JEWISH COMMUNITIES
IN THE
MUSLIM COUNTRIES
OF THE
MIDDLE EAST

A Survey

by

S. LANDSHUT

THE JEWISH CHRONICLE, LTD., LONDON

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prepared by

S. LANDSHUT

for

THE AMERICAN-JEWISH COMMITTEE

and

THE ANGLO - JEWISH ASSOCIATION

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FOREWORD

Recent events have drawn attention to the position of the most ancient Jewish communities in the world, whose settlement in various parts of the Middle East dates back as far as the destruction of the First Temple by King Nebuchadnezzar in 587 B.C. For the last thirteen centuries they have lived under Muslim rule. Their way of life, their customs, and their Jewish traditions are as varied as the vicissitudes of their long history.

The gradual improvement in their status during the last hundred years has now suffered a severe set-back, and their plight has attracted the notice of world Jewry. It has also become apparent that surprisingly little is known about the social, cultural, economic, and religious circumstances of these communities, who, in many respects, are so different from Western Jewry. Not a single sociological study has appeared either on Oriental Jewry as a whole or even on any individual community.

The Anglo-Jewish Association in London, the American Jewish Committee in New York, and the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* in Paris felt the need for a serious and objective inquiry on this subject, but the difficulties of the task became clear to the compilers soon after they began their work in November, 1948. They found that they were opening up an entirely new field of research and that, in view of the scanty information available, a comprehensive survey would involve elaborate and lengthy investigations for which the time and resources at their disposal were inadequate. The present work, therefore, does not claim to be an exhaustive study of all the questions connected with these Jewish communities. It is a first attempt to determine the significance of recent events in the light of as many historical, social, and political facts as were obtainable in the time and with the resources available. It may be expected that the very shortcomings of this preliminary report will illustrate the need for more comprehensive research on the subject.

Unfortunately, it has not been possible in the present Survey to deal with the Jewish population of French North Africa (Tunis, Algeria, Morocco). In that area the suzerainty of a European Power renders their position somewhat different from that of Jewish communities in most of the other countries of the Middle East, but it is hoped that the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* will shortly be able to fill this gap by the publication of a Survey of their own dealing with those territories.

Dr. Landshut, whose wide experience as a sociologist in Europe and the Middle East has given him special qualifications for undertaking this work, was advised on a number of points by a consultative panel consisting of Mr. S. Hillelson, Mr. David Kessler, Professor Bernard Lewis, and Dr. J. B. Segal, M.C.

In making this report available at a low price, the Anglo-Jewish Association and the American Jewish Committee hope that it will reach a wide circle of readers, including both specialists in Middle Eastern affairs and those members of the general public who are concerned with the position of Jewish minorities in a part of the world which is becoming increasingly a centre of interest, and with which the Anglo-Jewish Association and the *Alliance Israélite* have particularly close ties owing to their long experience there in the educational field. Thanks are due to the Trustees of the H. E. Joseph Trust and the Sefardi communities of London and Manchester for contributions towards the cost of the Survey, and to Mr. Neville Laski and Mr. R. N. Carvalho for their good offices in this connection.

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President,
American Jewish Committee

EWEN E. S. MONTAGU,
President,
Anglo-Jewish Association

April, 1950.

JEWISH POPULATION STATISTICS

Estimates as explained in the Survey.

MIDDLE EAST

Egypt	75,000
Iraq	120,000
Lebanon	6,700
Syria	6,000
Persia	100,000
Afghanistan	6,000
Bahrein	400
Hadhramaut	2,000
*Yemen	8,000
†Aden	1,200
Turkey	50,000
†Libya	14,000
Total in the Middle East	389,300

NORTH AFRICA

Tunis	100,000
Algeria	120,000
Morocco	225,000
Morocco, Spanish (1940)	14,700
Tangiers	7,000
Total in North Africa	466,700
Total in Middle East and North Africa (excluding Israel)	856,000

*The number of Jews still living in Yemen is a matter of conjecture. See Chapter VIII on Yemen.

†Emigration still in progress.

