliament and there were a few multimillionaires. Legally, they were divided into three groups: 1) those who were born in Egypt and who had foreign nationality acquired through their parents, 2) those who were able to obtain Egyptian citizenship. Birth in Egypt did not quality an individual for immediate citizenship. About 5000 Egyptian Jews had an Egyptian passport. 3) The third group was called "sujet locaux" (local subjects) who were considered stateless, and their official document was a "laissez-passer" which enabled them to travel. In spite of the fact that many generations of Egyptian Jews were born in Egypt, the culture of most was basically European.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Sociological studies on Egyptian Jewry settling in Israel do not exist at this time in indexed literature. An examination of a recent bibliography by Smooha (1987), a sociologist at the University of Haifa, covering social research on Jewish ethnicity in Israel 1948-1986, does not have a single entry on Egyptian Jewry, while scores of articles have been published on Moroccan, Yemenite, Libyan, and Iraqi Jews. Another extensive bibliography (Cohen and Yehuda, 1976) on the subject of Asian and African Jews in the Middle East published by the Institute of Contemporary Jewry of the Hebrew University does not have any reference about the adjustment of Egyptian Jews in Israel after the establishment of the State. One of the possible explanations is that most of the Egyptian Jews were not indigenous to Egypt and, as indicated earlier, most of them felt that they were Europeans. However, upon their arrival in Israel, as a group coming from an Arab country, they could be categorized between the fully Arabized Jews as those of Yemen, and immigrants from Europe. It would be of interest to find out how they responded to the situation and how they were viewed by others. Another group of Jews who came to Israel were those from Turkey. Weiker (1989) conducted a study of this group and according to his research, it was difficult to attribute a stereotype to them. He felt that Turkish immigrants were able to adjust comfortably among the many segments of Israeli society. During the past two years, there is a new wave of immigrants from Russia which has some similarity with the Egyptian Jewry. Many Russian Jews tend to be well-educated while minimally involved in Jewish practices and unfamiliar with the Hebrew language. An analysis of the adaptation of Egyptian Jewry may possibly throw some light on the future adaptation of Russian Jewry in Israel.

There are two studies which are closely related to our investigation. Inbar and Adler (1977) compared the adjustment level of 66 pairs of Moroccan Jewish brothers with one going to Israel and the other going to France. They found that while the group going to Israel did not do as well economically as their brothers in France, they seemed to be more satisfied with their lives than their French counterparts. In France, Schnapper (1983) conducted interviews to analyze the Jewish identity of French Jewry. Her sample included a large number of North African Jews but none from Egypt. While the study by Inbar and Adler (1977) included a questionnaire with objective questions, the study by Schnapper was qualitative. The present study will include both approaches.

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Note: We have not included the methodology of the research.

Note: The following text was written about 20 years ago for the purpose of applying for foundation financial support to conduct a large scale research in Israel to study the social and psychological problems of Jews from Egypt who came to Israel. Most of their assets were expropriated before their departure and they had problem of adaptation since they had little knowledge of Hebrew. I saw it fitting to include this research proposal in this book hoping that in the future, it will be possible to pursue this effort before the demise of the entire Egyptian Jewish immigrants in Israel.

THE ADAPTATION OF EGYPTIAN JEWS WHO IMMIGRATED TO ISRAEL AFTER THE ARAB-ISRAELI WARS

Before the onset of open hostilities in 1948 between the Arab countries and the Jewish residents in what was soon to become the State of Israel, it is estimated that close to a million Jews lived in Arabic-speaking lands. The largest numbers lived in Morocco and Iraq; Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen had smaller numbers. In Egypt, there were about 70,000 Jews, principally living in Cairo and Alexandria (96 percent). They included a variety of communities according to their country of origin and their social class; these were the "Musta'rabin", (Arabized Jews of local origin), "Sephardim", (Ladino-Spanish speaking Jews) who had come from Spain around 1492, as well as the descendants of the exodus from the Inquisition who had lived for centuries in the Ottoman Empire, Turkey, Greece, the Balkans, Syria, etc., and who relocated themselves to Egypt during a period of modernization of Egypt particularly with the opening of the Suez Canal. In addition, other Jews in Egypt had come from Central and Eastern Europe who were called "Ashkenazim," following the pogroms in Russia. The French culture which was introduced subsequent to Napoleon's conquest of Egypt dominated the intellectual and social life of most Jews. Many of them attended non-Jewish religious schools, particularly those run by the Catholic Brothers, and secular schools subsidized by the French government. There were a few schools under Jewish auspices but the language of instruction was French and the instruction of the Hebrew language was minimal. Very few attended government schools since a good knowledge of Arabic was required and this was not their home language. The religious affairs of the community were handled by the Central Rabbinate headed by a Chief Rabbi who was the spokesman for the group. Thus while Egyptian Jews maintained their Jewish identity, it was not expressed in religious terms.

In 1948-1949, because of their precarious political situation, a mass immigration began which later intensified after each conflict. According to the German historian Krämer (1989) who provided an extensive documentation on Egyptian Jewry, in 1956 there remained 50,000 Jews in Egypt. By 1967 their number had dwindled to 2500. Soon, the Jewish community in Egypt ceased to exist. At the present time, there may be approximately 200-300 elderly Jews still living in Egypt. Two synagogues are still in operation but regular services are not possible owing to lack of a quorum, a "Minyan." Sometimes, services are delayed to wait for visiting tourists to enable the start of services.

About 40,000 Egyptian Jews settled in Israel. 15,000 settled in Brazil; 10,000 made their way to France; 9,000 to the United States; 9,000 to Argentina; and 4,000 to Great Britain. It would be most important to document systematically from the historical and sociological point of view, what one author (Aharoni, 1983) has called "The Second Exodus from Egypt." Practically all of the Egyptian Jews were in business and white-collar workers with a few professionals while Israel, as a pioneering country, required manual and agricultural workers. Many immigrants were placed in hastily constructed transit camps (ma'abarot). It is believed that many of these Egyptian Jews encountered difficulties of adaptation which was accentuated by their lack of knowledge of Hebrew.

An unusual fact in the Arab world is that some Jews were appointed to the Egyptian parliament and there were a few multimillionaires. Legally, they were divided into three groups: 1) those who were born in Egypt and who had foreign nationality acquired through their parents, 2) those who were able to obtain Egyptian citizenship. Birth in Egypt did not quality an individual for immediate citizenship. About 5000 Egyptian Jews had an Egyptian passport. 3) The third group was called "sujet locaux" (local subjects) who were considered stateless, and their official document was a "laissez-passer" which enabled them to travel. In spite of the fact that many generations of Egyptian Jews were born in Egypt, the culture of most was basically European.

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DR. VICTOR D. SANUA
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GROWING UP AS A JEW IN CAIRO

By Victor D. Sanua Ph.D.

About 50 years ago, I came to America to study psychology. I was fluent in English but my speech had a slight accent. Many people would ask about my background. This was difficult to answer since one single response would not suffice. If I was asked my place of birth, it was Egypt (but I was not Egyptian). If I was asked about my passport, I indicated that I was Italian, but never lived in Italy; if they inquired about the origin of my family, I would indicate Spain but I had to add that my family left Spain about 500 years ago, went to Italy, and later settled in Istanbul where I found burial stones with the name Sanua (meaning "modest" in Hebrew), one dated early 17th. Century. The only thing I was sure about in my background was the fact that I was Jewish. I am presenting this short exchange to indicate that a large number of Jews born in Egypt were not culturally indigenous to the country. During the middle of the 19th Century, the rulers of Egypt who wanted to modernize the country readily accepted Europeans. Consequently, a large number of Ladino speaking Jews came from Turkey.

The Jewish Sanua Family in Cairo 1923.

In time, the dominant foreign language became French, in view of the large number of French schools such as the Lycee Francais and the Catholic Schools (Freres) which were attended by a large number of Jewish children. My education started in the School of Bab-el-Louk. Besides French, two other languages were taught, English and Arabic. Two hours a week were devoted to the language of the country. Since the Arabic that

Shaar Ha Shamayin Synagogue in Cairo, Egypt.

was taught was classical and had little to do with spoken Arabic, many of us were never conversant with the language, unless the home language was Arabic. However, we were able to manage with "street" Arabic. All department stores had French speaking employees. In my home , we spoke French and Ladino. Depending on their background, Jews spoke other languages. The small Askenazi community spoke Yiddish. Of course, the different nationals whose parents came from various countries spoke the language of their origin, and schools were established for Italians, Germans, Greeks and Armenians. A few schools taught in English. Since most of the students who attended such schools and who wanted to pursue professional careers could not attend Egyptian Universities because of Arabic language deficiencies, they had to go abroad. Very few students attended Egyptian universities. In view of the decline of France as a power in the 1930's, learning English became more important and it was at that time that I pursued my education in English, first in the high school attached to the American University at Cairo, and later in

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Growing Up As A Jew In Cairo

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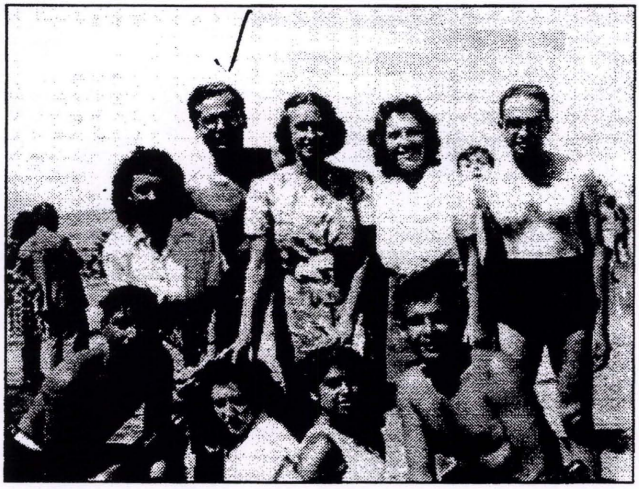
Prayers at the Shaar Ha Shamayim Synagogue; Cairo, Egypt. Photo Credit: Beth Hatefutsoth

their liberal college which made it possible for me to continue with my studies without difficulty in the USA.

Social life for Jews, between the two World Wars, was quite pleasant. Life centered around families, club activities and swimming pool facilities. Cairo had practically everything that a major European city could offer, Italian operas, ballet, Comedie Francaise, foreign symphony orchestras, etc. We had the most recent movies produced in the USA, England, France and Italy. Alexandria was the major resort city where many Cairenes went to the beaches during vacation time. Alexandria and Cairo had numerous night clubs presenting shows. There was one particular favorite place for dinner and dancing in Cairo which was called Groppi. I was a member of a club called Judeo-Espagnol but because of the rising nationalism, the name was changed to Judeo-Egyptien.

A teacher came to my home to prepare me for my Bar Mitzvah, which was celebrated in the major synagogue in Cairo called Shaar Ha Shamayim. (The Gates of Heaven). The famous Chief Rabbi of Egypt, Haim Nahoum Effendi, conducted the service. In 1984, 34 years after leaving Egypt, I returned with my daughter to visit this synagogue. The picture shows the front of the synagogue, where I am talking to Ninette Hassan, one of the remaining Jewish residents. I learned that she died later in 1995. On Friday evenings the synagogue was always crowded and there was only standing room if one was late. During the High Holidays, all synagogues were well attended. Clubs, private schools and large homes were used to conduct the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippour prayers. What was particularly strange was when we thanked G-d for having delivered us from the Egyptians during Pessach Seders. Our identity as Jews was quite strong and we even learned to sing the Hatikva in Ladino.

There were times of sadness, however. Many times during the year, the ritual of what we called "meldado" (Yahrzeit) was observed. The custom was celebrated in the



Friends and Family in Alexandria 1941.

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Growing Up As A Jew In Cairo

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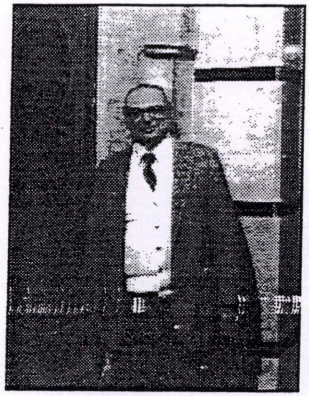

Dr. Victor Sanua returns to his old home in Cairo in 1984.

home. There were a number of older men of modest means who kept dates of deaths and made a living conducting such services in the homes. We requested a number of men to make sure that we had minyan, particularly in the middle of the week. Between prayers, they discussed-in Ladino-passages of the Bible.

These impossibly idyllic conditions of Jews in Egypt came slowly to an end with the conflict in Palestine, culminating with the establishment of State of Israel in 1948, and the disappearance of a vibrant community. Today, there might possibly be about 100 older persons in all of Egypt.

Since very little is widely known about the life of Jews from Egypt and their subsequent trials and tribulations, it would be important to commemorate the 50 years of the Second Exodus of Jews from Egypt in 1998. In 1992, we had an International Conference on the expulsion of Jews from Spain. The international Conference of Jews from Egypt will have witnesses who will be able to relate their own experiences. Furthermore, a number of sholars familiar with the events of the period could be invited. Anyone who feels that this would be an important conference to hold in New York, and who have suggestions regarding its organization should write to me.

For a more in-depth exposé of my experiences, the reader is referred to the book *Fields of Offerings*, by Victor D. Sanua (Ed.) Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1983. ❑

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SEPHARDIC HISTORY

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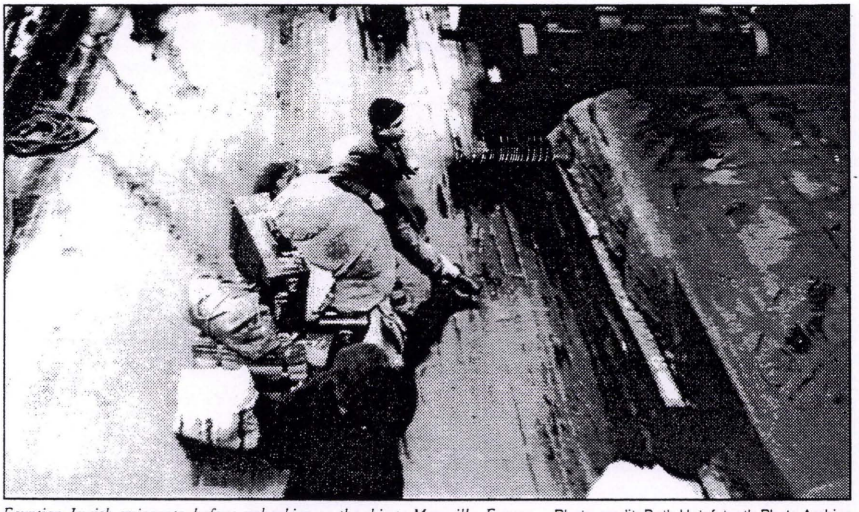
EMIGRATION OF SEPHARDIC JEWS FROM EGYPT

By Victor D. Sanua Ph.D.



Egyptian-Jewish emigrants, before embarking on the ship to Marseille, France. Photo credit: Beth Hatefutsoth Photo Archive

Before and after the onset of hostilities in 1948 between the Arab states and the newly established State of Israel, it is estimated that about a million Jews lived in Arab lands with the largest concentration in Morocco and Iraq. Algeria, Egypt, Syria and Yemen had smaller numbers. This article will deal with the experiences of Jews with their exodus from Egypt following the Arab-Israeli conflicts. The greatest increase in emigration took place during Nasser's presidency.

Jews have been living in Egypt since ancient times. During the Middle Ages, the Geniza documents were accumulated in Cairo. In 1517, when the Ottomans conquered Egypt, a small number of Ladino-speaking Jews from Turkey moved to Egypt. Egypt was opened to the world when Napoleon conquered the country in 1798. While the occupation was short-lived (1798-1801), it left a strong imprint on the Westernization of the country. Mohamed Ali, an Albanian officer in the service of the Turks established himself as the ruler of the country and started a dynasty with his last reigning descendant, King Farouk, being forced to abdicate in 1952 after a military coup. During the Middle of the 19th.Century, there was an influx of foreigners attracted by the economic development of the country, particularly at the time of the building of the Suez Canal. Jews came from various parts of the world. A sizeable number came from Turkey who spoke Ladino. However, there were groups of indigenous Jews who spoke Arabic and which included about 3500 Karaites who had rejected Talmudic writings in the eighth Century.

There was also a group of Ashkenazi Jews (6000). Thus the Jews of Egypt tended to be heterogeneous. What bound them together culturally was the French language and the strong French cultural influence. Jews in Egypt, in general, prospered in business and manufacturing. By 1947, it is estimated that there were

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SEPHARDIC HISTORY

EMIGRATION OF SEPHARDIC JEWS FROM EGYPT

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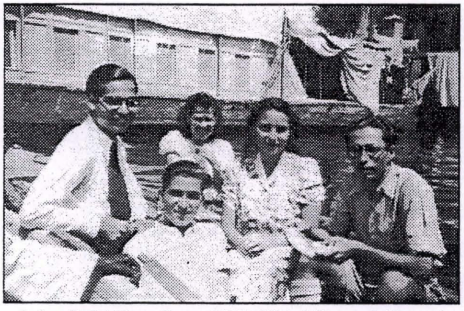
80,000 Jews in Egypt with the largest concentration in Cairo and Alexandria. Many of them kept or acquired European citizenship, since the foreign countries tended to seek some local representation with these new citizens. In spite of their small number, the contributions of Jews from Egypt to the economy of the country was enormous.



(Left to Right) Victor Sanua (USA), Michel Chammah (France), Isaac Crespin (Israel), Two ladies in the back - Renée Sutton (England), Becky Danon (Israel) on the Nile River. 1941

A number of factors developed in the thirties and forties that made life a little more complex for them. There was a general concern about the conflicts between the Jews and the Arabs in Palestine because of the Balfour Declaration in 1917 which promised the establishment of a National Home for Jews in the country. In 1936, the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty was signed which gave Egypt some independence. A year later, there was another treaty which led to the closing of the mixed courts where Europeans sought jurisdiction with their legal problems. Other factors included the deteriorating conditions in Palestine. The Arab governments strongly supported the Arab cause. What brought about a decided disadvantage to the Jews in Egypt was the Company Law of 1947 which required companies to have 75% of their office employees and 90% of their workers to be Egyptians. Thus, Jews with foreign citizenship were discharged from their positions and started having problems finding jobs, and a number of them decided to leave the country. To add to their disquiet, a number of riots took place in Cairo and some buildings and a synagogue were burned and a few Jews were killed in pogrom fashion. Conditions were worse when the actual fighting started in Israel, and some of the emotion against the Israelis was transposed against the local Jews accused of being Zionists. The entire history of these unfortunate events has not been judiciously documented. The present article is a meager attempt to reflect on these unhappy episodes of the Jews from Egypt, which is hardly ever mentioned in the current international press and literature.

Egypt now has approximately 100 aging Jews and it is obvious that the community is bound to disappear within a very short time. Jews in Egypt, in the course of more than a century, were able to establish a rich patrimony of community assets, besides individual fortunes. A large number of synagogues with hundreds of Sifrei Torahs and precious libraries were left behind in Egypt and are now neglected since there is no actual viable community. People often hear about what Arabs left in former Palestine, but there is no mention of the wealth that was left behind—to which should be added precious religious artifacts and books—which are bound to deteriorate and ultimately disappear. In our next article, we expect to write about the trials and tribulations encountered by Jews from Egypt during the era that came to be called the Second Exodus.

The material for this article was abstracted and amended from a research paper presented in Jerusalem by Dr. V. Sanua at the Eleventh World Congress of Jewish Studies in 1994. It was printed in the Proceedings, *The History of the Jewish People, Vol. III,* 1994.❑

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SEPHARDIC NATIONAL ALLIANCE

Int'l Assoc. of Jews from Egypt
2416 Quentin Road
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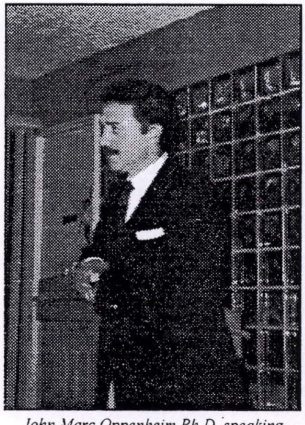
INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JEWS FROM EGYPT

(SPONSORED BY THE SEPHARDIC NATIONAL ALLIANCE)

By Victor D. Sanua Ph.D

On May 13, 1997, the International Association of Jews from Egypt convened at the Sephardic Community Center of Ocean Parkway in preparation for the First International Conference of Jews from Egypt which is scheduled to take place Nov./Dec. 1997 at the Middle East Institute of Columbia University in New York. The meeting was sponsored by the Sephardic National Alliance and hosted by the Cultural Arts Dept. of the SCC.



John Marc Oppenheim Ph.D. speaking about the need of Jewish Egyptian archives.

The conference, and all events leading up to it, have four basic goals: first, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the "Second Exodus" of Jews from Egypt, which began in 1948; when a once-thriving community of almost 80,000 people began to disintergrate; second, to aid efforts to rescue the priceless patrimony (archives, torah scrolls, ritual objects, synagogues, cemeteries, etc.) which Jews were forced to leave behind there; third, to begin recording the history of the Jews from Egypt, both orally and in writing, so that their existence will not be erased from history in the coming generations and will receive an honored place on the scholarly and intellectual map of the world; and fourth, to re-create among this special community the bonds of unity, strength, and comradeship which were shattered when they left Egypt and settled around the globe.

Mr. Gabriel Shehebar (left) asks Mr. Clement Soffer (center) a few questions after his presentation. Victor Sanua PhD (right) organized the evening.