DISTRIBUTION OF JEWISH MINORITIES



TABLE OF JEWISH MINORITIES IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES

% OF TOTAL POPULATION	NUMBER OF JEWS	
0·4	EGYPT	75,000
2·4	IRAQ	120,000
0·8	LEBANON	10,000
0·3	SYRIA	5,000
0·7	PERSIA	80,000
0·05	AFGHANISTAN	5,000 (Approx)
0·4	BAHREIN	1,000
	HADHRAMAUT	1,000
0·2	YEMEN	5,000
2·5	ADEN	2,000
0·28	TURKEY	45,000
1·5	LIBYA	20,000
2·9	TUNISIA	70,000
1·7	ALGERIA	120,000
2·6	MOROCCO	200,000
2·1	MOROCCO, Spanish	20,000
2·8	TANGIERS	5,000

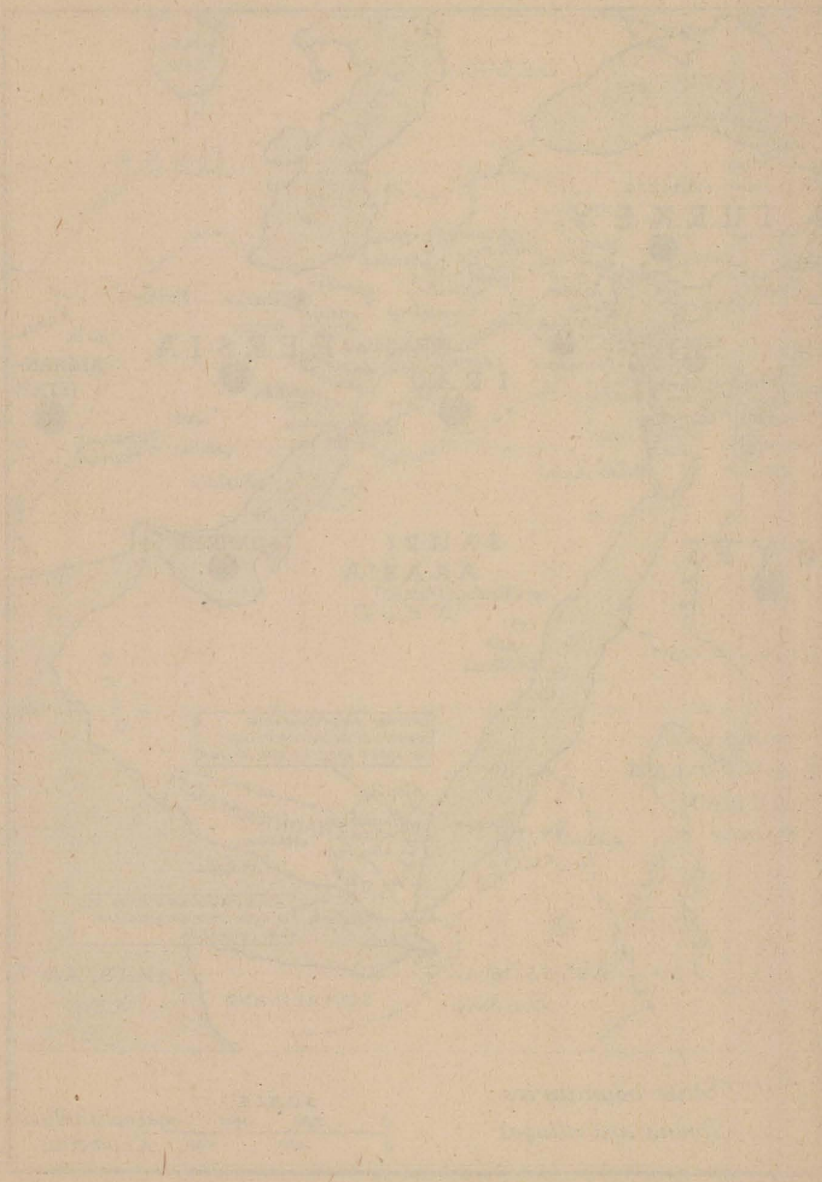
KEY TO SYMBOLS:–

Population of States } White segment shows proportion of Jews to total population.

" " Towns }

N THE MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA





CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

Population

At the present time there are rather more than 800,000 Jews in the Middle East and North Africa, exclusive of those in Israel. Before the Second World War they represented no more than 5 per cent to 6 per cent of the total Jewish population in the world, which then stood at 16-17 millions; and even to-day, after the massacre of approximately six million Jews by the Nazis, the proportion of Oriental Jewry to the total is no higher than 8 per cent.

The preponderance of the non-Oriental element can be explained by its remarkably high rate of natural increase during the last couple of hundred years, a rate higher during this period than even that of its Gentile neighbours. The latter's population increase in this time was, of course, unique in the history of the Western world—from 180,000,000 in 1800 to 536,000,000 in 1937. In the Islamic world, meanwhile, the Jewish population remained more or less stationary. Such natural increase as did take place among the Jews of individual Oriental countries was offset by the effects of persecution and famine in others —notably in Persia and Yemen.

It is estimated (see A. Ruppin: *The Jews in the Modern World,* London, 1934) that at the end of the seventeenth century the number of Jews in the world totalled approximately 2,000,000. Thus at that time as many as half the total—the total being taken to mean those scattered in the area bounded by Southern Arabia, Britain, Gibraltar, and the Caspian Sea—lived in countries where the prevailing faith was Islam.

Early Settlements

Broadly speaking, there were three great waves of Jewish settlement in the Middle East. Most of the Jewish settlements in the Muslim countries can be traced back to times long before the birth of Islam. It is likely, for instance, that many of the Jews in Iraq are descendants of those who dwelt in Babylonia at the time of the Babylonian Exile (586-538 B.C.), since only a proportion availed themselves of the opportunity to return to Jerusalem. North African tradition has it that local Jewish settlements existed before the destruction of the Second Temple in the year 70. There are claims of earlier settlements, but these remain to be substantiated. In Yemen, Jews are said to have settled at the time of the Prophet Jeremiah. Jews went to Egypt

during the Ptolemaic dynasty, settling initially in Alexandria. It is believed that the first arrivals came shortly after the death of Alexander the Great (332 B.C.), but it is possible that they came earlier.

The next great period of Jewish migration in the Mediterranean area came after the fall of Jerusalem in the year 70. Epitaphs on gravestones in Algeria testify to the presence of Jews there as early as the first century. In that period and following the barring of Judea to the Jewish people by the Emperor Hadrian (132-135), the second migratory wave reached its peak. Jews came to Northern Syria and Asia Minor, swelled the numbers of those already settled in Egypt, while other groups moved into Yemen and other parts of Arabia.

For nearly 1,500 years things remained much as they were. This long stretch of calm was broken by the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and the scattering of these so-called *Sefardîm* elsewhere along the Mediterranean littoral. There had, it is true, been an earlier exodus from Spain (in the seventh century), when many Jews left and settled in North Africa and in the cities of the Byzantine Empire in order to escape persecution by the Visigoths. But this move was in no way equivalent in size or importance to the later expulsion of the *Sefardîm* in the years following 1492, which increased the size of the existing Jewish communities along the length of the North African coast from Morocco to Egypt, in Palestine, Asia Minor, and in Constantinople.

A considerable number of Jews—the so-called *Gorneyim*—came from Italy in the seventeenth century, and especially from the city of Leghorn, to settle in Algeria and Tripolitania. Both groups of migrants—*Sefardîm* and *Gorneyim*—differed in many respects from the Jews already settled in these countries. They were more wealthy, better educated, and had a greater breadth of outlook generally. They were something of an aristocracy compared with the Jews among whom they came to dwell.