Three speakers and two video documentaries provided an exciting program on the night of May 13. The first documentary, RETURN TO CAIRO, featured a visit to Cairo by Mr. Maurice Mosseri in 1979. Mr. Mosseri visited the sites of his home before his departure for the USA, the Rabbinate, Ecole Sybille and the Bassatin cemetery. Everything he found, he told the audience, was extremely dilapidated. He began to sob as he described the condition of the Bassatin Cemetery where so many parents, grandparents, and relatives of those present were buried; there, where beautiful and well-tended graves once stood, chickens and goats roam around the vandalized stones. He was able to trace the burial spot of his own father-in-law only because he remembered its location close to a big Mausoleum which vandals could not completely destroy or carry away.

Mr. Clement Soffer, a distinguished leader and generous philanthropist in our community, shared with the audience his efforts to preserve and rescue our patrimony, the synagogues, torah scrolls, archives, etc.. He was instrumental in having a wall built

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SEPHARDIC NATIONAL ALLIANCE

Inaugural Meeting Of The International Association Of Jews From Egypt

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around the cemetery to help prevent its further desecration. He recently returned from Egypt after attempting to retrieve the many Torah scrolls which the Jews were forced to leave behind. However, he indicated that the Egyptian Ministry of Culture considers these as "antiques" and Egyptian property and therefore is unwilling to release them. He informed the audience that he is hoping to continue negotiations with the Egyptian government on these scrolls and expressed optimism that they will soon be returned to the hands of their original owners.

Mr. Victor Salama (left) and Mr. Eli Rofe (right) listening to the presentation with the rest of the audience.

Prof. Jean Marc Oppenheim of Columbia University next spoke on the need to begin an archive which will hold the collective memory of the Egyptian Jewish Community, particularly while its older members are still with us to share their stories. In order to start this archive, Dr. Oppenheim plans to begin interviewing individuals in the community this summer (by audiotape and, if possible, by video). Individuals interested in participating in this process, either by offering themselves as interview subjects or by contributing the necessary funds, equipment, and expertise to this expensive but urgent enterprise may call his office at 212-854-1743.

During the latter part of the program Dr. Victor D. Sanua urged members to spread word on these activities to friends, relatives, and associates, and gave an update on plans for the upcoming conference. More than 20 scholars around the world have agreed to participate in it and it is hoped that the papers they present on various subjects can be published in a jubilee volume. With the agreement of Columbia University to host the conference, there is however still an urgent need to gather the funds that will be needed to run the conference properly — including fees and travel expenses for the many speakers from Israel and Europe, accommodations for out-of-town guests, advertising, equipment, a banquet and refreshments, mailing expenses, telephone, clerical help, and most important of all the publication of the proceedings in book form. Members of the audience responded generously to this appeal. A good start was made at this inaugural meeting with a number of pledges. The meeting ended with a showing of a video entitled LES LUIS D'ALEXANDRE. The video was in French. It described the Jewish community in Alexandria. The film was shown originally on Canadian television.

The next meeting of the International Association of Jews from Egypt is scheduled for Sunday, June 22, 1997 at 4 P.M.. at the Sephardic Community Center 1901 Ocean Parkway, Brooklyn. The meeting will be sponsored by the Sephardic National Alliance and hosted by the Cultural Arts Dept. of the SCC. This will be primarily a social meeting, with refreshments and music planned. (See announcement on the following page). Anyone wishing to attend, to get on the Association's mailing list, to volunteer their services or to participate in the organization or in planning the International Conference in any way, is urged to contact Dr. Victor D. Sanua, Tel./Fax 718 339-0337. or write to him at 2416 Quentin Road, Brooklyn, NY 11229. ❑

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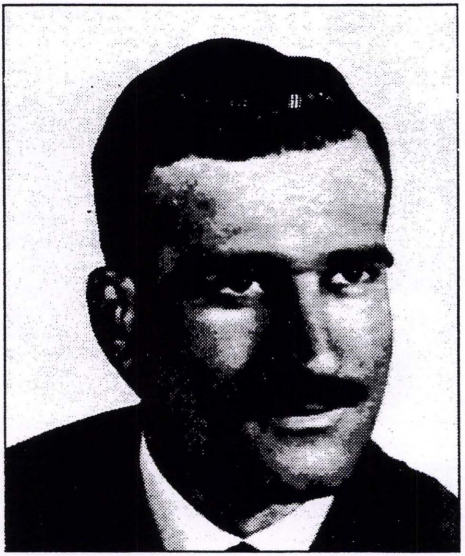
THE STORY OF ELIE COHEN:

AN EGYPTIAN BORN JEW WHO BECAME ISRAEL'S GREATEST SPY

By Victor Sanua, PhD

One most memorable story of spying during the Arab-Israeli conflict is attributed to Elie Cohen who was born in Alexandria, made aliya to Israel and subsequently was selected by the army secret services, for a most daring attempt to infiltrate Syria which at that time was on Golan Heights, and very frequently shelled at Israeli farmers down below. Maurice Mizrahi, the author of L'Egypte et ses Juifs. Le temps révolu (XIX - XXe siecles), reports on the fact that Elie Cohen worked in his business. Mizrahi noticed that Eli took a long time to carry out his duties outside the business. At that time, Cohen was connected with the movement of young Zionists which explained these long absences. In 1949, Cohen and all other Jewish students were expelled from Farouk University and an investigation was carried out because of their Zionist activities. In 1956, he was jailed during the Sinai campaign and subsequently expelled from Egypt in 1957.



Elie Cohen 1924 - 1965.

Elie Cohen settled in Israel and was recruited by the Israeli Intelligence Service. Because of his extremely good memory, good looks and facility with the Arabic language, he was sent on an extraordinary mission and was given a new identification with the name Kamel Amin Tabet.

Elie Cohen was sent to Argentina where he passed as a very successful business man and was able to become very friendly with the Syrian leadership. He became the most eligible bachelor in the community. In 1961, he moved to Syria and in no time developed friendships with the leadership of the country because of the magnificent parties he gave in his home, his expression of great nationalistic feelings, and the availability of funds which he bestowed around. He rented an elegant villa in the Abu-Ramana quarter which looked out on the Syrian Army Headquarters and faced the entrance to a luxurious residence where the Syrian Government put up its official guests. Elie Cohen managed to sit in on the meetings of the national Ba'ath party, was invited several times to the front line where he could observe the fortifications established by the Syrian army and he became friendly with President General Amin El-Hafez. Elie Cohen was able to transmit to Israel all kinds of information which could be used by the Israeli Army. Because of his reports on the Syrian fortifications, the Israeli army was able to capture and secure the Golan Heights within a very short time with a minimal loss of lives.

Elie Cohen was uncovered only after he accompanied Egyptian General Ali Amer on an inspection trip to the Syrian Israeli border. Elie Cohen, in a photo taken during this visit, was identified as the person who had been arrested while he lived in Egypt. Eli was jailed in Damascus, and after a long trial during which he did not get an appropriate defense, he received the death sentence by hanging. Despite many

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THE STORY OF ELIE COHEN...

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efforts to persuade the Syrian government to commute the death sentence, including the intervention of Pope VI and the heads of the French, Belgian, and Canadian governments, Cohen was publicly hanged in the Al Marjeh Square (Martyr's) of Damascus before an excited mob. As E. Ben Hanan pointed out at the end of his book, *Our Man in Damascus,* an excellent recount of the story, Elie Cohen was a hero. Even his enemies had to admit it. Cohen's brave deed has not been forgotten in Israel. Recently, the Ministry of Culture of the Israeli Government commemorated the 32nd year following his death.□

Victor D. Sanua, Ph.D. is a research Professor in the Department of Psychology at St. John's University. You can write to him c/ o Sephardic National Alliance P.O.Box 290-642, Brooklyn, NY 11229-0642. *Some of the material which was used in this article was taken from the book by E. Ben Hanan, Elie Cohn, Our Man in Damascus, A.D.M. Publishing House Israel 1967.*

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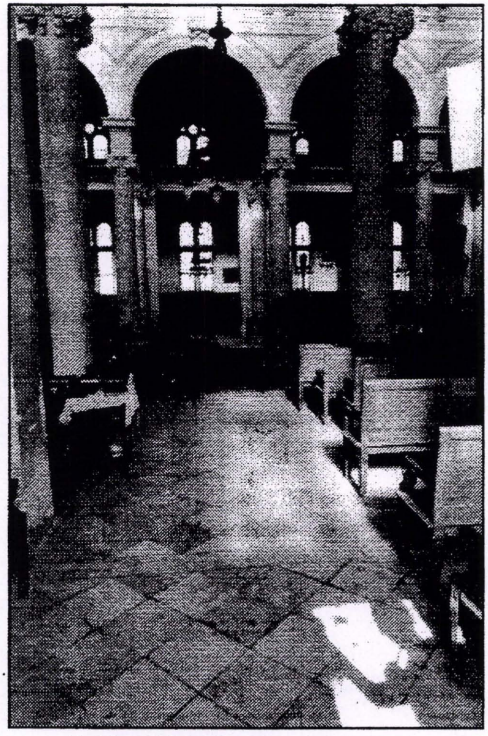
THE SECOND MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JEWS FROM EGYPT

By Victor D. Sanua Ph.D.

On June 22, 1997, the International Association of Jews from Egypt convened for a second time at the Sephardic Community Center of Ocean Parkway. Inspite of the heat and torrential rain, attendance at this second meeting was quite high. The meeting was primarily to continue our discussions for the arrangements of the International Conference of Jews from Egypt which will be held at The Middle East Institute of Columbia University on December 3-4, 1997.

Prior to the discussion, there was a video presentation of The Arabs: A Living History, "The City Victorious" (Landmark Films Inc.) It started with the life of the peasantry which shows that they still use the *sakieh*, archimedes screws, etc. in agriculture. Then a short historical background about Cairo which was modernized by Khedive Ismail, who received European royalty during the opening of the Suez Canal. His excesses in spending money led to the Suez Canal being taken over by European powers. The second part of the video showed the bustling, overpopulated city of Cairo which had 10 million people at the time that the video was taken. Today, it is reported that the population exceeds 14 million people. It seems that farmers are abandoning their farms to find jobs in Cairo which has caused such a concentration of the population. The way of life of the farm was carried over in the big city causing social problems.



The Eliyahu Hanavi Synagogue, Alexandria, Egypt.

After the video showing, there was a presentation by Dr. Albertde Vidas, editor of Erensia Sephardi and of the Bulletin Del'Amicale Alexandrie. Speaking of the Conference of Jews from Egypt, which we are organizing, Dr. de Vidas asked the audience to help in this worthwhile endeavor by providing the necessary resources. His publications are very important to aid in achieving the goals of promoting and preserving our heritage.

Dr. de Vidas, who was born in Alexandria, went on to describe the diverse and rich heritage of Jews from Alexandria. He cited as an example, the Synagogue Eliahou Hanabi, where he indicated that there were several rooms that catered to the many different cultural groups that comprised the community. Among

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THE SECOND MEETING OF THE...

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them, he included Jews coming from Syria, Lebanon, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Greece, Corfu, Persia, and a few Ashkenazi Jews. In the main sanctuary, services were conducted in the tradition of Spanish-Portugese ritual. While each group had their individual language, learned in their country of origin, there was one common language that bound all these various groups together. That was French since that language dominated the cultural and intellectual atmosphere of Alexandria.

This was followed by a long discussion about the Association's need for financial support, and urging the audience to be active in fund-raising particularly to make it possible to invite scholars from Israel and France, to establish a Hospitality Committee, to provide accommodations for out-of-town speakers, and to provide refreshments or catering for the meeting. Mrs. Lillian Hazan, to our great and pleasant surprise, brought in a number of trays of Middle Eastern pastries. They were very much appreciated by everyone during the recreational part of the meeting.

Dr. Sanua called upon anyone with computer skills to volunteer to help in the Conference and the organization in general. He also emphasized the need to have a publicity committee whose function would be to promote the conference among their friends and relatives in the U.S.A. and abroad. Dr. Sanua expressed the hope that another International Conference could be arranged to take place in Israel, and a third one in Egypt when conditions are more propitious for such a memorable return. Other objectives would be to have space available which could serve as a gathering point for archives, storage of pictures, letters, videotapes, etc. The last but rather ambitious objective would be to have a center where Jews from Egypt could meet for recreational and educational purposes. We would like to express our appreciation to Mrs. Sheila Schweky, Chair of the Cultural Arts Department of the Sephardic Community Center for hosting our meetings. Anyone desiring to participate in this exciting project is encouraged to contact Dr. Victor Sanua. ❑

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SEPHARDIC HISTORY

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"Egypt For The Egyptians":

The Story Of Abu Naddara (James Sanua) 1839 -1912
A Jewish Egyptian Patriot

By Victor D. Sanua, Ph.D.

While it is well known among scholars that Jews made many significant contributions to the commercial, industrial and intellectual development of modern Egypt, very few of them were active in the political life of the country. As is common in Jewish history, they frequently did not feel themselves to be a full part of the land, for Jews who had lived in Egypt for centuries existed largely in self-governing communities. By the 1900s, the majority of Jews were those who had arrived in the wake of opportunities opened by the 1870s construction of the Suez Canal and thus had relatively shallow roots in the country. A specific attraction for these immigrants was the so-called "Capitulations" laws, which permitted these Jews to keep a European nationality and be subject only to foreign courts. Under such circumstances, political activity among the native population appeared either superfluous or outright dangerous.

A major exception to this, however, was the life of the writer, playwright, linguist, satirist, poet, journalist, publisher, political cartoonist, religious critic and revolutionary James (Ya'Qub) Sanua, known by his nickname "Abu Naddara," the man with the eyeglasses, and sometimes by the title "The Egyptian Moliere." Sanua laid the foundation of the modern Egyptian theater, a forerunner to its well-known film industry in which, scholars have noted, Jews were well-represented. He was highly criticized for daring to write his 32 plays in the colloquial, rather than traditional classical; Arabi championed the common people and did not hesitate to write criticisms of Egypt's upper class and of the policies of its ruler, the Khedive Ismail (1830-1895). The corrupt and extravagant Khedive, Sanua charged, was despoiling their beloved country and all but selling it into the hands of the British, or "perfide Albion" as he sometimes called them. Sanua's political activities eventually brought upon him two assassination attempts by the Khedive's men and permanent exile to Paris in 1878.

"Abu Naddara" was born in Cairo to a well-connected Italian Sephardic family. He was raised as a Jew by his father Raphael Sanua, who had been born in Italy and ironically went on to become a valued advisor to the Egyptian royal family. In addition to his Jewish upbringing and fluency in eight languages, Abu Naddara became so well-versed in the Koran and Islamic lore that he earned himself the title "sheikh," a factor which led to rumors of his conversion to

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Egypt For The Egyptians

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Islam and no doubt eased his way in the surrounding Muslim world.

As a youngster he was sent, at the Prince's expense, to study in Leghorn, Italy, where he remained for three years and had his first taste of modern nationalism through exposure to the Italian *Risorgimento* ("resurgence"). This movement, led by such famed leaders as Mazzini and Garibaldi, from approximately 1815 to 1870 aimed for the unification of a fragmented Italy and its liberation from foreign rule. Egypt itself, from the 1850s onward, was experiencing the gradual encroachment of Great Britain (it formally occupied the country in 1882) and, like many, Abu Naddara was disturbed by these developments. When he returned to Egypt, he brought the ideals of nationalist aspiration with him.

Abu Naddara himself was never a military figure; his nationalist battles were fought on the grounds of culture, language and writing. His major contribution to Arabic literature was the innovation of writing in common, colloquial Arabic, which had tremendous appeal to the Egyptian masses. Most writing at that time was in classical Arabic, which could only be understood by the very well-educated. Criticism and parody of the Khedive and of the inequalities of Egyptian life were a common theme in his 32 plays, some of them adapted directly from the work of the great French playwright Moliere (1622-1673).

Abu Naddara was formally expelled from Egypt on June 22, 1878 and he became a resident and a great admirer of France. He continued to write until the end of his life along similar themes from wherever he happened to find himself. He earned his living by giving lectures and writing articles and columns for the world press.

He visited Turkey twice and was decorated by Sultan Abdel Hamid (1842 - 1918). In 1900, the Shah of Persia conferred upon him the title, Chaer-el-Molk (Poet of the Empire). While Sanua sought Turkey's support for the desirability of an evacuation of the British forces from Egypt, the Sultan was interested in Sanua's contribution in fostering a Pan-Islamic plan since this might assist to drive the British out. Thus he tried to bring together the two governments, France and Turkey, in a coordinated effort against Britain.

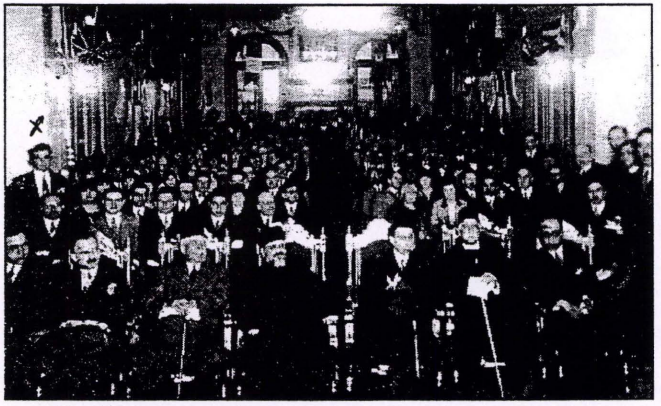
During the last years of his life, he became disillusioned with France with the signing of the "Anglo-French entente" in 1904 where, by mutual arrangement, France would not interfere with Britain's handling of Egypt. Another source of his frustration was the "Young Turk" revolution of 1908, which aimed to sweep away the imperial cobwebs and which reverberated among the entire Ottoman world. Its leaders showed no interest in the nationalist aspirations of the Egyptians. These two discouraging developments helped lead the almost 70-year old journalist to retire from political life, but they could not erase the contribution he had made to Egypt's movement for political independence.

Abu Naddara died in 1912... until a collected volume of his plays was published in Beirut in 1963. ❑

International Conference
On The Jews In Modern Egypt
December 4th, 1997 — The Middle East Institute Of Columbia University

By Victor D. Sanua Ph.D.

A once-in-a-lifetime event for our Sephardic community is almost upon us. The ***First International Conference On The Jews In Modern Egypt***, which will gather visitors and scholars from around the world in commemoration of the beginnings of our "Second Exodus" will take place on the campus of Columbia University in New York on Thursday, Dec. 4, 1997 from 9 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Our location will be at the prestigious Middle East Institute of the University (in the International Affairs Building) at 420 West 118th St. off Amsterdam Avenue.



May 1930 Inauguration of the U.U.J.J. (Union Universelle de la Jeunesse Juive-Universal Union of Jewish Youth.) Chief Rabbi Haim Nahoum is seated in the middle with N. Mosseri, founder of U.U.J.J.; the Governor of Cairo; Youssef Cattaui Pacha. Finance Minister of Egypt; and consuls from France and Italy. Also present is Moise Sanua, Secretary of Rabbi Nahoum.

Further activities besides the academic program include a reception on Wednesday Dec. 3, 1997 at 8 P.M. at the Sephardic Community Center 1901 Ocean Parkway, Brooklyn, NY and on Friday morning, also at the SCC, a program entitled "A la Recherche des Temps Perdus: Reminiscences by members of the Egyptian Jewish Community in America." At this time all Jews with any origins in Egypt will be invited to share their memories of the country, their experiences in leaving, and their adaptation in the host countries which received them.

World-renowned scholars who will be attending our conference include Prof. Yoram Meital of Ben Gurion University in Beer Sheba, who recently published a book on the Jewish sites of Egypt; Dr. Ya'acov Meron, of Israel's Ministry of Justice, who has studied the reasons why the Jews of Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries needed to uproot themselves in this century; Dr. Sasson Somekh, Director of the Israel Academic Research Center which is located in Cairo since the signing of the peace treaty with Israel; and Prof. Jacob Landau of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and this year a Visiting Professor at Princeton University. We will hear an address written by Jacques Hassoun, MD, of Paris.

From the USA, we shall have the opportunity to meet Prof. Joel Beinin of Stanford University and Walter Zenner of SUNY, Albany, a specialist on the Syrian Jewish community — many of whose members made their home in Egypt early in the 20th century.

The conference proceedings, lectures and private stories will be published afterward in book form.

The conference is being promoted by the *Sephardic National Alliance*, an organization whose purpose is to insure the survival of the Sephardic heritage and customs by promoting educational, social and cultural programs. Both events at the

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International Conference

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Sephardic Community Center are hosted by the Cultural Arts Department headed by Mrs. Sheila Schweky.

The registration fee for this celebration of our community, prompted by the 50th anniversary of the beginnings of our mass Exodus, is $45.00 includes the three days' events— payable to the "Sephardic National Alliance/ I.A.J.E." and mailed to 2416 Quentin Road, Brooklyn, NY 11229. If you are able to contribute more, donations may be made in the name or in honor of a family member or loved one. (All donations are tax deductible.) Larger funds are urgently needed as this event approaches. We want to make this event the biggest and best it can be, one which you will remember for years to come and which will help to properly preserve our heritage for our children and grandchildren while members of our community who left Egypt are still alive.

The conference can be reached by the #1 or #9 subway, stopping at 116th St.; if there will be enough members from Brooklyn interested, we shall also arrange for group bus transportation from the Center so that you can travel to the conference in safety and comfort in the company of your friends.