In the centuries that followed, the gap between the *Sefardîm* and *Gorneyim*, on the one hand, and the native Oriental Jews on the other, became, of course, much less pronounced. But it never disappeared altogether and, in some respects, can be observed to this day. In French North Africa, in Egypt, and in Turkey the descendants of these two groups form the body of the Jewish commercial and professional middle-class. A Judæo-Spanish dialect, known as Ladino, was their normal language until late in the nineteenth century. Latterly, French has been increasingly adopted by them as their first language, just as it has been by the other Levantine communities. To this day, however, many of the older generation continue to use Ladino among themselves, while Arabic, the mother tongue of the native Jewish population in the Arab countries is the *lingua franca* of them all. Likewise, in Persia the *lingua franca* is Persian.

Until 150 years ago the number of Oriental Jews was about equal to that of the Jewish population in Europe. But as regards their

ancestry and the directness of their descent from the original Jewish tribes in the Holy Land, the Jews of the Middle East and North Africa are an element perhaps less homogeneous than Jewish communities elsewhere in the world. It is important to remember that they have always formed an integral part of the indigenous population—as is perfectly natural, considering that the Orient, and especially the Eastern Mediterranean, is the original home of Judaism.

Differences Between Oriental and European Jews

In this sense the history of the Jews of the Middle East and North Africa has been fundamentally different from that of Occidental Jews. Until the break-up of ghetto life the Jew of the Western world, so long as he remained within his own community, was a member of a largely self-contained ethnic group, with its own traditions and way of life in many respects living a life apart from the Gentile population. In the Middle East, on the other hand, the Jew has always been at home. The stories and myths of his people and his religion, his language, customs and rites, his family festivals at births and marriages, and even his superstitions, belong to the East and are familiar to the non-Jewish peoples around him.

More will be said later of the communal pattern of large segments of social life and civil administration among all peoples dwelling in the Islamic world. Where the Westerner, especially during the last couple of hundred years, has increasingly felt himself a member of a nation-state—and therefore tended to resent the still primarily communal sense of identity of the Jew dwelling in his midst—the Oriental has never seen anything incongruous in the communal loyalties of his Jewish neighbours until he himself came to be affected in very recent years by the cult of nationalism. This time-lag in the arrival of nationalism in the Islamic world contributed to the favourable conditions which, in principle, existed for the natural absorption of Jewish community life in the East as part of the general pattern of community living in the area.

Other factors intervened to interfere with this tendency. But it is a tendency which must be borne in mind when examining the relations of Oriental Jewry with the Muslims among whom it dwells. Especially must it be borne in mind by the Western Jew, who is inclined to interpret the problems of Oriental Jewry in the light of his own quite different historical experience and see them through the eyes of a Westerner.

The Teachings of Islam and the Jews

An equally important consideration is the historically unchanging nature of the spiritual motive force behind Islam, a fact which accounts for the comparative stability of its relations with Jewry. It is only recently that the East has felt the impact of any of the revolutionary social, economic, political, spiritual, and technical changes which have

transformed the face of the Western world in the course of the last thousand years. And to-day, when the impact of these Western movements is making itself felt with cumulative force, ruffling the centuries-old spiritual calm of the Orient, the basic pattern of Muslim Jewish relationships has only begun to be upset: it has not yet been disintegrated.

What, then, is the nature of this Muslim-Jewish relationship? And to what extent is it determined by the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad?

The Prophet of Islam, be it noted, preached a faith itself considerably influenced by Judaism. In his time, Judaism was widely spread over the areas south and north of Mecca. In the sixth century, the last king of the Himyarite dynasty in Yemen, for instance, was a Jew. In the heart of what is to-day Sa'udi Arabia, Jewish tribes were once firmly established. There was an important Jewish settlement at Yathrib, on the site of which now stands the Muslim Holy City of Medina. Agricultural and commercial life in that neighbourhood was at one time controlled by Jews. Likewise, commerce over the so-called " Spice Road " from Gaza to the South was in their hands.

The Koran on Non-believers

The relation of Islam to Jews and other non-believers is laid down in two *Suras* of the *Koran* (*Sura* ii, 87, and vii, 179). The obvious ambiguity with which the *Koran* here refers to Jews and Christians reflects the personal attitude of Muhammad in the course of his struggle to secure the adoption of his faith. He regarded with great admiration *Ahl al-Kitab* or " The People of the Book " (*Sura* ix, 29 ; ciii, 3—Jews and Christians) and, conscious as he was of the origin of his religious revelation of the one God and the Day of Judgment, Jerusalem became, likewise, a holy place for him (*Koran: Sura* xvii, 1).

Driven from Mecca by the opposition of his own kinsmen to the faith which he preached, Muhammad turned with his followers to Medina, where the presence of a strong Jewish element held out hopes of a better reception for a creed itself rooted in Judaism. All the more bitter was his disappointment when the Jews of Medina and its neighbourhood refused to adopt the new faith or to submit to the new laws which the Prophet taught his followers. Muhammad's frustrated hopes eventually led him to regard Jewry with active hostility. In the year 625, the followers of Muhammad, having defeated the Quraish of Mecca, turned on the Jewish tribes in the Medina area. The tribe of the Banu Quraiza was completely exterminated, while the remaining Jewish tribes—the Banu Nadhir and the Banu Qainuqa—were driven out of the area. Since then this part of Arabia—the cradle of Islam—has been void of Jews. Though Jewish communities still remained in neighbouring Yemen, most Arabian Jews withdrew to the north-western part of the Arabian Peninsula now known as the " Fertile Crescent."

Meanwhile, as the chances of eventual agreement with the people

of Mecca grew (to further the chances of such agreement Muhammad made certain concessions to the pagan cult of the holy black stone in Mecca known as the *Ka'ba*) the Prophet tended to lean less and less on the Jewish and Christian traditions in the preaching of his faith. Friday was now adopted as the weekly day of rest in place of Saturday; the direction in which worshippers turned their faces during prayer was changed from Jerusalem to Mecca; and fasting was transferred from the Day of Atonement to the month of *Ramadhan*.

What emerged was thus an ambiguous attitude towards Jewry and Christendom, the recognition of the adherents of both as "People of the Book" and, at the same time, an attitude of hostile contempt towards the two as unbelievers, an attitude which remains to this day. This peculiar combination of dislike and respect lies at the core of the Muslim's attitude to Jewry.

The very nature of its origin has made Islam the only religion in the world with an inherent hostility towards the adherents of other beliefs. There is no doubt that passages in the *Koran* recommend the propagation of the faith by force; and the idea of *Jihad*—the Holy War—being an essential part of Muhammad's revelation, is one of the cardinal precepts of Islam. But in spite of this inherent aggressiveness Islam under the Caliphs was in practice far more tolerant and less aggressive towards non-believers than the Christian Church, even though Christian teaching denounces aggressiveness.

Special Taxation

Another characteristic of the pattern of relationship between Muslims and the unbelievers dwelling in their midst was the fact that the latter have always been forced to contribute financially towards the upkeep of their Muslim rulers.

It should be noted that even in the earliest days of Islam the Muslims had to abandon, as not feasible, the principle of conversion at the point of the sword. When Muhammad, for example, following the conquest of Mecca, extended his sphere of domination, there was no attempt at the forcible conversion of either the Christian inhabitants of Eylath, near Aqaba, or the Jewish tribes living in the Southern Oases. Both were merely promised protection in return for the payment of a tribute.

From this tribute later developed the regular *jizyah* poll-tax, which, in a modified form, had already been imposed on the converted. The principle was first formulated in *Sura* ix, 29, of the *Koran*. The relevant passage reads: "Make war . . . upon such of those to whom the Book has been given until they pay tribute offered on the backs of their hands in a state of humiliation. . . ."

Out of this tribute grew the conditions which determined the pattern of administration of conquered non-believers by the Muslims. In the main, the earliest followers of Muhammad were primitive Beduin tribesmen. Carrying the faith all over what is now known as

the Fertile Crescent (Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq) and, later—under Omar, the second Caliph (634-644)—into Egypt, the Muslim warriors took control of indigenous communities of Jews, Christians, Sabæans, and Zoroastrians, all of which had already a highly developed system of economic life, administration, and social organisation. The political and administrative organisation of the conquering tribesmen was, in contrast, primitive. To make these conquered areas secure, therefore, it was necessary to make use of the subjugated populations for the benefit of the conquerors. This was the purpose of the rules laid down during the reign of Omar for the treatment of non-Muslims in Islamic territories.