Anyone with questions about the conference, or who would like to offer home hospitality, volunteer their time, share their experiences at our "Memories" program, or further this cause in any way, please contact Conference Chairman Dr. Victor D. Sanua at 718-339-0337 by phone or fax, c

Hope to see you at these events! □

Prof. Victor Sanua is Research Professor in the Department of Psychology of St. John's University.

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First Conference On The "Second Exodus From Egypt"

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JEWS FROM EGYPT
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, DECEMBER 4, 1997

By Marianne Sanua, Ph.D

Introduction

Every year Jews around the world gather to tell the story of their freedom from slavery and the first Exodus from Egypt. Yet few are aware that barely fifty years ago, a cosmopolitan, largely French-speaking community of almost 80,000 Jews from various backgrounds flourished there. Far from being slaves, they were among the most wealthy, urbanized and educated of all the Jewish communities of the Middle East and played an integral role in the development of the modern Egyptian state.

Jacob Landau, PhD
Hebrew University (Israel)
(Chair)

Yoram Meital, PhD
Ben Gurion Univeristy (Israel)
Speaker

Jean-Marc Oppenheim, PhD
(Speaker, Organizer, and Committee Member)
Columbia University

Daniel Kutner
(Israeli Consul of Academic Affairs in USA)

In the 20th century, a "Second Exodus" including violence, mass arrests, impoverishment, confiscation and deportation, brought about the disintegration of this once-proud community. Approximately 40,000 went to Israel, 8,000 to the United States, and the rest to various countries around the globe. Today not more than 100 very elderly Jews remain in the cities of Cairo and Alexandria. The rest of the community and their descendants are scattered around the world in such places as Israel, the US, Canada, France, Italy, England, Switzerland, Brazil, and Australia.

Professor Albert de Vidas presenting an award of "l'Amicale Alexandrie" to Professor Victor D. Sanua.

Organization of the Conference

Yet the Jews of Egypt will not forget, nor will others allow them to be forgotten. The Egyptian Consul was only one of over one hundred guests from around the world who gathered at Columbia University's Middle East Institute on Dec. 4, 1997 to pay tribute in this unique community in the First International Conference on the Jews of Modern Egypt. The Conference was organized by Professor Victor D. Sanua (St. John's University) President of the International Association of Jews from Egypt, which he started about two years ago. In his opening address, he described his reasons for founding the IAJE and the decision to hold a major conference on the subject. The event was held at the Middle East Institute of Columbia University, headed by Dr. Reeva Simon. Professor Jean-Marc Oppenheim, played a major role in coordinating the conference and was also one of the presenters. The Sephardic National Alliance (Institute for Promoting Sephardic History and Customs) sponsored and publicized the conference.

At least 80 percent of the attendees and four of the speakers were Jews from Egypt who were either already members or who had responded to appeals spread by letters, synagogue announcements, newspapers, and e-mail. (The others were scholars or students not themselves of Egyptian

First Conference On The "Second Exodus"

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(From left to right) Panel of speakers - Sasson Somekh, PhD (Israel), Albert De Vidas, PhD (Conn), Yaacov Meron, Doctor in Law (Israel), Ada Aharoni, PhD (Israel)

origin, but who were interested in the subject.)

The gathering was part academic, as attendees listened to papers presented by leading scholars from Israel and the United States, and part reunion, as they chatted in French, ate, sang, cried and laughed, exchanged addresses, and reminisced about the days of their youth in a faraway land.

The Program

The gathering had begun the previous evening, Dec. 3, 1997, with a reception held at the Sephardic Community Center on Ocean Parkway in Brooklyn, New York, attended by almost 70 people. Guests were surprised and thrilled when Wael Gad, the Egyptian Consul, came to address them. Some initial discomfort quickly gave way to joy as this group of Jews gathered around him, greeting him with an animated exchange in Arabic. During the reception Mrs. Bonnie Gurewitsch, an archivist at the Museum of Jewish Heritage, gave a talk on the importance of preserving artifacts and urging the group to donate or lend any material of importance they might have to the Museum.

The academic program began at 9 a.m. the next morning at Columbia's spacious Dag Hammarskjold lounge in the International Affairs building, and continued throughout the day. Each paper was concluded with a lively and sometimes emotional question-and-answer session and comments from the audience: attendees also socialized and conversed with one another during breaks and at lunchtime.

(Standing-L to R) Victor Lipkin (Paris), Albert Barsano, Wael Gad (Egyptian Consul), Emile Cohen, Blanche Sacks (Baltimore), Chaya Romano.

The organizing committee and speakers joining the participants. (Standing - L to R) Dr. Victor Sanua, Dr. Ada Aharoni (Israel), Stella Sanua, Solomon Mosseri, Elie Mosseri, Victor Lipkin (Paris).

In the evening the speakers, organizers and invited guests enjoyed a sumptuous catered kosher Middle Eastern dinner at the Columbia Middle East Institute, complete with the region's famous delectable pastries. At the dinner plans were already being laid to hold next year's gathering in Israel, where the majority of Jews from Egypt made their homes after 1948. Anyone wishing to join the International Association of Jews from Egypt and participate in its further activities is urged to contact Dr. Sanua by phone or fax at 718-339-0337 or e-mail Sanua@stjohns.edu.

The International Association of Jews from Egypt welcomes contributions from interested donors as the Association can continue to bind Jews from Egypt from all over the world, only with their support.

At the end of the conference, Professor Albert deVidas, president of l'Amicale d'Alexandrie

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First Conference On The "Second Exodus"

At the end of the conference, Professor Albert deVidas, president of l'Amicale d'Alexandrie awarded a plaque to Professor Victor D. Sanua which recognized his efforts to preserve the patrimony of Jews from Egypt.

A videotape of the conference is available and a grant to publish the proceedings has been graciously given by the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation.

Announcement Of The International Association Of Jews From Egypt

The International Association of Jews from Egypt will continue with the third phase of their conference entitled, "A La Recherche Des Temps Perdus; Reminiscenses by members of the Egyptian Jewish community in America." Individuals interested in reporting on their experiences should get in touch with professor Victor D. Sanua at (718) 339-0337. There will be monthly presentations on the third Sunday of every month from 3:30 - 5:30 p.m. The first session began on December 21, 1997.□

Dr. Victor D. Sanua is a Research Professor in the Department of Psychology at St. John's University.

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SEPHARDIC HISTORY

Haim Nahoum Effendi (1872-1960): Sephardic Chief Rabbi Of Egypt

By Victor D. Sanua, Ph.D.

One of the most eminent rabbis in the Middle East was Haim Nahum Effendi — a scholar, lawyer, linguist and diplomat, who served as Chief Sephardic Rabbi of Egypt for over thirty-five years from 1925 until his death in 1960. During this period, Rabbi Nahoum was witness both to a vibrant and successful community of 80,000 Jews living in Egypt and also to the community's disintegration after 1948 when government hostility, violence, economic restrictions, confiscation and deportation caused most Jews to leave. To this day he is remembered with honor and affection by those who were privileged to know him.

H.E. Haim Nahoum Effendi
Cheif Rabbi of Egypt (1925 -1960)

Rabbi Nahoum (the title "Effendi" was a Turkish title of honor within the Ottoman Empire), who was born in 1872 near Izmir in Turkey, received an extraordinarily broad education before ascending to the Chief Rabbinate. After being sent by his parents to receive a traditional religious education at a yeshiva in the holy city of Tiberias, he later went to a French Lycee for his secondary education and then obtained a degree in Muslim law in the Turkish capital city of Constantinople (now Istanbul). Thereafter, he traveled to Paris in order to attend rabbinical school and to receive his ordination. Simultaneously with his rabbinical studies, he attended the Sorbonne's School of Oriental Languages, where he perfected his linguistic abilities and also studied history and philosophy.

Upon his return to Istanbul, Rabbi Nahoum occupied various teaching positions including an instructorship at the Turkish Military School. There, he became familiar with the leaders of the "Young Turk" revolution, a movement which sought to modernize and strengthen the centuries-old Ottoman Turkish Empire. He was invited to serve as the Chief Rabbi of Turkey and was an adviser to the Turkish delegation during peace negotiations with European powers following World War I.

In 1923, Rabbi Nahoum received an invitation from Moise Cattaoui Pacha, head of the Jewish community in Cairo, to become the Chief Rabbi of Egypt.

The rabbi was appointed to serve as a Senator in the nation's Legislative Assembly and helped to found the Royal Academy of the Arabic language. One of his major scholarly works, commissioned by the King himself, was to translate into French all of the Ottoman Turkish firmans (Imperial decrees and laws) which had been sent to the rulers of Egypt since the 16th century when Egypt had first passed under Ottoman imperial rule.

The history of the Egyptian Jewish community was of special interest to him. In 1944 he helped to reconstitute the Société d'Études Historiques Juives d'Egypte (Society for the Historical Study of the Jews of Egypt) and served as its honorary head.

Rabbi Nahoum's dream of documenting the contemporary history of Egypt's Jews found its voice in the recent International Conference organized by the International Association of Jews from Egypt. With the support of communities in the US and around the world, it is possible that his dream might

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Haim Nahoum Effendi (1872-1960)...

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yet be realized.

From Egypt Rabbi Nahoum was also active in international affairs, establishing contacts between Jews throughout the world. Early in his rabbinical career he visited Ethiopia and, convinced that the "Falashas" were Jews, arranged to have a few brought to Egypt and educated there. He was also eager to foster future Jewish leadership and sent young men to study at the Sephardic Rabbinical Seminary located on the Island of Rhodes which at that time belonged to Italy. Several of these former students are still pursuing active scholarly work to this day.

The community of which Rabbi Nahoum served as religious leader started to feel uneasy and unwelcome with the rise of Arab nationalism, the rebellion against colonial British authority in Egypt, and the support of Egypt for the Arabs of Palestine. Under the terms of the "Company Law" passed in 1947, at least 75 percent of office employees and 90 percent of the workers in any business in the country had to hold Egyptian nationality. This caused an employment crisis for Egypt's Jews, who were an important part of the nation's business life. Thousands were fired from their jobs or unable to find work and, being unable to earn a living, were forced to leave the country.

While all foreigners were targets of Egyptian displeasure in the late 1940s, Jews fell under especially dark clouds of suspicion with the outbreak of hostilities in Palestine. The Zionist movement and Zionist youth groups, which sought to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine, had indeed gained many adherents in Cairo and Alexandria, but Jews found themselves accused whether they had been active in the movement or not. Large numbers of individuals were arrested and interned for alleged Zionist activity. Jewish businesses were sequestered, Jewish bank accounts frozen, and exit visas could only be approved by a special government Agency for Jewish Affairs.

During these eventful years, as Rabbi Nahoum witnessed the sorrows of his flock, he sought to intercede and to minimize the impact of all these rules with the Egyptian authorities. He himself had to tread very carefully in the face of government opposition, fearful that the entire Jewish community might suffer because of his words or actions. Rabbi Nahum was frequently asked to make statements denouncing the Zionists. During the few times he complied with such orders, he was sure to make his statements as short and as vague as possible. During Israel's War of Independence, he was also asked to have prayers recited at all of Egypt's synagogues for the victory of Egyptian forces. These orders he refused to follow at all.

From the mid-forties onward Haim Nahoum was slowly losing his eyesight and eventually became totally blind. At first this did not affect his determination to resist hard measures against the Jews and to carry on his religious duties as best he could. He remained in his seat at the Naar Shamayim, the major synagogue of Cairo on Adly Pacha Street (also known as Temple Ismailiah.) He was still able to give long quotations from rabbinical sources from memory.

By 1960 Rabbi Haim Nahoum Effendi was a broken man. His own physical vicissitudes and distress at the irremediable decline of the Egyptian Jewish community had taken their toll. He died that year at the age of 88 and was buried at the Bassatin cemetery where a special Mausoleum was built for him. At his funeral thousands of people including Muslims and Christians came to pay their respects to this remarkable man. His remains do not rest in peace, however. By the 1990s, when barely 100 Jews remain in the whole of Egypt, much of the cemetery has been desecrated and squatters have taken up residence in the great rabbi's tomb.

The legacy of Rabbi Haim Nahoum Effendi remains, however. Few rabbis have attained such eminence in the world of Jewish history. Not only was he a great Chief Rabbi in Turkey and Egypt; because of his political wisdom, his outstanding erudition, his wonderful personality, his contributions to international Jewish causes and Jewish education, and his courage in trying to alleviate Jewish suffering, he deserves recognition from all of us who come from that region. May his memory be for a blessing. ❑

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The Contributions Of Sephardic Jews

To The Economic And Industrial Development Of Egypt

By Victor D. Sanua, PhD

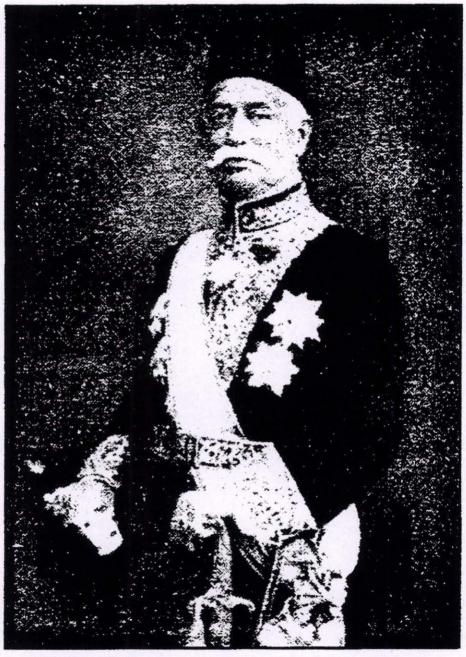
For almost 400 years, Egypt was a province of the Ottoman Empire. Mohammed Ali Pasha, who was a former officer of the Turkish Army, became Viceroy of Egypt early in the 19th. Century (1805-1848) and established a dynasty of kings, the last one being King Farouk.

In his efforts to modernize the country, Mohammed Ali Pasha invited foreigners to settle in Egypt in order to contribute to its development. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 increased the influx of foreigners, and especially Jews who lived in other areas of the Ottoman Empire, particularly Turkey, and Syria. By the end of the 19th. Century, there were scores of rich Jewish families, a phenomenon which did not exist in other Middle East countries. The earliest known rich family was that of the Cattauis who are believed to have come from Holland. They were the first Jews to leave the Haret el Yahoud (Jewish quarter) and to live in Shubra which at that time was a new suburb of Cairo. Other areas where Jews built and moved include Maadi, Zamalek, Heliopolis, and Garden City, Roda, Giza, etc..

The oldest established families functioned as "Sarafim", money changers, coin testers, and collectors of taxes. The transition to regular banking made it possible for them to reach high positions in the Egyptian Government. Jews contributed to the development of the Egyptian National Bank of Egypt, Egyptian Credit Foncier, Misr Bank, and the Mosseris established their own bank, J.N. Mosseri et Compagnie. These banks assisted in international trade, land development, building of industrial plants, infrastructure, etc.

Sephardi Jews coming to Egypt during the latter part of the 19th. Century and early 20th. Century went into commerce and started opening department stores. It is to be noted that marriages among the wealthy Jews tended to be frequent. While many of these Sephardi Jews, were sophisticated in high finance, they included a respectable number of scholars, many having attended European universities.

Besides focusing on the development of the economy of the country, the major families presided over Jewish communal affairs, in Cairo and Alexandria and were involved in philanthropic activities. Because of close relationships with European businessmen, they were able to persuade them to invest in Egyptian enterprises. In spite of their small number, Jews dominated the financial and economic life of Egypt. Other nationalities were involved in this development, the French, Belgian, British, Greeks, Italian, Armenians, etc. also participated in this development. Each group had a specialty, but banking was dominated by Jews. During World War I and World II, Jews developed local industries which contributed to the national income and created jobs for Egyptians. As a recognition for their efforts, many members of these Jewish families were given the title of "Bey" or "Pasha" by the sovereigns of Egypt.



H.E. Joseph A. Cattaui, President of the Jewish community in Cairo, Finance Minister and Senator in Egypt.

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The Contributions Of Sephardic Jews

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The Cattaui Family — One of the first known Cattaui was Youssef (Joseph) who wrote two volumes on the history of world and a history of Egypt in Hebrew. The family was involved in the financing of the railway system in upper Egypt and public transportation. Joseph Aslan Cattaui, (1861-1942) who studied engineering in France contributed to the development of the sugar industry. He was a member of the Egyptian delegation to London to negotiate the independence of Egypt. He published in French a book defending the economic policy of Khedive Ismail who, because of his extravagance, almost ruined the country. He was made finance Minister of Egypt in 1924, and later appointed as a Senator and presided over the Jewish community in Cairo. His son Rene Cattaui took over the management of the sugar refinery of Hawandiah, 25 kilometers from Cairo. I had the opportunity to visit this huge and massive plant which refined the molasses arriving mostly from plants in upper Egypt. René Cattaui, who wrote a 3-volume history of Egypt under Mohammed Ali, tried to reestablish with Rabbi Haim Nahum Effendi the Société d'Etudes Historique des Juifs d'Egypte. In June 14, 1944, he wrote a letter to the Hebrew University asking for assistance in their efforts:

Dear Sir,

I have the honor to inform you that the Historical Society of Jews from Egypt has been reestablished. In the course of our recent discussion, it was decided that among other activities, to have an annual scientific review dedicated to the history of Jews in Egypt... (translated from the French) Unfortunately, a few years later with the political situation deteriorating for the Jews, this dream was never accomplished in Egypt. This task of writing a yearly history of Jews of Egypt was never realized. Documenting the history of Egypt was recently undertaken by The International Association of Jews from Egypt which had a very successful conference at The Middle East Institute of Columbia University in December 4th, 1997, where scholars from around the world gave papers on Egyptian Jewry. The proceedings of the Conference will be available in the Fall. Rene Cattaui Bey was the last of the Cattauis to preside over the Jewish Community. Members of the Cattaui family had presided over Jewish communal affairs for almost 100 years.

The Cicurel Family — Moreno Cicurel a Ladino-speaking Jew from Izmir, Turkey came to Egypt in the latter part of the 19th. Century. After working in a store owned by a Jew, Hannaux called, "Au Petit Bazar", he established Les Grands Magasins Cicurel near La Place de l'Opera, which was in the heart of the city. In time with the assistance of his three sons, it became the largest department store in Cairo and other cities. They opened another chain of stores, Oreco, where the prices were moderate. Salvator is better known since he took over the presidency of the Jewish community of Cairo in 1946 from Rene Cattaui. Salvator Cicurel was the last president of the Jewish community. He was the head of the Egyptian Chamber of Commerce and was involved in other economic activities. He was also a distinguished sportsman. He was a champion fencer and golfer, and was selected to be the captain of the Egyptian fencing team at the Olympic games of 1928 in Amsterdam where they reached the finals. His niece married Mendes-France who became prime-Minister of France. Other major rich Jews in commerce include Douec, Haim, Mizrahi, Najar, de Picciotto, Romano, Aghion. etc. It is to be noted that the name of the department store, Cicurel is still in use to-day. Other well-known department stores with Jewish ownership include Chemla, David Ades, Benzion, Gattegno, Simon Artz (Port-Said), Chalons, Morums, Pontremoli, etc.

The Mosseri Family — They came from Livorno, Italy and established the well-known Bank Mosseri. One member of the family, Victor Moise Mosseri, an agronomist by training, contributed a great deal to the development of cotton by saving the crops from parasites. Eli N. Mosseri reorganized the Egyptian Cement Company. Joseph Vita Mosseri Bey founded the Josy film company in 1915 which developed into the largest company in the Egyptian film industry.

Other rich families include the *Suares,* which had an important square in Cairo named Suares Square; the *Menasce* family established the Menasce Free Schools, one member of family was elected president of the Alexandria Jewish community; the *Rollo* family were involved in the Helwan railway, Robert Rollo was director of the National Bank of Egypt.

Joseph de Picciotto Bey — contributed periodically to al-Muqattam, where his economic and financial studies were well received; *Eli Politi* founded and directed l'INFORMATEUR FINANCIER ET COMMERCIAL and played a part in the establishment of the daily al-Misr which became one of the most important Arabic-language papers; *Joseph Smouha* was responsible for the construction of Smouha City built over reclaimed marshes. He is also well-known

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The Contributions Of Sephardic Jews

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having built a race-track in Alexandria.

Jewish businesses began losing their dominant position with the rise of nationalism and the conflict in Palestine. In time, many of the Board members of industrial and agricultural organization were replaced with Muslim boards of directors. Between 1948 and 1957, Jewish businesses suffered because of mass arrests, internment in camps, confiscation of property. All those rich families left Egypt during those eventful years, and many of them settled in Switzerland and Southern part of France. Today, there are approximately 100 aging Jews in Egypt, the remnants of a population that was 80,000 strong that was a great asset to the country.

If any of the readers know the whereabouts of the descendants of these families, please contact the writer. ❑

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Jewish Life In Alexandria

Ancient & Modern Times

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By Victor D. Sanua Ph.D

About 15 cities in the world have the name of Alexandria, but the most famous one is the Alexandria of Egypt (Al Iskandaryah in Arabic). It was founded by Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.E.). It was the capital of Egypt for more than a thousand years since its foundation. It is a major seaport on the Mediterranean which lies about 130 miles north west of Cairo.

Temple Eliahou Hanabi in Alexandria.

One of the most beautiful sights in modern Alexandria is its fine sea coast road completed in 1934. It used to be called , "La Corniche" and now it is called Al-Geish (Army) street. The beautiful beaches attracted visitors from all over the country. The most popular beaches were Stanley Bay and Sidi Bishr. During the summer months, there were special trains, "trains de mer", which enabled the Cairenes (Cairo) to travel to Alexandria during the weekends. There was a kind of boyish rivalry between Alexandrines and Cairenes. Cairenes considered them to be mostly playboys, while thinking of themselves as more serious individuals. On the other hand, they complained that Cairenes dirtied their beaches and were responsible for increasing prices during the good summer season. Cairenes had a song about this friendly rivalry. If anyone remembers the words, please contact the writer.

Alexandria In Ancient Times

Alexandria attracted Jews in great number because it became a great center of commerce and learning.

Ptolemy I, a leading general of Alexander the Great, founded the famous library. In the course of the centuries, Jews prospered under benevolent rulers, but were the subject of expulsion and even extermination by unsympathetic rulers. (Or by plain antisemitic antagonism of the non-Jewish population.)

Around 100 years B.C.E. Alexandria became the largest city of Jews in the world. They created their own version of Hellenistic culture. That is the time when the Bible was translated into Greek, *The Septuagint*. It became very important because it was translated from texts that do not exist any more. During this period, there were many Jewish philosophers.

The best known philosopher of the time was Philo. In 40 B.C.E. which is the only date known about him , he was sent to Rome to represent the Jews of Alexandria in seeking the restoration of privileges which were lost because they had refused to accept an imperial edict to worship Caligula. The Romans under Augustus occupied Egypt around 31 B.C.E. after the relationships between Julius Ceasar and Mark Anthony with Cleopatra. Mark Anthony and Cleopatra were defeated at the battle of Actium and defeated again in Alexandria.

The Jews under the Ptolemys enjoyed a great

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Jewish Life In Alexandria

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Dr. Moise Ventura
Chief Rabbi of Alexandria (1938 - 1948)

degree of freedom and were able to build many synagogues in Alexandria. However, some of their privileges were taken away by the Romans who provided citizenship only to the Greek population. The efforts of Jews to get citizenship infuriated the Greeks and a series of confrontations developed, but the Romans suppressed a revolt. In 66 C.E., Jews of Alexandria influenced by the war in Palestine against the Romans rebelled also against the Romans. The revolt was crushed and according to Josephus (Wars, 2:497) 50,000 Jews were killed. Historians believe that he exaggerated the number of Jews killed during that period.

There were some Jews in Alexandria in the 7th. Century when the Arabs under General Amr conquered Egypt (639-642 C.E.), 20 years after the rise of Islam, but the exact number of Jews living in Alexandria is not known. Later Egypt was conquered again by Arabs led by the Fatimide rulers.

Mamelelukes (Arab Slaves) And The Turkish Period:

The Mamelukes were originally slaves brought to Egypt by the Fatimide caliphs in the 10th Century to be trained as soldiers. In time those soldiers became rulers of the country (1250-1517). Jews under the Fatimide rulers and Mamelukes did not fare well. It was during that period that the pact of OMAR was established, making all non-Muslims protected minorities "dhimmis" with inferior rights and status. They were second class citizens.

However, with the conquest of Egypt by the Turks in 1517, their status improved. It is a well-known fact that the Jews of Spain who were expelled during the Inquisition in 1492 were very well received by the Turks. In 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte conquered Egypt defeating the Mameluke forces near the Pyramids.

Alexandria During The 18th Century:

When Mohammed Ali, an Albanian officer in the Turkish army became the ruler of Egypt, he weakened the hold that Turkey had on Egypt. Mohammed Ali opened the doors of the country to Europeans and Jews for the purpose of modernizing the country.

Alexandria In Modern Times:

The Jewish community administration was headed successively by three members of the Menasce family who were rich, cosmopolitan and Sephardic. Most of them were educated in Europe, and made their fortunes in international banking. They are well-known for establishing Jewish schools in Alexandria. Other rich Sephardic Jews of Alexandria include the Rolo family who were also in banking, the Aghion family mainly engaged in cotton trading. (and the Tilches who made their fortune trading with Italy.)

Corniche and Beach of Stanley Bay in Alexandria (1941)

During World War I, Alexandria had to receive a large number of Jews who were expelled from Palestine by the Turks as the latter sided with Germany. In 1915, under the influence of Jabotinsky and Trumpeldor, the Zion Mule Corps was established in Alexandria to fight on the side of the Allies. They distinguished them-

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Jewish Life In Alexandria

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selves for the assistance provided to the British forces in the Gallipoli campaign against the Turks, in 1917.

Chief Rabbis Of Alexandria:

Alexandria had three chief rabbis of great eminence in modern times. Raphael Della Pergola born in Florence (1876), who studied in the well-known rabbinic seminary of the city and distinguished himself in philosophy and rabbinic studies, became chief rabbi of Alexandria (1910-1923). During World War I, he worked diligently to help Jewish refugees who had come from Palestine. He died at an early age of 47, while he was in Florence. He was one of the leading Zionists in Alexandria. In 1918, he was invited by Weizmann when the cornerstone for the Hebrew University was laid. His grand son, Sergio Della Pergola, a professor in the Department of Jewish contemporary studies at the Hebrew University, wrote a biography of his grandfather.

David Prato born in 1882 in Leghorn, went to Florence to study in the same seminary as Della Pergola . He became chief rabbi of Alexandria (1927-1936) where he was recognized for his interest in developing Jewish youth. He was also strongly Zionistic in his views. In 1919, he founded the French Hebrew review *L'Illustration Juive* which was followed by the *Cahiers Juifs* in 1933. He became chief rabbi of Rome in 1936, but left Italy because of the anti-Jewish policy of the Fascist government, he eventually resumed his function as chief rabbi of Rome at the end of the war in 1945. (Both Della Pergola and Prato tried to develop the use of the Italian language while making efforts to revive Jewish values in the community.)

The last Major Chief Rabbi of Alexandria was Dr. Moise Behor Ventura born in 1893 near Izmir, Turkey, who served as chief rabbi of Alexandria (1938-48). He studied in Istanbul, Baghdad and after the war resided in Paris where he studied pedagogy, philosophy and social sciences at the Institute of Psychology and the Sorbonne. In 1935, he received a doctorate. The subject of his thesis was *The philosophy of Saadia Gaon.* (He also wrote a number of textbooks of hebrew and religious instruction in French. Ventura was an ardent Zionist.)

The last rabbi of Alexandria was Jacob Nefoussi. During the Six Days war of June 1967, about 350 Jews including rabbi Nefoussi were interned in the Abu Za'bal detention camp where the living conditions were extremely primitive. Rabbi Nefoussi presently lives in Brooklyn.

Major Synagogues Of Alexandria:

Alexandria had a large number of synagogues in the various neighborhoods of the city. The most prominent is the Eliahu Hanavi synagogue, which is considered to be the oldest. It was built several times on the same spot. A recent documentary on French television shows the inside of this magnificent synagogue on a Saturday morning. Only four old men were present. Because of the lack of a minyan each prayed separately. One of the congregants who was interviewed cried when he expressed his feelings, "What is going to happen to this place, when we die". The rabbinate director is Mr. Joseph Harari and his assistant Mrs. Matatia who are custodians of the synagogue which has many sifrei torahs and valuable books. Efforts to get these religious artifacts in Alexandria and other cities out of the country have not been successful. (There is a reluctance on the part of the Egyptian government to let these sifrei torahs go since they are considered to be antiquities.

Other synagogues that once occupied Alexandria and which were, in general built by rich families, include the following; Azouz where the rabbinate office and the home of rabbi Prato was situated; Baron Yaacoub de Menasce; Green Synagogue in Moharrem Bey; Sasson in Glymenopoulo; Eliahou Hazan at Cleopatra; Zaradel which was founded in 1381 and reconstructed several times; Castro in Moharrem Bey; Shaareh Tefila in Camp de Cesar, Synagogue of the Chatby Orphanage. Naturally, most of these synagogues do not exist any longer and now are probably used for storage or for other purposes. As indicated earlier, the only synagogue which seems to be open is the Eliahou Hannabi but where it is unlikely to have a minyan. ❑

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SEPHARDIC COMMUNITIES

Jewish Life In Cairo:

Medieval And Modern Times

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF JEWS FROM EGYPT
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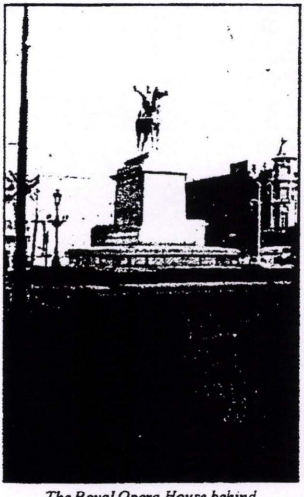
By Victor D. Sanua, Ph.D

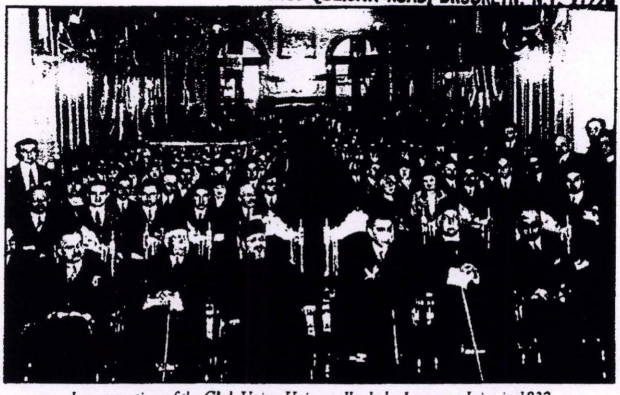
Early Jewish Communities In Cairo

In 641 the Arab general Amr Ibn-el-As conquered Egypt and founded Fostat, (to-day old Cairo) and made it a capital of Egypt. Jews settled quite early in Fostat as it became a flourishing economic center.

With the conquest of all of Egypt by the Fatimides (969), Cairo was built North of Fostat. Jews moved to the new city and established for themselves a new quarter called Haret-el-Yahoud (Street of the Jews). In time, Cairo became the cultural center of all the Jewish communities in Egypt.



The Royal Opera House behind the statue of Ibrahim Pacha.



Inauguration of the Club Union Universelle de la Jeunesse Juive in 1932 with Chief Rabbi Haim Nahum Eff.

Major Jewish Figures Of The Period

A number of major important Jewish figures became prominent, the most important one being Rabbi Moses Ben Maimoun, or Maimonides. He was born in Cordova, (1135-1204) in Spain and took refuge in Egypt because of persecution of Jews by the Muslim Almohades who ruled the southern part of Spain. He became the spiritual head of the Jewish community, and personal physician to the viceroy Saladin. Another illustrious rabbi, Saadia Ben Joseph Gaon (882-942), systematically compiled the Sidur with instructions in Arabic, and translated the Bible into Arabic.

Occupation Of Egypt By The Ottoman Empire

In 1517, Egypt was occupied by the Ottoman Empire. Many Jews became responsible for the financial administration of the country heading mints, collecting taxes and customs payments. During the 16th. centuries, some Spanish refugees came to Egypt, and in time there were three distinct communities. The Musta' Arabs (native arabic speaking Jews), Maghrebim (Jews of North African origin) and Spanish Jews.

During the 17-18th. century, the Ottoman empire began to decline, and there was also a decline of Jewish life. Jews during that period are estimated to be about 7000.

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Jewish Life In Cairo

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Jews In Modern Egypt

The building of the Suez canal (1859-1869) caused an influx of Europeans and Jews who came from western countries and Turkey. Their children were able to attend schools where European standards of education were maintained. By 1947, Cairo had about 41,860 Jews.

Major Synagogues In Cairo

By 1940, Cairo had 40 synagogues, all very active. However, during the High Holidays, they could not cope with the demand of seats. It was necessary to rent schools, clubs and private homes to accommodate all those who wanted to attend holiday services. The major and largest synagogue is on Adly Pasha street and was commonly called, "Temple Ismalia", The Hebrew name was Shaar Ha-Shamayim (Gates of Heaven). It is a fine architectural edifice which reminds one of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem. The interior has impressive decoration of lotus designs and marble columns. The synagogue, however, is now closed.

The only functioning synagogue at the present time is the one in Meadi, which is attended primarily by Israeli diplomats. Another well-known synagogue is Temple Maimonides. Older people talk about the miraculous cures that took place when patients stayed overnight in a room of the synagogue, dreamed about Rab Moche and hoped for a cure of their ailment. At the present time, it is in complete disrepair, the ceiling collapsed when the Yom Kippur War started. Another famous synagogue which is considered to be the oldest is the Ben Ezra synagogue. It became famous because of the discovery of valuable documents stored in the attic of the synagogue above the women's gallery. In 1896, Solomon Schecter, a scholar of Cambridge University, received from Egypt some Hebrew fragments. He found in one of those documents, the lost Hebrew original of Ecclesiastics. Realizing the great value of this material, he travelled to Egypt and was able to recover about 100,000 documents.

Shariah Fouad, center of town with "A L'Americaine" restaurant.

Among the legends associated with this synagogue, is the story that the Pharaoh's daughter found Moses in the Nile which was close to the synagogue. Most of the other synagogues in Cairo are neglected and in ruins, or transformed as mosques, police stations, warehouses, etc.. It was reported that many of the religious artifacts including sifrei Torahs are being sold to antique dealers.

The Pleasantness Of Life In Egypt For The Jews

There were several social clubs in the heart of the city. One was the Club Union Universelle de la Jeunesse Juive (UUJJ). Lectures, plays and dances were given periodically. Later, "Judeo-Espagnol" club was started by Ladino speaking Jews. This was a meeting point to go to the movies, theater, or going to Groppi which was a favorite restaurant, dancing and entertainment establishment attended mostly by Europeans and Jews. During the summer months, Jews frequently went to open air cinemas or skating rinks. During vacation time, some of the favorite resorts were the beaches of Alexandria, Port-Said and Ras-el-Bar.

Cairo had practically everything that a major European city could offer. There was the Royal Opera House. The first opera was Verdi's Aida. There were Italian groups primarily from La Scala, for plays by the Comedie Francaise, and for ballets. The most recent movies produced in the USA, England, France and Italy were shown on Egyptian screens. Naturally there were exclusive clubs for the very rich. The occupational structure of Jews in Egypt was similar to the one found in major European capitals. They had fewer number of children than Jews living in other Arab countries, and furthermore, Jewish women in general were working. Life tended to be very pleasant.

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Jewish Life In Cairo

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Changes In The Political Situation During Post-World War II — Which Led To The Almost Disappearance Of The Jewish Community

The above idyllic situation started to deteriorate seriously after 1945. There was some inkling of this possibly even prior to World War II because of the conflict between Arabs and Jews in Palestine and the nationalism which was driving the British out of the country. In November 2, 1945, the first anti-Jewish action was initiated by the Misr el-Fatat (Young Egypt) whose chauvinistic youths wore green shirts. Some synagogues, a Jewish hospital and numerous institutions and shops were damaged or destroyed. Riots, burnings and occasional killings continued intermittently. The most serious ones took place during the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration which promised the Jews a homeland in Israel.

When war started in 1948 between the Arab armies and Israel, a large number of Cairo Jewish youths (the right number has never been identified) were sent to internment camp at Huckstep, a former American airbase. The youths of Alexandria were sent to an internment camp at Aboukir. Many Jewish businesses were sequestered during that period.

By 1952, it is estimated that about 20,000 Jews left Egypt, either on their own or expelled. In 1954, when Nasser took power in Egypt, life for Jews became more difficult. By 1960, about 40,000 Jews left. In the following years, the Jewish population slowly dwindled so that at the present time, it is estimated that there are about 100 Jews in the whole country, with sixty of them still living in Cairo. Jews from Egypt are now dispersed in many major capitals of the world. They do not have any kind of cohesion. Several efforts in the past, in France, Italy, Israel, Australia, Brazil, etc. to make these groups coalesce have been unsuccessful. As in the past, these efforts cannot be sustained since there is a certain lack of interest shown by the Jews of Egypt to maintain their patrimony. The time is pressing for its history to be recorded. Many people who have lived in this history will not be alive within 10-20 years and this wonderful saga will be lost forever, unless adequate support is forthcoming and people take responsibility of this historical survival. It should be noted that there has never been a concerted effort on the part of Jews from Egypt to claim the billions of dollars of property left behind in Egypt.

An illustration of what could be done, is what the Iraqi community has done in Israel establishing The Babylonian Jewry Heritage Center at Or-Yehuda. located in a specialty built facility. The Center has published almost 20 books on different aspects of life of Iraqi Jews. They also have a regular periodical in English which contains articles and reviews on a variety of aspects of the history of Babylonian Jewry and its culture, usually written by researchers, accompanied with pictures and illustration. It provides news about the activities of the Center and news on various Iraqi communities around the world. Hopefully, some day Egyptian Jewry will rise to the challenge and carry out similar activities. We owe it to our children and grand children so that they may have a clearer picture of the life of their forebears. I say Amen to that! □

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A Short History Of
The Exodus Of Jews From Egypt

By Victor D. Sanua, Ph.D.

During the years 1917 and 1939, Jews from Egypt could go to Palestine by obtaining a visa in Cairo from the mandatory power, which was Great Britain, by giving a deposit of 60 British pounds. They would leave and some would not return. In 1947, the trip to Palestine, for political reasons, was made more difficult, which necessitated illegal attempts to circumvent the verification of the British at the frontier. A number of Jews were involved in facilitating their departure. Some Jews were able to leave by going through the desert on camel, and by offering bribes, were able to reach Palestine. In other instances, employees of a travel agency arranged to hide the passengers in the train at the time of verification of documents. Some were able to go to Lebanon and managed to get to Israel, again by offering bribes their way. Edmond Sanua had made aliyah to Israel in the 30's, and as a controller of the Shell Company, had to make a monthly trip to Egypt because of his work and then return to Palestine. At each trip, he was able to hide two youths in his trunk. Since he was known at the frontier, he was allowed to go through without verification.

Celebrating the 14th of July — Bastille Day (circa 1946).

However, these efforts were limited since a small number of Jews from Egypt could manage to get through. Preparations were made to send larger numbers by sea, again by bribing the ship owners. However, this method had to be abandoned because Britain had established a maritime blockade around the shores of Palestine. In 1943, the Jewish Agency sent

A group of Jewish boyscouts camping at Meadi 1937.

a number of shlichim to assist in the transfer. Zionist groups in Cairo assisted these shlichim by giving them false papers so that they could carry on their illegal work which consisted of preparing the youth to work in Palestine, and teaching them self-defense. This experience was put to good use when the rioters tried to invade the Haret-el Yahud, the Jewish quarter. The British army that was fighting the Germans who were stationed in Libya included a Jewish brigade made up of volunteers from Palestine. It appears that they had some influence on some young Egyptian Jews to leave Egypt. In 1946, "Operation Pessah" was initiated which would enable hundreds of youths to go to Palestine. Jewish soldiers in the British army were allowed to return home to celebrate Pessah. Arrangements were made so that they would renounce such a right, which would permit Egyptian youths to wear British uniforms and pass through at the frontier. They were taught beforehand to act "British." There were different estimates regarding the number who passed the frontier (estimates vary from 2000 to 8000), but there were enough youths to help the great flow of Jews from Egypt who came following the Arab-Israel wars.

In 1948, when the conflict started on May 15, police arrested a number of Jews, mostly for Zionist activities. It is estimated that 600 individuals (but the exact number will never be known) were jailed in three major camps, Huckstep, a former United States air base near Cairo; a former R.A.F. camp in

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An outing during the Spring Festival of Sham el Nissim 1948.

Aboukir near Alexandria, and a camp in Port Said. The women were interned in prisons for foreigners. While the early conditions were chaotic, in time the internees were able to ameliorate the conditions of the camps. Internees included Zionists as well as rich non-Zionists whose properties were confiscated. It seems that some were arrested because it was known that they had relatives in Israel. At one point 50 internees of the Huckstep camp were, it seems, selected at random and sent to El Tor in the Sinai desert where conditions were quite primitive, very hot during the day and very cold at night. One of the internees was able to write a long letter describing the terrible conditions in the camp, which was clandestinely sent out. While the conditions at times were terrible, there was no comparison to the suffering of Jews under the Nazis. Those with foreign passports were assisted by their consulates to get their exit visas, some non-Egyptians were forced to leave the country and signed papers to the effect that they were leaving voluntarily. Of course, they could not recover their property. During the war period there was a lot of rioting in the streets when a few Jews and Europeans were killed. Because of the unsettled situation and inability to make a living, or inability to get sufficient compensations from their sequestered businesses, many Jews, particularly those with foreign citizenship, were able to leave but they could not take with them more than 20 Egyptian pounds for each individual. Others were given a few days before being forced out of the country. It is estimated that 30,000 Jews left the country following the fighting in Israel. They received help from the World Jewish Congress, Joint Distribution Committee, the Red Cross and the Jewish Agency. Some of the ships that were used included the Esperia, Misri, Nefertiti, Khedivial Maritime Line. The ships were filled with immigrants, mostly living on the bridges. When the ship reached international waters, the Jews from Egypt started to sing the Hatikva in unison and in full force. They were thus expressing their great joy at finally enjoying their freedom, and their hopes for a better future. In Egypt, any expression of Jewishness was shunned for fear of arrest. Some were fearful even to have Hebrew books in their homes.

There was an amelioration of the conditions when King Farouk was dethroned in 1952 and the government was headed by General Naguib, who on Rosh Hashana visited the major synagogue in Cairo and gave his good wishes to the congregants. However, the situation worsened again later when Nasser became President. With the Suez war in 1956, when the British, French and Israelis attacked Egypt to prevent the expropriation of the Suez Canal, most of the citizens with English and French passports were arrested and again there was a great flow of Jews leaving the country by ships which landed in Marseilles, Naples and Athens. By 1957, out of 80,000 Jews living in Egypt, about 3000 had not yet left the country. Today, the total Jewish population in Egypt is about 100 very aged persons. It is felt that within a few years, the only Jews in Egypt will be the tourists.