These measures became known as " the Covenant of Omar." The document traditionally ascribed to the second Caliph, Omar, is actually of later date. It probably dates from the Umayyad dynasty and represents the opinion of theologians rather than official practice of that time.

According to these rules the non-Muslim inhabitants were to be treated as *Ahl al-Dhimmah*—" People of the Covenant "—and were subject to certain obligations which have had far-reaching consequences in moulding the pattern of relations between the conquerors and those over whom they held sway. The latter were obliged not to do any of the following:

1. Revile the *Koran,* Islam, or its Prophet.
2. Marry Muslim women.
3. Attempt conversion of Muslims.
4. Injure Muslims in life or property.
5. Assist the enemy.
6. Harbour spies.

These six conditions were absolute and their breach was punishable by death. " From the client committing any of these offences protection is withdrawn " (W. Muir: *The Caliphate,* 1924, p. 137). The offender becomes an outlaw and his life is forfeit.

There were six further conditions—applied less stringently—but none the less enforceable and their breach punishable by penalties.

1. To wear distinctive clothing—*ghiyar* or yellow patch on the dress and *zunnar* or girdle.
2. Not to build houses higher than those of Muslims.
3. Not to use wooden bells (Christians) or read their scriptures in a loud voice.
4. Not to drink wine in public.
5. To mourn and bury their dead in silence.
6. Never to ride on horseback—only mules or asses being permitted.

Such was the basis of the regulations, derived from Omar, under which the People of the Covenant, or *Dhimmi,* were granted the

protection of the Muslims. Whereas the first six conditions clearly served the severely practical purpose of making good the security of Muslim rule, the other six cannot be interpreted as seeking anything else than the humiliation of those to whom they apply. Small wonder that the Muslim masses came to develop a feeling of contempt for the non-Muslims dwelling among them. In spite of intermittent—and sometimes extensive—periods of normal, and even good, relations between Muslims and non-Muslims, this feeling of underlying contempt has repeatedly broken through in the course of the centuries, especially when individual rulers either felt the need for tightening up the rigour of Islam or required a scapegoat for some public unrest.

The status of *Dhimmi,* moreover, was granted to the subjugated non-Muslim communities only on the condition that over and above the *jizyah* poll-tax they paid a special land-tax known as *kharaj.* Land in their possession was considered public property, of which the occupant had only the usufruct. Consequently, the alienation of such land or the conversion of the occupant to Islam did not affect the collection of the land-tax.

In due course, the *jizyah* poll-tax, initially payable only by fully mature men (" wearing a beard "), came to be exacted from every male over the age of fifteen. The proportions which this special tax sometimes assumed can be gathered from the number of annuities—45,000—allotted to the members of the Muslim ruling class in Damascus under the Umayyad Walid I. The number of pensions registered in Homs and its surrounding district under Marwan I was 20,000 (Hitti: *The Arabs,* p. 231).

The Arab conquerors, ruling indigenous populations far more numerous than themselves, had to draw on the agricultural, trading, and commercial resources of the population in order to maintain their widely spread cantonments and garrisons. And they were spreading rapidly and far: within thirty years of the death of Muhammad (about the year 660), the Caliph ruled over a territory extending from Persia in the East, across the Fertile Crescent, down the Eastern Mediterranean coast, through Egypt across Libya and as far as Tunisia.

As one victorious battle succeeded another, and the extent of occupied territory increased, the Muslim conquerors found themselves compelled to leave substantially intact the fabric of the existing civil administration in these newly won territories.

Partly Autonomous Communal Administration

The Christian and Jewish populations were allowed to go on living under the same laws as had been enforced before their conquest, except that these laws were now administered by religious, instead of civil, authorities. The head of each community was thus able to perform a very useful function in that it was on him that rested the responsibility for the collection of taxes exacted by the Muslim conquerors.