A theatrical group at the Judeo-Espagnol Club 1944.

The Jews of Egypt had the same characteristics as the non-Jews. They were mostly cosmopolitan, with their vision towards Europe, with most of them speaking French and as indicated in an earlier report, the 14th of July (Bastille Day) was a great time to celebrate. Everyone learned to sing the Marseillaise. English became an important language only after World War II and due to their knowledge of several languages and good education, Jews from Egypt had managed to reach economic and professional success very quickly wherever they settled. While most of them were born in Egypt, they had nothing Egyptian about them. Of course a relatively small group spoke Arabic at home, but the majority spoke foreign languages while French was the lingua franca.

Egyptian Jews were never considered Egyptian in Egypt. Although they were considered Jews, they were also, perhaps more strongly, considered Europeans.

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Since they were never true "Egyptians" in Egypt, they preferred to be considered as Europeans in Israel, which is more in tune with their education and culture. They have in general adapted very well to Israeli life. They generally depicted their past in Egypt as a "lost paradise," and described in great detail the good life they had in Egypt, but de-emphasized the hard times and the loss of their wealth. Many have a nostalgia for a country which no longer exists. What may be Egyptian about them is their appreciation of Egyptian foods such as the molochia (green garlicky soup), foul medames (fava beans), tahina, stuffed graped leaves, feta and Kaskaval cheeses, machsi (peppers and eggplant stuffed with rice and meat), etc. There was one general holiday for Jews and non-Jews, Sham el Nissim, a spring festival, a kind of Thanksgiving when people went outdoors. At that time, as a ritual, a doll was thrown into the Nile. In ancient Pharaonic times, they threw a young woman. This was also the time when a smelly fish by the name of "Fisikh" was eaten.

While Jews from Egypt have adapted economically very well in Israel, they show no interest in politics and as a result they have little electoral clout. The Moroccan Jews in Israel are one of the most influential of any immigrant group in Israel's political life. Moroccan Jews were always part of Moroccan political life and this tendency was transferred to their life in Israel. They became officers, members of the Knesset and hold high ministerial positions in Israel. Moroccans settled in moshavim and agricultural settlements in the Galilee and the Negev and began building developmental towns. The Jews of Egypt settled in Holon, Bat Yam, Be'er Sheva, Ashdot, Jerusalem, Haifa, Acco, Natanya and Tiberias. Moroccan Jews fit best as a whole in the pioneer mode. They came to Israel from a more modest background and were more influenced by "true Israeli" hard-working pioneer convictions. They were more idealistic with a strong Zionist and religious background. The Jews of Egypt were accustomed to a more comfortable way of life and European culture. While some Egyptian Jews had the "pioneering" spirit, the majority has adapted to the middle and upper class way of life. They are likely to reminisce about the comfortable lifestyle they had in Egypt.

Any readers who are appreciative of the potential in producing high quality research documentation about the Jews of Egypt and who are in a position to help with the work, please contact the author. ❑

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The Meeting Of Jews From Egypt

At The Hotel Étoile - St. Honoré, Paris, France

By Victor D. Sanua, Ph.D.

Miss Christine Grilloux, Dr. Victor Sanua, Mr. Neville Sartell, Mrs. René Sardell and Mrs. Stella Sanua having dinner.

Dr. Victor Sanua, Mr. Raymond Stambouli and Mr. Victor Namade.

Mrs. Esther Sasson, Mrs. Suzanne Mizrahi, Mr. Henri Mizrahi and Mr. David Jury.

In a recent meeting, a group of learned individuals attended a conference to discuss the importance of preserving the heritage of jews of Egypt. On October 17th, 1998 these renowned scholars and residents gathered at the Hotel Étoile-St. Honoré in Paris, France to preserve the traditions of many ethnic groups which included the Sephardic community of Egypt. The following is a list of important events at the conference.

The highlight of the session was Dr. Jacques Hassoun's remarks about Jews from Egypt. He stated it is essential that all the groups of Jews of Egypt who are in various parts of the world and not connected, must survive and coordinate their efforts in order to transmit their history.

Dr. Hassoun feels that the Jews of Egypt are a unique and an exceptional group whose ideologies spread along a wide spectrum from the extreme political right to the left. They published in Egypt newspapers, in possibly, ten different languages, Arabic, French, Italian, German, Yiddish, etc. There is little contact among the various groups in different countries, thus they do not seem to be aware of their respective activities around the world. Contacts must be established at any cost. It seems that young people who are not Egyptian born are presently doing research on Egyptian Jewry. "We need to document our experiences while we are still alive," said Dr. Hassoun.

There were three major developments of Jews in Egypt. At one time, they had embraced the Greek culture. In another period they were Arabized and produced a series of learned books. The third phase is when they adopted French as their language. Dr. Hassoun referred to the publication NAHAR MISRAIM which was published for a number of years by the Association Pour La Sauvegarde du Patrimoine Culturel des Juifs d'Egypte. The issues of the series could be republished.

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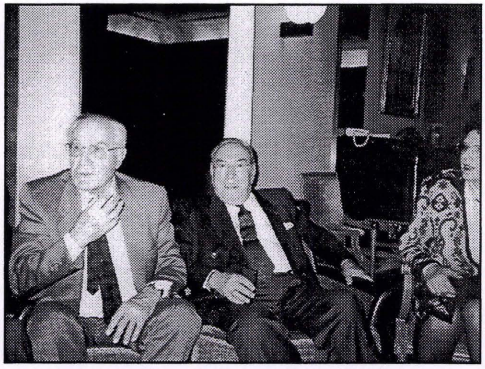

Mr. David Joury, Mr. Albert Bivas and Mrs. Christel Joury.

Dr. Jacques Hassoun, President of the Association pour la Sauvegarde du Patrimoine Culturel des Juifs d'Egypte.

Dr. Victor and Mrs. Stella Sanua taking a cruise on the Seine.

It was at this point that a discussion was opened which dealt with the topic of the reasons that the French language developed among Egyptian Jews. Mr. David Joury maintained that besides the occupation by France which left its mark on the country, Mohamed Ali, the founder of the dynasty of Egyptian kings, surrounded himself with French scholars and technicians. A comment made by Mr. Raymond Stambouli was that the British did not feel the need to educate the masses in the English language. The French, on the other hand, established lay and religious schools. While there were a few Jewish schools (Ecole Menasce, Alexandria) which provided secondary education, it was indicated that the Jewish community provided scholarships to promising students who had their primary education in Jewish schools which enabled them to attend schools of advanced education.

As an example of the influence of French culture in Egypt, Mrs. Joseph Diday pointed out that her grandfather who was French speaking had come to Egypt to help the country with the building of the railway system. Mr. Joseph Diday made some reference about a group that got together some time ago under the efforts of a Maurice Bensousan, but unfortunately there was no follow-up. He strongly suggested that it is high time that Jews of Egypt should create a formal association in Paris and meet on a regular basis every month at a hotel or café to exchange ideas about who we are and share information which could be of use to younger generations. That particular Saturday, October 17, 1998, we had "effleuré" all kinds of topics which could be developed during those monthly metings. Mr. Joseph Diday volunteered to make arrangements for such meetings.

References were made to the existence of Los Muestros, edited by Maurice Rahmani, and Lettre Sepharade, edited by Mr. Jean Carasso, but it was indicated that their purpose is to develop Sephardic topics and may have little to do with Egypt. Some comments were also made about AMICALE ALEXANDRIE edited by Dr. Albert de Vidas.

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Mr. Maurice Hazan informed us that he has collected the names of 8000 Jews of Egypt of 30 families who speak Judeo-Spanish. He plans to give those names to Bet Hatefutsot, in Israel. It seems that in recent years, there has been quite an interest in genealogical studies which we should all pursue. Mrs. Suzy Sidi had come especially for the meeting from London. She pointed out that she is presently conducting research for her M.A. thesis interviewing Jews from Egypt with her video. Those interested in her work should contact her at 14 Westside London NW4 4XB England, Tel. 00-44-181-2035453.

The rest of the evening was continued with informal and friendly exchange. It is hoped that this will be followed by some serious actions in trying to bind the Egyptian Jews not only in Paris but throughout the world.

Subsequent to the meeting in Paris at the Hotel Etoile-St. Honore, there was some discussion about holding the Second International Conference of Jews of Egypt in Paris. The tentative time chosen was early in the year 2000.

This will give an opportunity for Jews from Egypt around the world to get together at a meeting where the French language will dominate, a language in which most Jews of Egypt are conversant, in spite of the fact that they left Egypt about 40-50 years ago. The conference will include three types of activities, one on general research of Jews of Egypt in modern times, sessions when Jews of Egypt could report on their personal experiences during their exodus from Egypt, starting in 1948, and the problems of adaptation in the countries that received them. The third activity would be to arrange for a number of socials such as a banquet, dancing, singing performers, etc. If anyone is interested to take an active participation in this conference and give suggestions which would increase the success of the conference in the three types of activities, please call or write to Dr. Victor D. Sanua, 2416 Quentin Road, Brooklyn, NY 11229, Tel. and Fax 718-339-0337.

Full details of the conference will appear in the first issue of the Newsletter of the International Association of Jews from Egypt. ❑

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ADDENDUM NO. 3

14 ARTICLES IN IMAGE MAGAZINE

38 PAGES

Section VII
Biographical (Pictorial) Sketch
Victor D. Sanua Ph.D.

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With the printing of the second edition of this book, I have decided to write a biographical sketch to be added at the end of this volume. Before my departure from Egypt to the U.S.A. in 1950, I was able to get through the Government Censorship Department in Cairo hundreds of pictures taken in Egypt and elsewhere. These pictures are precious because many Jews from Egypt were reluctant to go to the Censorship Department for the clearance of their pictures. I have selected a number of them to be included in this chapter, recapitulating some of the highlights of my life and personal experiences, a kind of pictorial biography. I already have a large number of pictures taken in Egypt printed in **The International Association of Jews from Egypt Newsletter** and in the articles I wrote for **The Image Magazine**. The newsletter has a number of pictures of sites in Cairo and Alexandria. A few of these pictures which have already appeared have been duplicated in this last chapter of the book. I thought that they were important to keep the sequence of our story.

Most of the material that appears in this chapter has primarily depended on my memories. If any Egyptian is inclined to correct some of my statements, I shall be happy to hear from him or her. Whenever I could remember, I have added the names of people appearing in the pictures. The letter "d" is next to the names of those whose deaths have been confirmed and with whom I have been in touch before. As stated by Dr. Ada Aharoni of Haifa, We are the "last of the Mohicans" of the Jews from Egypt.

The importance of my work was brought to my attention when I received an article from a non-Egyptian Jewish friend, Fred Lee Barber, written by Mark Stevens which appeared in New York Magazine, of January 24-31, 2005. The article is about a picture exhibit arranged at New York University by Walid Raad and Akram Zaatari The purpose of the exhibit is to counterbalance the cliché of unpleasant pictures which originate from the Arab world. They collected pictures from the archives of The Arab Image Foundation in Beirut; it included men and one woman in swimming suits on the beach and people walking leisurely in the streets, pictures which contrast sharply from those usually shown in the news media. I have added some historical captions under my pictures and after the pictures you will find in alphabetical order further information about the various places where they were taken. The following are the main phases of my life:

1. My childhood in Egypt.
2. Adolescence.
3. The World War II years.
4. Early manhood and the good life in Egypt.
5. Life as student at the American University in Cairo (AUC), 1943-45 and 1947-49.
6. Preparing to leave Egypt, 1950.

7. Departure for America and first year as a Graduate student in the U.S.A.
8. The death of my mother prior to her planned departure from Egypt.
9. Laboring to earn pocket money.
10. Working as a psychologist, getting married and achieving the status of a professor.
11. Trips abroad.
12. Return to Egypt, 1982 and 2002.

Cairo and Alexandria offered most of all the amenities that could be found in major capitals of Europe. People seeing the pictures are sometimes surprised to see the modernity of our lives. I used the word "Europeans" for even Jews born in Egypt in contrast to "Native Egyptians", the latter being Muslims and Copts. Egypt had a sizable group of Jews who were indigenous to the country, particularly the Karaite Jews differ from other Jews in their rejection of the "Oral Torah". The Europeans were addressed as "Khawaga" in Arabic, which at one time was a sign of respect for "Mister".

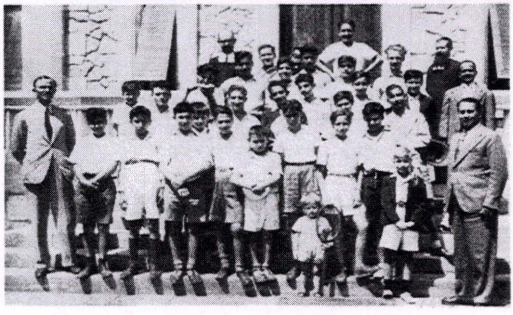
While I have emphasized the good life we had in Egypt, some people have thought my pictures to be too rosy. Of course, Egyptian Jews had different experiences, positive and negative. Some serious problems developed in 1948 after the first Arab-Israeli War, which slowly eroded the Jewish community. Egyptian Jewry was forced to leave the country, either, because they could not make a living or were expelled by the Egyptian authorities and made refugees with their assets expropriated. I use the word "refugees" appropriately, since we often hear about "Palestinian" and not "Jewish refugees." Fortunately, not many Jewish refugees remained as such for any length of time, since they were accepted by those countries that received them and quickly adapted to the new conditions.

A great deal of stress resulted from the breakdown of the family's unity with siblings living in different countries and the dispersion of very close friends and relatives around the world. My own mother died two weeks before the arranged departure with my sisters to join me in the U.S.A. I shall never know if the stress of leaving Cairo had anything to do with her death. Nevertheless, the hardships I personally incurred do not compare with the vicissitudes sustained by other Jews from Egypt. A large number of them were interned in detention camps, where the treatment varied in severity. The imprisoned Jews at Tourah, in the desert outside Cairo and at El Tor in the Sinai desert had a very rough time. I hope that someday a professional historian will write a complete history of the hardships sustained by the Jews of Egypt and Jews coming from all Arab countries as well. Turkey is the only Muslim country in the world that has still a viable Jewish community.

The biographical sketch is in the last section of this chapter is an outline of a book on my memoirs, which I plan to write. I hope that in spite of my advanced age, I shall be able to complete it and leave it as a legacy to my grandchildren and great grandchildren. It could also be very useful to future historians who will have the writings of a witness who lived in Egypt during those turbulent years. I hope that this book will provide a clearer picture of what Jewish life was like in Egypt prior 1948 and the subsequent hardships caused by our dispersion.

1. My Childhood in Egypt

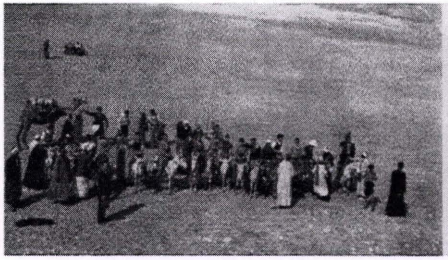
(Left) Sanua family picture in **Cairo*** 1923. The little boy is Victor Sanua. (Top Right) Outing 1925, Guizirah Island Gardens. Father and mother at extreme ends, Victor Sanua in the middle, couple in the back, my uncle Vita Simon and his wife, Camille. (Lower Right) Outing, 1933, Ezbekyiah Gardens. Sanua family in the middle, Victor to the right. Picture taken after returning to Egypt from Belgium in 1933.



1. Victor Sanua, 1927.
2. (Top Right) Excursion of the school St. Jean Baptiste de La Salle, Bab el Louk 1934 to **Sakkarah, necropolis***

3. (Bottom) Excursion to the Zoological Garden, Cairo, 1935.

Note : At the end of this set of pictures I have included a section of Historical Notes about the sites marked with a asterisk *.



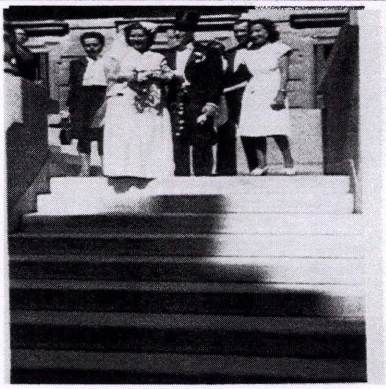
(Left) Excursion donkey ride in **Sakkarah necropolis***. I am on far right. (Right) I am in the middle. Student to my right is Tseppas, whose father had the best pastry shop in Cairo. In 1982 I went back to the pastry shop, it was still there with the same name. I inquired about the owner and was told that Tseppas had left a long time before. In general, the names of well-known stores remained. For example, the well-known name of the **Cicurel** department store is still in existence.

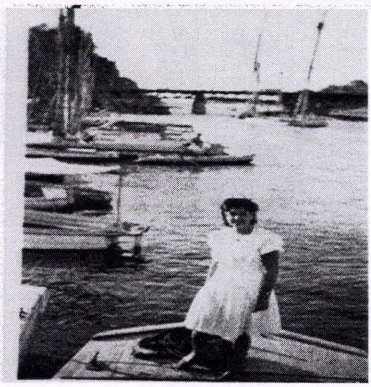
2. Adolescence

1. (Top left) At the beach, **Alexandria*** (Sporting Beach, 1936). To my right is **Emile Rahmani**. (classmate). 2. (Top right) An outing of the Jewish Camping Club (J.C.C.), in **Maadi*** (a suburb of Cairo), 1937. I am at the extreme right. 3. (Bottom Left) Meeting Boy Scouts at the **Mokattam Hills***, Cairo in 1937. I am sitting third from right. 4. (Bottom Right) Outing in **Heliopolis***, Cairo, Meeting again Boy Scouts, 1937.

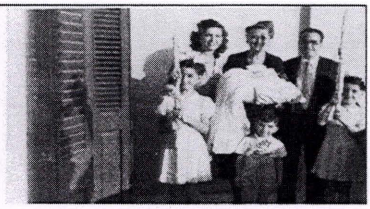
Note: Back of these pictures, I wrote the specific dates when these excursions took place.

(Left) Boat ride to **Hawandiah***. a sugar refinery village, 1937.
(Right) On the top of the citadel built by Mohammed Ali, ruler of Egypt, . He killed 400 **Mamelouks**, to govern the country (1811). One of his descendants is King **Farouk**. The man on the right selling a soft drink (*irq sous*) .





(Left) Wedding of **Suzanne Sidicaro** and **Henri Mizrahi**, steps of **Shaar Ha-Shamayim** ("Gates of Heaven") synagogue on Adly Pasha Street, Cairo 1942. We usually called the synagogue the Ismaliah temple. (Right) **Odette Sanua** (Benjamin) on a boat ride on the Nile, Cairo, 1944.

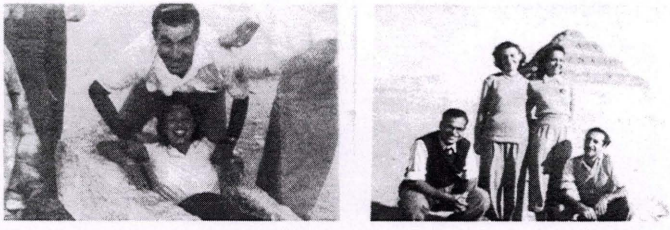


(Left) Cairo,1943. I am Chief Clerk at Lindell's office, importers of spinning, weaving and printing machinery. In time the brothers went to different continents- Switzerland, Canada, Australia and the U.S.A. (Right) On the occasion of the **Berith Milah** (circumcision) of the son of **Max Sanua, Rosa Sanua** is holding the infant, her daughter to her right is **Fortunee Hemsi** and her three children in front. Now members of the family are in Switzerland, U.S.A., Israel and France. **Rosa** and **Max Sanua** are deceased. Initially they all lived in Italy after leaving Egypt, in 1953. Fortunnee's husband **Lazarre Hemsi** died when the family arrived in Milan in 1957.

4. Early Manhood and the good life in Egypt

(Left) Excursion at the Barrages, a suburb of Cairo, 1939. We danced to music from a phonograph. The spring of the phonograph often broke down! I am on the extreme right; next to me is **Isy Crespin**, a good friend who died in Israel in 2005. (Right) At the Japanese Garden of Helwan, a town near Cairo known for its thermal baths, 1943. These were friends now living around the world. I can only be sure that one of them, **Raphael Bigio** died in an airplane accident in Venezuela.

(Left)At the Guezirah swimming pool on the occasion of the visit of **Victor Naim**, a cousin who survived a concentration camp in Italy, 1946. (Right) I am riding an Arabian house close to the Guizah pyramids, 1947.



(Left) At the **Sakkarah necropolis* David Joury**, now living in France, pushing **Dina D'Amico** now in Italy into an abandoned sarcophagus, 1947. (Right) The Step pyramid of Sakkarah* in the background, 1947. The man on the right is **Emile Cohen**, a painter living in Paris, one of the young men interned at Tourah.

(Left) Dancing with friends at the Stanley Beach Rialto Hotel in Alexandria, 1947.
(Right) Costumed for a play to be performed at the Judeo-Espagnol Center, 1947. I do not remember the play, but it had to do with South America.

Walking through a street in **Maadi***, a garden suburb of Cairo with a classmate of the American University in Cairo. She is Muslim. While we could be friendly with Muslim girls, there was a cultural barrier for dating.

(Left) **Victor Sanua** and **Dinah d'Amico** (in Italy) close to the Guizah Pyramids.
(Right) Boating on Lake Qarun in the Fayoum Oasis, about 80 miles of sand terrain south west of Cairo. There is some doubt that it is really an oasis, because of its huge salt-water lake made from the water of a spring.

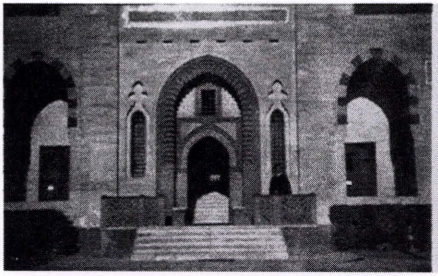
3. The World War II Years

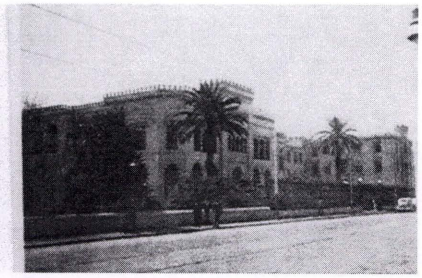
I worked as a chief clerk with the British Army Indian Red Cross, Cairo, 1941, providing amenities to the Indian troops fighting in the Middle East during World War II.

(Left) Picture at the door of the Zoological Gardens with pilots of the British airforce.
(Right) Party with American and Greek soldiers on the roof of the building where Anna Patros (a classmate of A.U.C) lived. Both pictures are in Cairo 1944

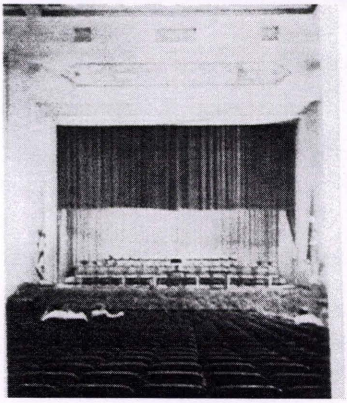
Meeting sailors from the British Navy on a beach in Alexandria, 1944.

5. Life as a student at the American University in Cairo,

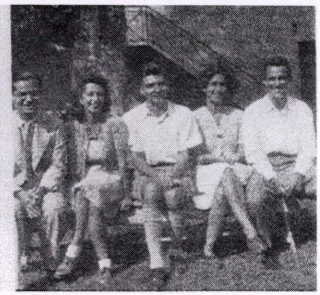




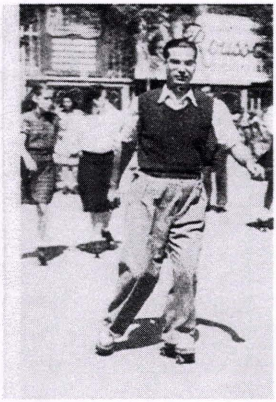
The American University in Cairo (A.U.C.) building on Kasr el Eini Street and its main door, 1943. The building was a former palace. Note the lack of traffic.



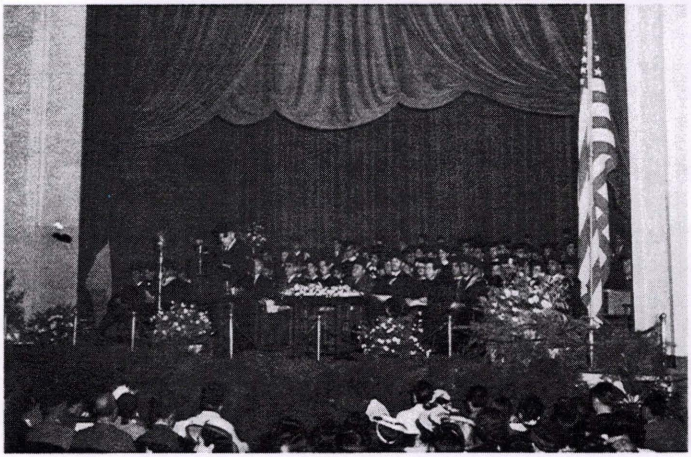
(Left) Ewart Memorial Hall of the AUC, drew many theatrical groups and symphony orchestras. During war time it was used also for Army entertainment. Toscanini once conducted the Palestinian Symphony Orchestra, now the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra. (Right) Dr. **J.B. Watson**, founder in 1919, president of the American University in Cairo. He was my professor in one course on Religion.

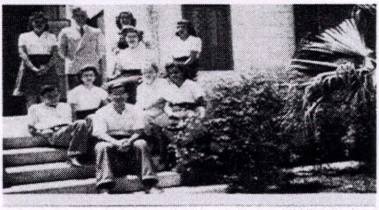


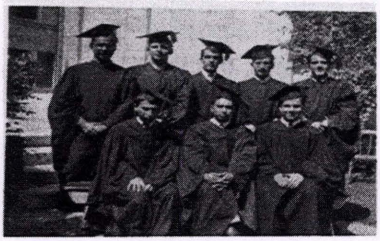
(Left) Junior classmates (A.U.C., 1944). Anna Patros, Greece; Sami Dayan, Switzerland; Victor Sanua and Halina Krougly , U.S.A; Mario Feininger Switzerland, U.S.A; (Right) Junior classmates on the campus of the A.U.C. -1943. Left to Right; Victor Sanua, U.S.A; Josette Tamches, Israel; Sami Dayan, Switzerland; Aimee Setton-Beressi, France; Baracat Mourad, Australia ; a close-knit group now living in five different countries. Sami Davan. the only one confirmed deceased.



(Left) **Sami Dayan** a classmate and me walking down King Fouad Street (now the 26th of July Street). Sami went to America to get a Ph.D. degree in philosophy, I went to America for a more practical career psychology. I learned of the death of Sami from a returned letter stamped by the Swiss post office that he had died. (Right) I am skating in a skating rink near Fouad Street.







(Left) President **J.B Watson** speaking at the 1945 commencement exercises of B.A. graduates at Ewart Memorial Hall. **Taha Hussein**, who received the Nobel Prize in literature, was the guest of honor.
(Top Right) Senior students behind Oriental Hall with **Dr. Smith** a philosophy professor, who made Kant understandable!
(Bottom Right) Social science graduates of 1945. From left to right: **Victor Sanua,** U.S.A., **Sami Dayan, (d)** Switzerland, **Baracat Mourad,** Australia, **Omar Chafei,** Egypt, **Richard Host, (d)** Italy. **Sitting, Left to Right, Mario Feininger** , Switzerland, USA; **Anthony Economides, (d)** Greece, **Maurice Hodara,** a physician in France.

(Top) Performing a play written by me, playing the hypnotist at Oriental Hall, 1947.

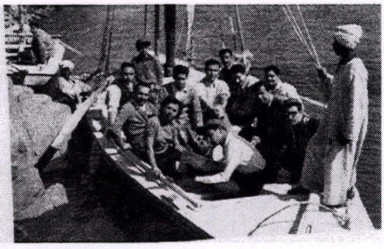
(Bottom) Party arranged by A.U.C. high school students, with college students of A.U.C invited, 1944.

(Left) A reception for education students at Oriental Hall, 1948. The tall man in the back is **John Badeau**, a professor of comparative religion and a specialist in Iraq, the best Professor I ever had. He became American ambassador to Egypt 1961-64.

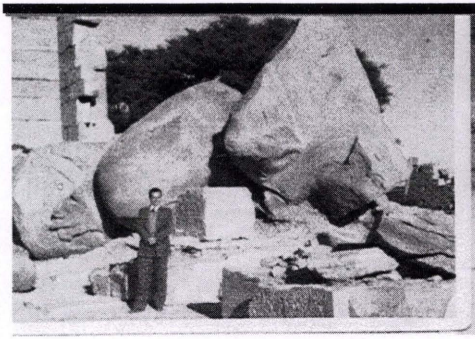
(Right) Picture of B.A. graduate students in education, 1949. I took the education classes because of the courses in psychology. The man in the middle is Professor **Amir Boktor**, who was one of the first academicians to include scientific psychology as a subject in an Egyptian University. His classes prompted me to select psychology as a profession. I had the distinctive pleasure of meeting him at the International Congress of Psychology in Brussels, in 1956 and introducing him to Stella, whom I had recently married. I felt very proud of my status at that time, from a former graduate student of Michigan State University to professor with a Ph.D. in psychology.

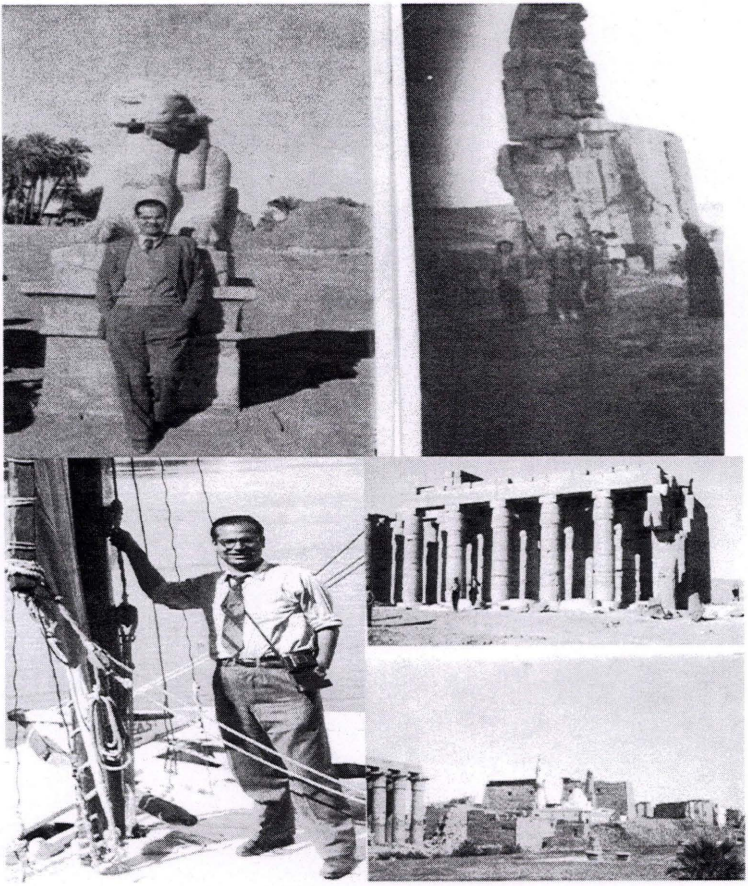
6. Preparing To Leave Egypt

(Left) Family Pictures, 1950. My mother **Marie Sanua** on the left, her sister **Emilie Palacci** on the right. (Right) The *s.s Esperia* on our way to Italy for the purpose of settling in Israel. The plan was aborted because of the Korean War, which started on June 1950, the day we docked in Italy.



During the last few weeks before my departure, I visited major archeological sites. I went into the funerary chamber of the Cheops Pyramid of Guizah and visited the big mosques of Cairo, which included the earliest mosque Ibn Toulon, inaugurated in 879. I went to see the Suez Canal. (left) The rest of the pictures show visits to Luxor, I visited the Valley of the Kings, where many pharaohs were buried in secret locations. The reason is that in the past plunderers were able to enter the pyramids. The only tomb that remained untouched (lower- left picture) was the tomb of King Tutankhamun (King Tut in America), which was discovered by Carter in 1922, this pharaoh was a minor ruler and died in his 20s. The treasures of that tomb are now exhibited (2005) in American Museums, but not New York. One of the purposes of the exhibits (according to the newspapers) is for the Egyptian government to obtain foreign currency. To the left below, I am in front of a colossal statue of a pharaoh that was destroyed by a later pharaoh who did not like him, according to our guide.





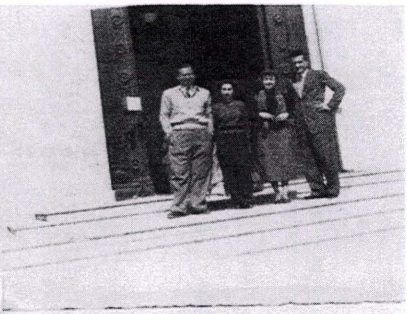
(Top left) I am in front of a ram-headed sphinx in Luxor. This is part of two rows of scores of similar statues outside a huge temple.

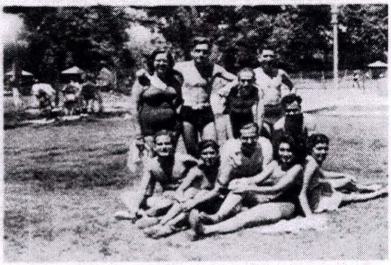
(Top right) One of the two gigantic statues of the colossi of Memnon nearly 20 yards high. They once graced the entrance of an immense temple that does not exist anymore.

(Bottom Left) Boating on the Nile during my visit to Luxor.

The two other pictures are of the Temples of Karnak, a holy city of pylons, obelisks and colossal statues, built over centuries. The temple about 600 feet long, is the largest archaeological building in the world. According to our guide, a Muslim dreamed about a holy man, who asked him to build a mosque on the site of the temple of Karnak (see last picture).

Note: With my plan to depart from Egypt, I felt the need to visit ancient Egypt archaeological sites. For the first time I went inside the Cheops Pyramid to see the funerary chamber which was empty. Pyramids tended to be plundered easily. The pharaohs decided to be buried secretly in the Valley of the Kings, built on a secluded part of the dessert in Upper Egypt, where so far Egyptologists have discovered about 60 tombs of pharoahs and dignitaries. However, with the exception of King Tutankhamun's tomb, all were plundered in the course of history. King Tutankhamun a minor pharaoh, became famous only because his tomb was found as it was sealed originally. There was evidence that some efforts were made to plunder it, without success.





(Top Left) Picture taken in Sakkarah. The monkey story- one does not talk; one does not see; and two do not hear.

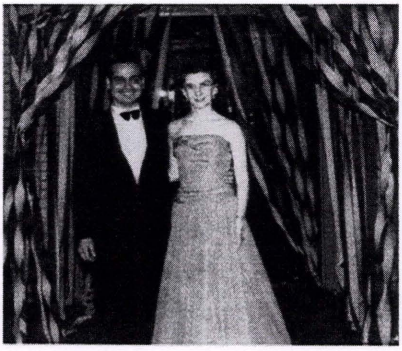
(Top Right) At the door of the **Egyptian Museum of Antiquities** in Cairo (I am on the left of the picture), which houses the richest collection of antiquities of 3000 years of Egyptian civilization, including the treasures of King Tut-ankhamun.

(Lower Left) **Train De Mer.** During the summer months we could take a special weekly train to spend the weekend in Alexandria, a four hour trip. More comfortably we took the bus through the desert. From left to right; **Dinah d'Amico, Fortunee Sanua** and **David Joury.**

The rest of the pictures were taken at the Guizirah swimming pool, mostly frequented by Europeans. The pool was well attended, from 1 and 4 pm, when offices were closed to allow employees a siesta. Certain periods during the week the pool was used exclusively for training the national male swimming, diving and water polo teams of Egypt. Egyptian women did not participate in competitive swimming sports.

All these pictures were taken between 1945-48.

7. Departure for America and First Year as a graduate Student



(Top right) Sailing on the *s/s Saturnia* an Italian liner, on my way to America. I had the greatest pleasure of seeing the statue of liberty at dawn when the ship came up the Hudson River.

(Top left) Picture taken at Coney Island, Brooklyn, NY. with members of the Adventurer's Club of the Y.M.H.A.

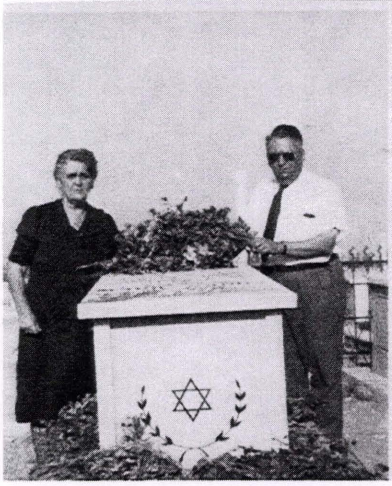
(Middle left) Spending New Year 's Eve in New York with some friends. For long weekends and vacations, I used to take the Greyhound bus and visit friends and relatives in New York.

(Middle right) My first picture on the campus of Bowling Green State University in Ohio. I had to get used to snow and cold weather.

(Bottom left) My first date, a graduate student in psychology at Bowling Green State University in Ohio.

All pictures were taken in 1950-51.

8. The Death of my Mother prior to her planned departure from Egypt

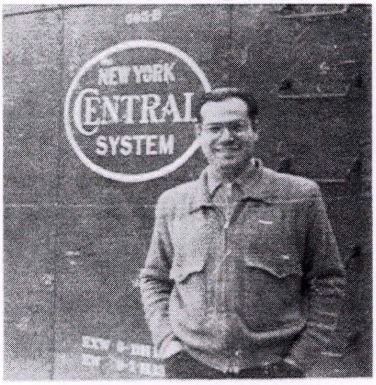


(Top) The funeral of my mother in a hearse on a horse-drawn carriage with ceremonial attendants holding artificial flowers on the way to the Bassatine cemetery, which is more then 1,000 years old. Today a large percentage of the marble tops with inscribed names have been removed. Funerals tended to be elaborate in Egypt in those days. Funeral parlors did not exist. The bodies of the deceased were removed directly from their own homes. My sisters sent me the picture of the funeral which occurred before my mother could depart from Egypt to join me, in 1950.

(Bottom left) My aunt **Rosa Sanua** and my uncle **Nissim Simon** sent us the picture of the stone a year later in 1951. The burial site cannot be identified because the marble top with the name inscriptions seemed to have been removed.

(Bottom right) This picture was taken in 1951 in Washington D.C., where my sisters first resided. As was customary in those days, people in mourning wore black clothing. Their moving to Washington was arranged by the Hebrew Immigration Aid Society (HIAS). They later moved to New York to live in a more exciting city!

9. Laboring to Earn Pocket Money



(Top and middle left) Working for **Acme Fast Freight,** Co. in Lansing carting mostly machinery coming from New York and being transferred to trucks to various cities in Michigan. Working sometimes in sub-zero temperature.

(Top right) Working for the **Kroger's** grocery chain in Toledo, Ohio.

(Middle right) Working for a union in front of a store in downtown Toledo, Ohio.

(Bottom) Working as a waiter in East Lansing, Michigan. I sometimes also worked delivering furniture, including refrigerators.

Note: I came to the U.S.A. with $3,000 cash purchased in the black market. Since my plan was to return to Egypt. I spent the money visiting various cities such as Washington D.C., Chicago, Philadelphia and Miami, during my vacations. By the time I was getting ready to return, I had only enough money for the ship going back to Egypt. While I had scholarships, room and board, I needed money for pocket expenses. When I developed enough skills, I worked as a school psychologist.

10. Working as a Psychologist and Getting Married

(Left) Living in New York with my three sisters, having a little party attended by friends from Egypt. (From Left to Right) **Fortunee Sanua**, **Halina Kroogly** (former A.U.C. classmate) and her husband, Vicky and me. Sitting **Yvonne Salama**; **Edmond Abdel Noor**; the former registrar of the A.U.C., with his wife on his knee. 1952. (Right) Having lunch on the grounds of Bellevue Hospital, N.Y.U. **Odette Sanua** (my sister) is on my right.

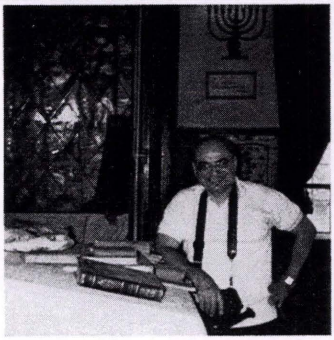
(Left) Getting married to **Stella Sardell**, January 29, 1955. (Left to Right) **Odette Sanua, Vicky Sanua, Rachel Naim,** a cousin, **Stella** and me, **Tina Naim and Elie Simhon,** my best man.

(Right) With my wife and two children, **Stella**, M.A., M.S in psychology, **Marianne**, B.A. Princeton, Ph.D. Columbia University, **David**, B.A., Columbia University, J.D, from **Benjamin N Cardozo School** of Law, Yeshiva University.

I MADE IT! GOD BLESS AMERICA! ADDRESSING THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF PSYCHOLOGISTS IN SAN FRANCISCO AS A PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION, 1970.

(RIGHT) DINNER WITH THE COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL.

11. Trips Abroad



(Top left) Walking in 1992 in Kuzguncuk, a beautiful suburb of Istanbul on the Asian side of the Bosphorus. Where my grandfather Victor Sanua and his family resided before immigrating to Egypt. This picture was taken while I was attending the quincentennial anniversary conference on the expulsion of Jews in 1492 by the Spanish Inquisition.

(Top right) The cemetery in Kuzguncuk,, Turkey. Dr. **Minna Rozen**, an Israeli historian from Haifa, took pictures of all Jewish cemeteries in Turkey and found ten graves bearing the names of Sanua in Kuzguncuk, with the first one dating 1670. She gave me the pictures of all these stones, which had inscriptions in Ladino with Hebrew characters. I visited the graves in Kuzguncuk and attended a Sabbath service in the local synagogue, part of the service was in Ladino. There are no Jews in Kuzguncuk today, but the synagogue is still maintained by the Jews living in Istanbul, on the European side of the Bosphorus. It seems that any property which is not used is taken over by the government. Visiting Kuzguncuk was as expected highly emotional, since I was able to see a beautiful site where my ancestors lived.

(Bottom left) Visiting the Canakkale (Dardanelles) synagogue, which was attended by my grandfather, on my mother's side, **Marco Simon**. The town has now six aging Jews, but the synagogue is well preserved.