Such was the system of self-administering religious communities

which was to prevail throughout Islamic territories until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and which still survives in a modified form, in most countries of the Middle East. These self-administering communities came to be known as *Millah*. (The Ottoman term was *Millet*.)

Three factors, then, determine the position of the Jews in the Islamic realm—first, their general status of tolerated outsiders and inferiors; second, the special taxation to which they have been subjected; and, third, the autonomy under which they administered their own communal and religious affairs.

Tolerant Interpretation of the "Covenant of Omar"

In all fairness it should be added that their status as "Protected People" has not always been a mere cover for exploitation: more than once it has stood them in good stead. A recent example was the action of the Sultan of Morocco in protecting Moroccan Jews from persecution by Vichy.

It should be stressed once again that on the whole the tolerance of Muslims towards Jews, and other non-believers, compares favourably with that of other faiths. Throughout the reign of the Umayyad dynasty in Damascus (661-750) and the Abbasids in Baghdad (approximately 750-1258) there is no record of Jewish complaints of persecution or harsh treatment.

The Western reader, in trying to picture their conditions of life, must remember that he is dealing with a period in human history long before the high standards of to-day were established; and, what is perhaps more important, with a part of the world where people even to-day are accustomed to a much harsher pattern of living than that which the West tends to regard as normal. Taking these two points into account, there is no doubt that on the whole the "Covenant of Omar" was not rigorously enforced.

Some of the Caliphs, for instance—the Umayyad Omar II (717-720), the Abbasid Mutawakkil (847-861), and again the Fatimid Hakim (996-1021)—felt it necessary to issue new regulations concerning the special dress and other outward tokens of discrimination against non-Muslims, because the old regulations had not been observed with sufficient strictness for their taste.

Once they had paid their special taxes, the Jewish and Christian minorities were left unmolested to earn their bread and worship. More than that: the well-to-do mixed freely with their Muslim neighbours. Building sites for places of worship were allocated to Jews and Christians (as, for instance, under Hisham, 724-743). Jews played an important part in economic life, and especially in foreign trade, notably with the Levant ports and European trading centres like Venice. The unconfirmed story that one of the three envoys from Charlemagne to Harun al-Rashid was a Jew shows popular recognition of Jewish influence in the Golden Age of Islam.

Typical is the way the treaty signed by Omar with the Christian

Bishop Sophronius of Jerusalem, after the city had been surrendered to the Caliph was applied. The treaty stipulated that no Jews should reside in the city. This clause was quietly ignored and Jewish sources (J. Mann: *The Jews in Egypt and Palestine Under the Fatimid Caliphs*, I, p. 44) confirm that, immediately after its occupation by the Arabs, the Holy City became accessible to Jews. A special area on the Mount of Olives was assigned to the Jewish community and services were held there during festivals. About two years after the surrender (640) the Jewish centre of learning in Palestine returned from Tiberias to Jerusalem.

In Alexandria also, the Jewish community remained unmolested after the town had surrendered to the Arabs in 641. The town, however, lost its former importance when the Arab conquerors built a new seat of government in Fustat (Old Cairo). It was not long before here, too, an important Jewish community sprang up, a community which later became a centre of Jewish learning and the residence of the Egyptian Exilarch, or *Nagid*.

The Exilarch or Nagid

In Babylonia, the Jewish community found itself in a particularly favourable position. Its members had supported the conquering Arab armies against the Persian Sassanids, at whose hands the Jews had suffered great hardships. Shortly after the foundation of the new capital in Kufah, near the ruins of Old Babylon, the Babylonian Jews started to rebuild their community.

Not only was the young heir of the Exilarch, Bostanay, reinstated in his office, but his princely dignity was recognised by the Caliph, who is said to have given him a princess of the former Persian dynasty as his wife. The Jewish Exilarch was generally treated by the Caliphs as the princely ruler of a dependent but allied nation.