(Bottom right) Family reunion of my cousin **Moise Sanua**, the man seated wearing glasses, formerly the secretary of **Rabbi Haim Nahoum Eff,** chief Rabbi of Egypt, with my uncle **Raphael Sanua** in Tel Aviv. They had not seen each other for more than 60 years. They cried when they met. This picture was taken during my 1973-74 sabbatical in Neve Avivim, a suburb of Tel Aviv. We were in Israel when the Yom-Kippur War broke out. We were in the synagogue, when we learned that the Egyptian crossed the canal and killed most of the defenders. My son, **David** with long hair is behind me. Raphael Sanua, left Egypt as a young man and went to the Belgian Congo and established a very successful business.

12. Return to Egypt 1982, 2002

(Top left) Return to Egypt in 1983. I am on Soliman Pacha Street, Cairo, where we see a shepherd leading his flock of sheep in a main street of Cairo. In the background is the **Metropolitan Hotel**, where we had ballroom dancing.

(Top right) **Cicurel department** store still exists (1983).

(Bottom left) In front of the **National Bank of Egypt,** 1983.

(Bottom Right) In Guizah, the three pyramids behind me. The largest one is **Kheops** (Khufu). Today it is forbidden to climb it. I entered in to the funerary chamber a few days before my departure. The names of the other pyramids are **Khafre** (Chephren) and **Menkaure** (Mycrinus). The Pyramids are the only wonders of the world that still exist. Not too far is the **Sphinx,** a recumbent lion with a human head, supposed to be the head of **Khafre**. The **Sphinx** has a broken nose, there are various theories to explain this loss.

Note: As you can see from the pictures, traffic in Cairo is very heavy. I read in the New York Times, that deliveries are allowed only at night to reduce the traffic during the day.

Historical Notes about the areas visited and which are referred in the pictures

1. **Alexandria** (Iskenderiya in Arabic)
2. **Cairo (Al Kahira in Arabic)**
3. **Guizah**- Site of the major Egyptian Pyramids
4. **Hawandiah**
5. **Heliopolis** (worship of the Sun)
6. **Maadi** (a suburb of Cairo)
7. **Mokattam Hills**
8. **Names of the streets where we lived**
9. **Sakkarah necropolis**
10. **Schooling in Egypt in foreign schools**

Historical Notes about the areas visited and which are referred in the pictures

1. Alexandria (Iskenderiya in Arabic)

Alexandria, the second largest city in Egypt, has an estimated population of 4.5 million. It is the major port of the country. It is the favorite resort town of many Egyptians and foreigners because of its famous beaches, hotels, nightlife, and the beautiful corniche on the beach, palaces, and magnificent buildings, now faded.

Alexander the Great built Alexandria on the site of a fishing village. At one time it boasted the famous wonder of the world The Pharos, a lighthouse and extensive libraries. The lighthouse is assumed to have a height of 124 meters. Today no one knows what it looked like. According to annals of history, an earthquake destroyed it and the masonry fell into the bay, fires destroyed the libraries. This is where the Old Testament was translated into Greek. The remnants of the lighthouse were found in the surrounding waters of Alexandria close to where the Pharos was built. A French archeologist **Jean – Yves Empereur**, found in the waters quite a number of statuary of the time of the Ptolemy's. Alexandria is the famous city where Julius Caesar and Marc Anthony had their romance with Cleopatra. At that time, Alexandria was the capital of Egypt. Alexandrians were very proud of their city, since they considered it as part of Europe. They labeled the rest of the country as Egypt! They often complained that the Cairenes (people who lived in Cairo) dirtied their beaches in the summer months. They even had a song expressing their superiority as there was a kind of rivalry between the two cities. (If anyone remembers the words of this song, please contact the editor). Today there are two newsletters devoted to Alexandria: **Amicale Alexandrie Hier et Aujourd'hui,** edited by **Sandro Manzoni** in Geneva and **Amicale Alexandrie** by **Albert de Vidas,** who lives in Fairfield, Connecticut. Information on these two newsletters can be found on their website.

Alexandria has still one large synagogue, Eliahu Hanavi on Nebi Daniel Street. A magnificent opulent building has been well maintained and is surrounded by a large garden. The Alexandria Rabbinate has offices on its premises. There are no regular religious services, but I understand that for Rosh Shashanna and Yom Kippur, Israelis come to Alexandria to arrange the services. It is open exclusively for tourists who want to visit the synagogue. There are three cemeteries which are relatively in good shape. The man in charge of the rabbinate is **Dr. Max Salama**, a retired dentist who is in his 80's; **Mrs. Lina Mattatia**, also in her 80's is assisting him, and **Victor Balassiano**, who seems to be the youngest male of the Jewish Alexandria community, is 63 years old. I visited the synagogue about 3 years ago when my cruise ship stopped in Alexandria for one day. At that time, the man in charge was **Mr. Joseph Harari**. He was the last Jew to own a store in Alexandria. I understand that he is now living in Brazil. I videotaped my interview with him and videotaped the inside of the synagogue. I had a chance to meet Mr. Balassiano's two daughters, Racheline and Esther who managed to come to the USA and get their B.A. degree. Racheline got her degree in graphics and she designed the cover of the book. .

Victor Balassiano and his daughters took me to the famous and well-known restaurant, **Beniamini** to eat "Foul Medames"(Fava beans) and "Tamiya" (a better known word is "Falalel" made of chick peas) and other favorite foods which are considered to be national food. It was a favorite eating-place for Europeans. Issue No.4 of my newsletter has a complete story of the visit. All major native businesses now have kept the names of the original European owners after the latter left Egypt. The Balassianos drove me along a stretch of the beach Corniche. The beaches were crowded with men in swimming trunks, but no woman in swimming suits. I shall mention here the famous beaches with which we were familiar, Sidi Bishr, San Stefano, Glymonopolou, Stanley Bay, Rushdy, Sidi-Gaber, Sporting, Shatby, etc. There was a beach called Camp de Cesar, which probably has a new name. I am sure that many Egyptian Jews reading the names of those beaches will have a great sense of nostalgia.

2. Cairo (Al Kahira in Arabic)

Cairo is the modern capital of Egypt, **Khedive Ismail** modernized the downtown section of Cairo in the 18th century, inspired by the large boulevards of Haussmann in Paris. In ancient times Egypt had two capitals- **Memphis** near Cairo and **Thebes** in Upper Egypt. At one time the two parts of old Pharaonic Egypt were united. About 15 miles from Cairo, lies Guizah with its famous Pyramids and Sphinx. When I left Egypt in 1950, Cairo had a population of about 2.5 million people; now, its population is estimated to be 16 million. The total population of the country was 26 million in 1950. Today, it is estimated at more then 70 million. The traffic is so intense in some places that they erected bridges between the two sides of some streets. Cairo boasts of the famous bazaar **Khan Khalil**, mostly visited by tourists, and the well-known **Al Azhar** University built in the 10th century. It is the oldest and the leading center of Islamic learning in the Arab world.

In 641 the Arabs under General Amr Ibn Al-As, the Muslim conqueror of Egypt, founded **Fostat** (Old Cairo today). In 882, a Coptic church sold to the Jews, became the **Ben Ezra** synagogue, which had the famous **Genizah** (Hidden) documents, lodged in the attic, containing many documents of great value in Hebrew and Arabic. **Solomon Schechter**, an English Talmudist, originally deciphered some of this material. It came to his attention in 1896, when two female English tourists bought some documents in Cairo and sent them to Schechter for his evaluation. He found them of extraordinary value. Most of these documents are presently stored at Cambridge University. They are also to be found at a few major universities in the world. Some of the documents are at the Jewish Theological Seminary and Yeshiva University in New York. **S.D Goiten**, an American scholar at the University of Pennsylvania, in 1967 published five volumes, A Mediterranean Society, based on these documents. They had become as a unique, historical source providing important information on Jewish life in the Middle Ages. **Maimonides**, the medieval philosopher and physician, lived in Fostat.

As far as I know, there may be a few old male Jews still living in Cairo. Except for the **Ben Ezra** and **Shaar Hashamayim** synagogues, all the rest are in serious disrepair, particularly the synagogue of Maimonides. However, there is a small synagogue that holds services and it is situated in Maadi, but primarily used by the

Jewish Israeli and American diplomatic corps. Cairo used to have about 30 functioning synagogues. The President of the Jewish Rabbinate in Cairo is a woman, **Carmen Weinstein**. According to the rules of the rabbinate, only a man can be president, but since there are no competent Jewish males around, a woman is at the head. Carmen Weinstein is working very hard to maintain the functioning of the rabbinate. The Bassatine cemetery, which is one of the oldest in existence, is in very poor shape because marble burial slabs with the names of the deceased have been taken away and I understand that squatters inhabit some of the mausoleums. It is to the credit of Carmen Weinstein that, with the assistance of French and Brooklyn Egyptian Jews, she has been able to clean up the area and built some walls to reduce the damage of general neglect and prevent people to throw garbage. An American Jewish student Aaron Kiviat, while studying at the American University in Cairo, rallied some volunteers, managed to computerize all the names of those burial stones that were still identifiable. He could not find the names of any of my relatives, or parents.

Desire Sakkal, a former Egyptian Jew who lives now in Brooklyn, is trying, through his organization, **Historical Society of Jews from Egypt,** to get the entire Torahs scrolls from all the synagogues out of the country. There is opposition from the Egyptian government who considers these scrolls as antiquities and opposition from Carmen Weinstein. She feels that foreign Jewry should provide the necessary funds to maintain the Jewish artifacts in the country, possibly in a museum. The reality still remains as to who will be responsible for controlling and preserving those Torahs after every single Jew has died. **This is the great dilemma.**

3. **Guizah**- Site of the major Egyptian Pyramids

Guizah is about 25 kilometers from Cairo. It was the necropolis of **Memphis**, the ancient capital of Egypt. It has many pyramids, but there are three large ones well known around the world. The largest is a burial monument of **Khufu (Cheops),** a pharaoh of the old kingdom built around 2690 B.C. It is with the other two pyramids the only wonders of the world that ares still standing. Cheops has a height of about 137 meters and occupies a surface of 13 acres. Its original height was 146 meters. It is only a few days before my departure to the USA in 1950, that I decided to take the strenuous task to go down a narrow low ceiling passageway to the funerary chamber which was empty, but with walls covered with hieroglyphics. The building of the pyramids was due to the desire of rulers to use these monuments to serve as sepulchers after their death, to preserve their bodies since they believed in resurrection and immortality. The names of the other Pyramids are Khafre (Chefren), who was the son of Khufu and Menkaura, who was the son of Chefren. .Today, it is still a mystery as to how those pyramids were built. It is assumed that a ramp was built around the pyramid and elevated as the work proceeded, and do away with the ramp once the building is completed.

Not far away is the **Sphinx,** a mythical statue with the body of a lion and a face of a man. It is assumed that it the face of Chefren. The Sphinx does not have a nose, and a legend tries to explain it. It seems that during the battle between Napoleon who conquered Egypt and the Mamelukes around 1798, that nose was blown off by a cannon

ball. According to the French history book which we used in our Catholic school, Napoleon is supposed to have said, I do not remember the exact words, "We are witnessing 30 centuries of history". This is the closest we ever got at the College des Freres, to an event in Egyptian history, and we have to be thankful to Napoleon for it! A travel Egyptian brochure explains the missing nose from shooting practices of Egyptian forces during the 17th Century, another puzzling explanation.

As an adolescent, I used to rent a bicycle in Cairo and go as fast as I can back and forth to Guizah, and all along the road, one could only see farms. Now housing of the poor are replacing the farms. We used to rent a cottage near the Pyramids, owned by the YMCA where we spent our weekends. Many of the pictures that I have included in the previous section were taken in such surroundings. Guizah had another attraction for us, and this was "*"L'auberge des Pyramides"*, which was a kind of nightclub in the open-air which provided shows and dinner dances. Not far away was the famous hotel **Mena House** which I understand was extended before the inauguration of the Suez Canal in 1869 by **Khedive Ismail**. The purpose was to host the Empress of France, **Eugenie**, wife of **Napoleon III,** so that she could look at the Pyramids from her balcony. My understanding is that **Khedive Ismail** had a crush on her! (Robert Sole)

4. Hawandiah

Hawandiah a village about 25 kilometers from Cairo, consists of two sections: a poor section for native Arabs, working for the big, single refinery of sugar in Egypt, financed and managed by Joseph Cattaui Pacha, and a European section for employees living in beautiful villas, with big gardens. There was a huge grocery store, surrounded by a very large garden, owned by a Greek national and he served the European community, It was customary for Greeks to own grocery stores all over Egypt. An uncle of mine, **Nissim Sanua**, worked for the refinery and I had the opportunity to visit him several times to meet my cousin **Max Sanua** (d. 2003) who was of my age. I learned a great deal about gardening in their huge garden surrounding their house. At that time I was 13 years old, and I used to walk through the village and witness the great differences between how the dwelling of Europeans and the Arabs.

I developed an interest in anthropology and became quite familiar with the superstitions of the natives, particularly the existence of "Afrits", a name for native spirits regarded as devils much dreaded in Egypt. I was told not to walk near a river, because bad "Afrits" lived there. Another word with which I became familiar is "Ghoul". The Arabian "ghoul" is a desert-dwelling, shape-shifting demon that can transform itself into an animal, especially a hyena. It robs graves and feeds on the flesh of the dead, or on young children. It also lures travelers into the desert to slay and devour them. Children who misbehave are disciplined by referring to the "Ghouls". According to my recollection, either side of the road between Cairo and Hawandiah, was all farmland. In 1983, I visited Egypt with my daughter and I took a tour to see archeological sites near Cairo. In the course of the tour, the guide said we were going through Hawandiah, which, of course, reminded me of my early experiences in that village. All the land between Cairo and Hawandiah as I recall were farms, which had disappeared for building native dwellings because of the population explosion in the country.

5. Heliopolis (worship of the Sun)

Heliopolis ("Misr el-Guedidah", or "new Cairo" in Arabic) was originally a suburb of Cairo. In 1906, a Belgian industrialist Edouard Louis Joseph, **Baron Empain** purchased a large stretch of desert land, northwest of Cairo and built Heliopolis with neo-Arabic-style buildings set in gardens, also built a commuter train (we used to call it the **Metro**) which started from the center of the city, Fouad lst Street. Originally, Heliopolis was mostly inhabited by upper-class Europeans. I cannot use the word "foreigners", since most of them were born in Egypt. It had large gardens, and even a race horse track. As Cairo grew, the distance between Cairo and Heliopolis vanished, and now Heliopolis is inside Cairo.

6. Maadi (a suburb of Cairo)

Maadi, a wealthy suburb of Cairo and built in 1905 partially financed by Jews consisted of villas surrounded by gardens. Outside this suburb, **Marconi**, the Italian wireless communication company, built a station on desert land, but there were enough trees so that camping was possible. At present Maadi has the only functioning synagogue. **Meyer Biton Temple,** which recently re-opened primarily for the staff of the Israeli diplomatic corps. Jews now living in Egypt are either very old or sick, and it is not possible to have a minyan (10 people) of native-born Jews for Sabbath services. At the present time the number of Israelis on diplomatic missions is larger then the number of local Jews (Haaretz). Because of the increasing Egyptian population, there are very few gardens left, since the land is being used to build dwellings.

7. Mokattam Hills

On top of the Mokattam hills, Saladin, a ruler of Egypt of Kurdish origin (1137-1193) who defeated the Crusaders under Richard of England, built in 1183 a fortress. The fortress commands a strategic view of the entire capital and together with the Mohammed Ali Mosque dominates the Cairo skyline. The Mokattam Hills separate Cairo from the Western desert.

8. Names of the streets where we lived

Before leaving for Europe, my family lived on **Malika ("Queen" in Arabic) Nazli** Street., which was on the way to beautiful **Heliopolis**, a Cairo suburb, built by the Belgians. **Nazli was** the mother of **King Farouk**, sent to exile by the "free officers" under **Nasser** in 1952. Upon returning to Egypt in 1932-1933, we lived on **Khedive Ismail** Street. Both Farouk and Ismail belonged to the dynasty started by **Mohammad Ali**. He was appointed by Turkey (then, the Ottoman Empire) in 1805 as governor of Egypt. He destroyed the **Mameluk's** power and ruled until 1848 when he became senile. Mohammad Ali who was of Albanian origin, was responsible for inviting foreigners to modernize the country. When World War II started, our home was close to the British barracks and the bridges over the Nile. Since we were fearful of bombing, we moved to **Malika Farida** Street. **Farida** was the first wife of Farouk. He divorced her, presumably

because she gave birth to three daughters. Farouk started all their names with an "**F**" which was traditional in his family. Another tradition was that only royalty could use red cars.

After his divorce our street was renamed **Abdel Khalig Sarwat Pacha.** After the revolution in 1952, the word "Pacha" was dropped. Streets with names of Europeans were also changed altogether. For example, an area called **Clot Bey**, a French physician who established the first medical school in Egypt, was probably changed. I do not dare to inquire about its present name since it was a disreputable area. Another example is **Soliman Pacha** square with his own statue. Soliman was a French general who converted to Islam. Nevertheless, the square and the street name were changed to **Taalat Harb** after an important businessman. In that famous square, stood Gropppi, well-known establishment. It had a restaurant, patisserie, dancing and entertainment facilities where we used to have extremely pleasant times. Maurice Chevalier performed once at Groppi's. I visited Groppi in 1982. I was sorry to see that it was turned into a café where people played backgammon and drank tea.

We did not select our apartments because the address had the names of royal family members, it was unintentional!

9. Sakkarah necropolis

The **Sakkarah** necropolis of the ancient capital of Memphis, which lies about 27 kilometers southwest of Cairo, used to be a favorite place for excursions. It has a Step Pyramid, the first large-scale, stone structure in history built in 2816 BC. It marked a transitional phase in the evolution of smooth-sided pyramids. Later such pyramids were built at Guizah. On the Sakkarah site, there is also a tomb, the **Serapeum,** where a large number of mummified **Apis** bulls who were worshiped and buried in monolithic sarcophagi. Egypt had two ancient capitals: **Memphis** in Egypt near Cairo and **Thebes** in Lower Egypt, near modern **Luxor.** The kingdoms were united about 3400 B.C.

There is very little left of Memphis since the stones of this ancient city were taken away by later Pharaohs to build their own monuments. Thebes in the South, on the other hand, has the highest concentration in the world of imposing statuary, monuments and temples, namely the Karnak monuments. Some can be seen in the pictures I took before my departure in 1950.

10. Schooling in Egypt in foreign schools

A large percentage of European families sent their children to French schools primarily, the Catholic religious Brothers' schools and the secular Lycees Francais. However, the British, Italian, Greek, Armenian, and German communities had their own schools enabling their graduates to attend universities in their countries of origin. A good knowledge of Arabic was required to attend Egyptian schools and universities. Very few of the Europeans attended those schools, since their native language was not Arabic. However, most of them spoke colloquial Arabic, which was not adequate in pursuing academic studies. The American University in Cairo was the only foreign educational

institution offering regular undergraduate degrees. There was a French night school where legal studies were offered under the supervision of the French educational system.

At the Catholic school, we learned a great deal about French history, and Greek civilization. We learned in some details how **Demosthenes**, a law maker in Athens who because of some speech defect, practiced improving his speechmaking by putting pebbles in his mouth and talking while facing the sea with its surging waves ! We learned also that the Spartans, because of their fitness programs, were able to defeat the brainy Athenians. We had no historical studies of Egypt, ancient or modern, in spite of the fact that we were living in the country. At the American University in Cairo, we had a course on the different religions of the world taught by the president **J.B. Watson**, but the study of the Muslim religion was not included. I learned later that he had written a book on the Muslim religion. Thus, it is ironic that the foreign educational system in Egypt did not feel the necessity to teach the history of the country in which we lived. I am assuming that such state of affairs must have probably made the Egyptian resentful.

Autobiographical sketch
Victor Sanua Ph.D.

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I was born in Egypt into a Ladino (a form of archaic Spanish.) speaking family. My mother was born in Canakkale, Turkey (Dardanelles), and my grandfather on my father's side **Victor Haim Sanua**, was born in Istanbul. Our common language was French. My father **David Sanua** worked as a manager in a department store. I had two older sisters, Fortunee (Tuna) and Victoria (Tota) and a younger sister to whom my mother gave a French name Odette! In 1927, the whole family moved to Brussels, Belgium, where my father joined his brother to do business with the Belgian Congo. My father was absent for some time, working in Leopoldville, (now Kinshasha). Because of the very rough and cold weather in Belgium, my family decided to return to Egypt, as they were "missing the sun"!

When we returned to Cairo in 1933, we lived close to the Abdin Palace, where **King Fouad** resided. Every morning, I could watch from my balcony soldiers parading around the huge square with a marching band. At that time, it was appropriate for middle-class Jewish families to send their children to Catholic schools, which were considered the best. I attended the Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle school, Bab-el-Louk, 1933-36. Because of my limited knowledge of English and Arabic, the school placed me in a class below my age grade. We had two hours of English and two hours of Arabic a week. I learned some English and some Arabic, but because the literary Arabic we learned in school had very little in common with colloquial Arabic, I never acquired any fluency in the language and as a result later had a serious problem.

After graduating from the Catholic Junior High School, my mother very wisely decided that I should continue my studies in English, because for some time, the use of the French language had been declining in international importance, particularly after World War II. I attended the high school attached to the American University in Cairo. Since my English was very limited, they placed me in a lower grade and I required five years to get a high school diploma. I quickly learned the English language, and the school promoted me twice so that I was able to get my London University matriculation at 18. However, I had to take examinations for the two years I skipped, thus I spent two summers studying on my own for the two curricula I missed. The school diploma I received from my high school was valid only in the U.S.A. I had to take the London University matriculation examination, in order to be eligible to be admitted to an English University. Of course, I had to be very familiar with Shakespeare! With such an educational academic background, I became quite knowledgeable of the French and English languages, in addition to the regular Ladino (Judeo-Spanish) spoken at home. Ladino was never taught systematically as a language, but fortunately, it was instrumental in enabling me to qualify for permanent residence in the U.S.A. since Spanish-speaking psychologists were in short supply.

Before my graduation, my father passed away, and I had to work for a living. Because of my knowledge of English, it was easy for me to find employment in the import-export business dealing with England. While working for the **Gattegno** department store, we often received the news from our correspondents in England, that German submarines in the Mediterranean often sank British merchant ships. England was making great efforts to export, since her survival depended on trade.

During the war, I was considered an enemy alien because I had an Italian passport. If I traveled from one city to another, I had to report about those trips to the police. At the outset of the war, a large number of Italian citizens were interned in detention camps. I was probably spared from that predicament because being Jewish; I could not possibly have supported the Axis powers. I was even able to work as the chief clerk of the Indian Red Cross of the British army. Rommel, who headed the Italian and the German armies, tried to invade Egypt. Britain had large contingents of its soldiers, and soldiers from the British Empire on the Western front. This was a period of great danger, because of the fear that the Germans would occupy Egypt. The British army was ready to evacuate, but fortunately, General Montgomery repulsed the German Army at El Alamein in 1942, and he continued with his campaign until the whole Italian and German armies were destroyed. .

I started working in 1939 for four years with the intention of returning to the American University in Cairo for a B.A. degree. By 1943, I had saved enough money to return to the American university. I completed the three years of college in two years, and graduated in 1945. My first job after graduation was to work for the radio division of the Office of War Information (OWI) of the United States Government. Upon its closing, I worked for a while in the United States Information Service (USIS) library. In May 14, 1948, during the first Arab-Israeli war, I was working for a Jewish firm. I lost my job because of my Italian citizenship, in spite of the fact that I was working for a Jewish company. An Egyptian **Company Law** required that 75% of the employees of businesses should be Egyptian. I tried to work independently as a salesperson but I was a total failure. I was able to find employment in an office representing the Hungarian communist government, as foreign companies were exempted from the Company Law. Later I found a position as an accountant with the American Friends Services Committee, (A.F.S.C.), an organization of Quakers who volunteered to assist the refugees.

During my high school days, I attended evening classes to study accounting and shorthand. I felt that the academic subjects of a regular high school program would not be adequate to work in a business office. I could not attend an Egyptian University, since my Arabic was quite poor. The A.F.S.C. was originally responsible for assisting Arab refugees, displaced by the first Arab-Israeli war. Later on, the United Nations assumed this humanitarian effort and employed me. This assistance of Arab refugees became quite politicized at a later period. A larger percentage of Arab refugees of the 1948 war and later wars, their children and grandchildren are still refugees in 2005.. During this period, life for the Jews in Egypt had become very difficult. Many Jews were arrested and placed in detention camps. I assume because of my Italian citizenship I was spared from imprisonment. Foreign citizens were less likely to be arrested. Young people with Zionist activities on their records were more likely to be sent to detention camps. Well-known detention camps were

Huckstep near Cairo, a former air base of the U.S.A., Barrages, Abou-Zaabal, Tourah, near Cairo, Aboukir, near Alexandria and El Tor in the Sinai desert, et al.. The treatment of Jews was quite severe after the English, French, and Israeli invasion of Egypt in 1956. The invasion was launched because Nasser forcefully seized the Suez Canal, which was considered an international waterway. French and English nationals had to leave within a short period and their assets were confiscated. Big businesses owned by Jews were sequestered. Subsequently, Egyptian officers were assigned to manage those companies, which resulted in great losses for the Jewish owners. About half a century later (2005), one organization, JUSTICE FOR JEWS FROM ARAB COUNTRIES in the U.S.A.and THE WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR JEWS FROM ARAB COUNTRIES in Israel, and the ISRAELI FOREIGN OFFICE are still trying to assess the value of the Jewish properties left behind. The chances for retribution are minimal, since the economic status of Arab countries is very precarious.

Early on, I realized that the future for Jews would be very insecure in the Arab world and I thought of relocating in some other country. Early in 1940, I registered my family on the immigration list of the U.S.A. Consulate. However, there was a problem. My mother was born in Turkey, and as the Turkish quota was different from the Egyptian quota, she would not have been able to come with us. I was quite aware of that problem but left our names anyway.

In 1949, an unpleasant experience prompted me to make the move to leave as soon as possible. One night I was in a downtown Cairo Greek café with some friends when we heard the shouts and commotion of a mob approaching from some distance. My friends decided to leave immediately while I lingered. There was a riot with people destroying European property. When the shouts were close to the café, foreseeing serious danger, I decided to hide myself under one of the tables close to the wall and lowered the tablecloth so as not to be seen. The mob came into the café, broke a few chairs, glasses, and glass partitions, but fortunately did not see me. It is precisely at that time, that I seriously considered leaving the country with my family. In 1950, because of the further deterioration of the political situation, we decided to go to Israel. My mother, Fortunee and I decided to go first to Italy and then go to Israel. Relatives had already departed for that country. There were no direct connections between Israel and Egypt because both countries were still at war in spite of the armistice. Two of my sisters, Vicky and Odette, remained in Cairo, and the plan was to send for them once we established ourselves in Israel. Before leaving Egypt, I sent applications to the Graduate schools of six universities in the U.S.A. I got those names hurriedly from a book Study Abroad Opportunities, published by the United Nations My plan was that once my family was established in Israel and felt safe, I could go to America to do graduate work in psychology and return to Israel after I had developed some skills in that profession.

The day we landed in Italy, the Korean conflict started on June 25, 1950, and there was fear that World War III would breakout. Rather than continuing with the trip and because of the fear that the Mediterranean might be closed, we returned with great regret to Egypt. Upon our return, I found that five universities had accepted me with a scholarship, room and board, but one did not. The first letter I received was from Bowling Green State University in Ohio. Since the fear of World War III had subsided, I decided that I would go to study in America,

for one year, then return to Egypt and pursue our intention to settle in Israel. As expected, leaving my mother and three sisters was very distressing to my mother. I must confess that I had sincere doubts that I was doing the right thing leaving four women in difficult times, but the future seemed more promising if I had a profession before going to Israel.

When I went to the American consulate to get a student's visa, the official told me that I could not get one because I was on the immigration list. Because of the problem of the quota system, I waived my claim to immigration status and went to America with a student's visa. I sailed on the s/s. *Esperia* of the Adriatica line. The ship had a large number of Egyptian Jewish passengers leaving the country for Naples; from there they would go to different countries that would accept them. Every foreigner before leaving Egypt had to get an exit visa from a special office of the Cairo governorate. I was quite fearful of applying for the exit visa myself because of my limited knowledge of Arabic. I assumed that this could possibly antagonize the government officials. So I assigned a relative, who could speak Arabic fluently, to go to that office and I hoped that he would able to persuade an official to give me a visa without my presence. This whole situation reflects the great fear we had around that period, particularly as we were hearing of indiscriminate arrests. Another example of fear was that one Friday night; we had a Shabbat candle lit in the apartment and no one at home. Upon hearing an air-alarm about a possible attack by Israeli planes, I rushed to my home when to my distress; I found I had misplaced my house key. I needed to extinguish the candle, since we were fearful of being branded as spies signaling to Israeli planes. With almost superhuman strength and a few kicks with my right leg, I was able to break the door open and extinguish the candle to my great relief. We could hear in the street, "*Taffi el Nour*" ("Turn off the light"), a frightening warning. I always enjoyed taking pictures and quite often, I carried my camera in the street. My mother often argued with me because she feared that a policeman (a *shawish* in Arabic) could arrest me as a spy, photographing places of strategic importance.

While I was on the ship on my way to Naples, I experienced a very emotional moment when we reached international waters. In unison, all the refugees started singing the "**Hatikva**", the Jewish national anthem. It was very hazardous to sing such a song in Egypt. We were even fearful of using the word "Israel" outside our homes. It had become customary to use the expression "*chez nous*" (our place) to signify Israel, since that word had become anathema to the Egyptians and still is today. My plan was that upon reaching Naples, I would try get a ship going to America on the same day of my arrival. If none were available, I would continue to Genoa, where there were more opportunities for ships going to the U.S.A. I was fortunate to find a booking in the second class of the ship s/s *Saturnia*, which was leaving the same day. After I got my ticket, there was a downpour, but I had to rush back to the s/s *Esperia* in order to get my very heavy luggage, I could not get anyone to help me. I had to do it quickly because the ship was ready to leave, and the gangplank was pulled up when I reached the pier. .

I spent a full year doing graduate work at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. I did all the course work for an M.A. degree in psychology, but without the thesis. As I was making plans to return to Egypt in 1951, there were riots in Cairo, and many Jews and Europeans decided to immigrate to Brazil, Australia, Italy and other countries, thus

shortening the list of applicants trying to immigrate to the U.S.A. It is for this reason that my sisters were able to get their immigration visas to America. They obtained a tourist visa to Canada for my mother. The plan was for me to travel to Montreal and stay with my mother while my sisters entered the U.S.A. Fortunee would then go to Montreal to stay with my mother. We hoped for the best. At least, all of us were out of the country. At the time I was taking my final exams, I received a call informing me that my mother had died. This happened two weeks before the departure of my family, so there was no need for me to go to Montreal. Is it possible that leaving behind cherished possessions in the apartment and having an uncertain future seriously affected my mother's morale? This was of period of great distress and sorrow for all of us. My sisters sent me pictures of her funeral. Some time afterwards, I received from my aunt and uncle the picture of my mother's burial stone at the Bassatine cemetery. Aaron Kiviat, a young American student attending the American University in Cairo in 2002, computerized the names that could be identified on the stones of the cemetery. A high percentage of the marble stones with their inscriptions had been removed. Kiviat did not have the names of my buried parents on his list.

I was in a great dilemma in 1951 because of my student status. I had to return to Egypt unless I was registered in a university, and Bowling Green State University did not have a Ph.D. program in psychology at that time. . During this period, I had spent all of my money, keeping enough funds to return to Egypt. I originally came to the U.S.A. with $3,000, all bought on the black market, and carrying them in my pocket. I was officially a foreigner in spite of the fact that I was born in Egypt. I could not get dollars legally transferred through a bank. In the summer of 1951, as I was looking through my old correspondence, I found the original letter received from Michigan State University, East Lansing. It indicated that they would not accept me for graduate work in the Fall of 1950, but on the other side of the letter, there was postscript stating that I could be accepted in 1951, an important message which I did not note previously.. Of course, this simplified the whole situation.

For the next four years, I was a student at Michigan State University in East Lansing. Early I was involved doing all sorts of odd jobs, including the emptying of freight cars of the New York Central Railways, delivering furniture, particularly refrigerators, working as a waiter (see pictorial memoirs), instructor in Arthur Murray dancing school, et al. I had received a full scholarship, room and board at both universities, but at M.S.U., I needed money for my pocket expenses. Because of my foreign status, I could not work at Veterans' hospitals where most of the clinical psychology students received their clinical experience and a sizable remuneration. However, later I was able to work as a school psychologist in Lansing after I developed enough skills in the profession. Furthermore, I became an instructor at Michigan State University teaching classes made up of football players who had failing grades. This was a rather responsible job because I had to teach them how to study. Football players who did not improve their grade-point average, could not play on the university football team. Football was very important at M.S.U. The team went twice in a row to the Rose Bowl games in California during the years of my graduate work

In 1955, I was able to get a psychology internship at Bellevue Hospital, New York University and because of my Ladino-speaking skills, I had to interview Puerto Rican patients during my internship. Of course, this forced me to modernize my Ladino Spanish to

modern Spanish to enable me to communicate with them. I had to drop all the Hebrew and Turkish words that I had thought were Spanish!, but I had also to learn some Spanglish. After I terminated my internship, I was supposed to go back to Egypt, since I was still under a student's visa. Bellevue Hospital arranged for me to have residence status because they needed a Spanish-speaking psychologist and I became a regular employee of the hospital after my internship.

My younger sister Odette with her knowledge of several languages was able to work for International Time-Life Magazine. My two older sisters Fortunee and Vicky had a rough time. In Cairo, they owned a successful dressmaking business of "*Haute Couture*". They had to abandon everything, the apartment with all of its furniture and the workshop. At Customs in Alexandria, before boarding the ship, they were frisked with some intensity and whatever jewels they were carrying, including watches, were confiscated. In the U.S.A., they made their living by altering dresses in department stores, which naturally made them very unhappy after having had a very comfortable and secure life in Egypt.

After two years at Bellevue, I joined a group of investigators at Payne Whitney Clinic (New York Hospital) connected with Cornell University. The purpose of the research was to find out about the psychological problems among various ethnic and religious groups, including Blacks, Latinos, Italians, Jews, Irish, et al. This early exposure to research led me to an academic career, and I specialized in psychopathology, especially schizophrenia and infantile autism and research methodology. The study of Egyptian Jewry was my hobby. I subsequently taught at Harvard University, Yeshiva University, City College of CUNY, Adelphi University and St. John's University. I had a Fulbright lectureship in 1965 to teach at the Sorbonne in Paris. While my younger sister Odette and I were able to adapt beautifully to life in the U.S.A., my two older sisters, Fortunee and Vicky were not so fortunate particularly since their English was rather inadequate and both died prematurely. Thus, while being forced to leave Egypt was a blessing for many of us, like Odette and myself, older person trying to adjust to new conditions with little finantial resources sustained a great deal of stress. What is surprising is that during the few years they lived in the U.S.A., my sisters never expressed any recriminations or animosity against the Egyptian government that had made their life miserable.

Tentative Program of the WCJE HAIFA, 3-6 July 2006

FIRST DAY OF THE CONGRESS: July 3, 2006

1. Prof. Chaim Aharoni - The Modern History of Jews from Egypt.

2. Ovadiah Yeroushalmi - Jewish Journals in Egypt.

3. Tomer Levi - Jewish Philanthropy in Alexandria.

4. Levana Zamir - History of the Jewish Insitutions in Egypt, from 1850 to 1950.

5. Yitzhak Kerem - Sephardic Judeo-Spanish Speaking Settlement in Egypt in the late 19th and 20th Centuries.

6. Elie Politi and Ernesto Rahmani - After the Second Exodus: Rebirth of a Jewish Identity in South America.

7. Aimee Pelletier - Preserving and Disseminating Egyptian-Jewish Culture: Art and Life.

8. Naim Kattan - Reprendre La Parole.

9. Racheline Barda (née Abécassis) - The immigration experience of the Jews of Egypt in Australia.

10. Roundtables of the History of the Jews from Egypt as reflected by Writers and Poets: Ada Aharoni, Victor Sanua, Victor Nahmias (in memorium), Suzy Vidal, Vivian Silver, Albert Pardo, Albert Oudiz. The Roundtable will be moderated by Mireille Galanti.

11. Workshops on our own memories and stories, to be included in the *"Golden Book of the Jews from Egypt.*

SECOND DAY OF CONGRESS: July 4, 2006

1. **The Jews of Egypt in the 19th and 20thcenturies**
Participants: Prof. Zvi Zohar (Bar Ilan),
Prof.Ya'acov Landau (Hebrew University, Jerusalem),
Prof.Ilan Nachem (Bar Ilan),
Prof. Chaim Aharoni (Technion).

2. **The Change of Policy of Egypt'sAuthorities toward the Jews**
Participants: Prof. MichaelLaskier (Bar Ilan),
Mr. Tarek Heggy (Cairo, Egypt),
Dr. Ruthi Kimche (Haifa University),
Prof.Yoram Meital (Beer Sheva University).

3. **Israel, the Jews from Egypt andEgypt**
Participants: Prof. Ada Aharoni (Technion),
Prof. David Kushner (Haifa Universuty),
Prof. Yoav Gelber (Haifa University),
One of Israel's ambassadors to Egypt.

THIRD DAY OF THE CONGRESS : July 5, 2006

1. ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE NEBI DANIEL
"The Jewish Heritage in Egypt"

Chair-persons from A.I.N.D.:
Roger Bilboul ,Yves Fedida , Alec Nacamul.

2. ASSOCIATION pour la SAUVEGARDE du PATRIMOINE CULTUREL des JUIFS D'EGYPTE
Jo Chalom and Andre Cohen
Les recherches et livres de Jacques Hassoon et La Revue ***"Nahar Misrayim".***

3. PANEL:
1). Dr. Efraim Lev
The Cairo Genizah as a Main Source for the Reconstruction of Medical Knowledge and Practice in Medieval Mediterranean Societies.

2) Prof. Cyril Aslamov
The Francophony of the Egyptian Jews: French in a Multicultural Context.

3) Prof. Gabriel Rosenbaum
Spoken Jewish- Egyptian Arabic in the Twentieth Century.

4) Workshops on our own memories and stories, to be included in the
"Golden Book of the Jews from Egypt."

The Registration Fee is $ 250 - until 31.12.05 (and $ 300.- after this date).
It includes:
Three days Congress (two at Dan-Carmel Hotel or Meridian Hotel, and one at Haifa University), including coffee breaks.
Transportation to Haifa University and back to hotels.
Simultaneous translation (French, English, Hebrew).
Planting a Grove on Mount-Carmel, in the name of the Jews of Egypt.
One day trip (by special air-conditioned buses) to Mount-Carmel, visiting Haifa, Museums, the Bahai gardens, the Druze villages, reception by the Mayor of Haifa, etc.
and a ***Gala Dinner.***

Please send your filled forms and Registration Fee asap. (form below), to: WCJE Administrator, Ms. Sara Rossano, Manager, at: **L'Union des Juifs d'Egypte**
Address: 56 Pinsker Street, Tel-Aviv 61113 - Israel
Phone: +972-3-5285534 , Fax: +972-3-5285534

*For additional information please visit WCJE website at: www.wcje.net
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According to the Hebrew Bible, about 3500 years ago, Jews who were slaves in Egypt, left the country led by Moses. History in part repeated itself in the mid-twentieth century with what many have called "The Second Exodus." A modern, multi-lingual, vibrant, economically and culturally advanced community of 80,000 Jews, which had prospered in Egypt for decades and which was responsible for much of Egypt's contemporary development (including its famous film industry) found life in that land untenable and were forced to leave. The tragic consequences of the Arab-Israeli wars led to its demise. After every such war, there were anti-Jewish riots, arrests, internment, expropriations of Jewish assets, and laws that deprived them of their livelihoods. Between 1948 and 1957, most of these 80,000 souls had become refugees, a fact which today is rarely broached in the public domain when the subject of Middle Eastern refugees arises. Jews from Egypt, contrary to Palestinian refugees, did not remain refugees for any length of time. They managed to integrate themselves well into every country they immigrated to. The younger generation adjusted especially well, with their adaptivity and knowledge of numerous languages including English and French.

The older generation having enjoyed a comfortable life in Egypt, found it much more difficult to start life all over again in their new countries, and much physical and psychological distress resulted. The majority of the Egyptian Jewish refugees went to the new country of Israel. Many others settled in France, England, Italy, Australia and Brazil. The author himself witnessed the exhilarating feelings of the passengers when they started singing Hatikvah, the Jewish National Anthem, when their ship reached international waters. In that departure, the *SS Esperia* of the Italian Line Adriatica, a ship appropriately named for those who were leaving the country, became the symbol of their freedom. The book attempts to cover in a limited way the saga of modern Egyptian Jewry their history, life, culture, language, humor, and the challenges they faced and ultimately overcame.

Dr. Victor Sanua provides in this book Guide to Egyptian Jewry in the Mid-Twentieth Century a compilation of nine Newsletters written for the International Association of Jews from Egypt. The newsletters provide all types of information, which he was able to put together from various sources regarding life of Egyptian Jewry before 1948 events, reviews of biographies written by former Egyptian Jews, detailed listings and comments on papers presented at conferences in the USA and Israel. It includes a series of personal pictures which he was able to get out of the country in spite of the severe censorship, and pictures of sights of Cairo and Alexandria. In the last few issues, he has added an Egyptian Rubric, which includes a few jokes, particularly those of Goha. There is a second set of 15 articles on different aspects of Jewish Life in Egypt, which originally appeared in the Image Magazine, which were published in Brooklyn.

Furthermore, Dr. Victor Sanua has added a dozen articles on the same topic which have appeared in various regular Jewish periodicals, conference proceedings, a chapter, "Growing up as a Jew in Cairo", which appeared in a book which he edited. What prompted Prof. Sanua to undertake the preparation of this volume was the fact that documentation on contemporary Egyptian Jewry tends to be rare, if not existing, in the regular and Judaic libraries. He hopes that in years to come, the grandchildren of Egyptian Jewry might be interested to know more of the life of their forebears in their country of origin. Such compilation, while not topical at the present time, could turn up to be of interest to future investigators interested to document information on a neglected area of research. What makes this kind of work invaluable is that efforts to get out or even make copies of the archives in Alexandria and Cairo have not been successful because of the opposition of the few remaining rabbinate officials who want to hold on those treasures. They are bound to deteriorate further with their inevitable approaching demise of these officials. Egyptian Government officials have also not been helpful in solving this problem.

A Guide To Egyptian Jewry In The Mid-Twentieth Century

http://www.iajegypt.org

Egyptian Jewry
ISBN 0-9763226-4-1