The famous Jewish traveller of the twelfth century, Benjamin of Tudela, describes how the Exilarch was received in audience by the Caliph. He drove through the streets of Baghdad dressed in embroidered silk and wearing a white turban gleaming with gems, escorted by mounted outriders. Before him marched a herald calling out: " Make way, make way, before our lord, the son of David." During the reign of the Caliph Ali and under the Umayyads, the Old Babylonian centres of Jewish learning in Sura and Pumbaditha received a new impetus. It is from that time that dates the fame of their leaders (under the title of *Gaon*).

Use of Arabic

At the time when the Muslim Empire stretched from Persia to Spain, the Arabic language came into general use throughout this area. Whereas, up to the ninth century, the language of the Jews in Syria and Palestine was mainly Aramaic, and in Egypt, Greek (Hebrew being reserved for literature, legal documents, and correspondence), Arabic now gradually came to be accepted by all the inhabitants, including the

Jews. Indeed, some of the most famous Jewish writings—fruits of Muslim-Jewish symbiosis—were in Arabic. These writings, having a universal philosophic conception, have, for that reason, since become part of the common heritage of human civilisation.

"Golden Age" in Spain

No account of this subject would be complete without a word on that remarkable phenomenon in the history of Jewish-Muslim relations, the "Golden Age" of both Jewry and Islam in Spain.

Though geographically Spain lies outside the sphere of this study, the seven centuries of Muslim rule in Spain, and the important part which Jewry played in it, can hardly be ignored. In Spain the laws governing Muslim-Jewish relations were the same as elsewhere in the Islamic world—discrimination combined with an element of protection as well as a degree of communal and religious autonomy. But even more than elsewhere under Muslim rule, these stipulations were a mere flexible frame within which intellectual, commercial, and even social activities developed almost unhindered between all the different elements which inhabited Spain.

Perhaps nowhere else and at no time in Jewish history since the destruction of Jerusalem has a Jewish community benefited by so fortunate a set of circumstances as did the Jews in Spain under Muslim rule. The fact that there are few records of their presence during the first two centuries of Muslim rule—from 711 until Abd al-Rahman III in 912—seems to indicate that, on the whole, Jewish life in Spain went on unhampered. Maybe this was in part due to the support some of them gave to the conquerors, as, for instance, at the surrender of Cordova to the Arabs in 712. But from the beginning of the tenth century, and even later, under the Almoravid Ali (1106-1143), the Jewish community enjoyed very liberal treatment. Peace and security reigned. Prosperity naturally followed.

A noteworthy number of Jewish scholars held high posts in the State administration and diplomatic service. The heads of the Jewish communities were honoured with customary regal splendour. Arab writers recorded their admiration for the style and erudition of Jewish scholarship, especially for Samuel ha-Nagid, who died in 1055. Likewise, educated Arabs delighted in the verses of Jewish poets like Hasdai abu-Fadl, who died in 1066.

Arabic being the normal language of social intercourse, most of the famed Jewish philosophers of the period—Ibn Gabirol, Ibn Ezra, Yehuda ha-Levi, Maimonides (like Sa'adya Gaon in Egypt and Iraq)—wrote in that language.

Anti-Jewish Outbreaks in Spain

It was only towards the second half of the seven centuries of Muslim rule in Spain that the position of the country's Jewish communities began to deteriorate. Between 1013 and 1148 there were

three outbreaks of Muslim mob violence and looting against the Jews—events which are typical of the inherent uncertainty of any Jewish community's position in an Islamic country, even when that community has enjoyed a peaceful existence for centuries.

The first of these came after three hundred years of almost undisturbed peace and prosperity. It occurred in the year 1013 in the city of Cordova—then probably the most flourishing city in the world. The outbreak was in no sense officially inspired. It seems to have begun by a mutiny of the Moorish garrison conducted under the leadership of the garrison commander, Sulayman, against the Caliph. Once the mutiny got under way it degenerated into an outburst of indiscriminate looting against the well-to-do.

Many of these happened to be Jewish. Hence the fact that it was the Jewish community which suffered most from a disturbance whose origins had nothing to do with any anti-Jewish feeling.

The second outbreak occurred in 1066, when about 1,500 Jewish families were massacred in Granada. Here again the fact that the Jews were victims was accidental. The initial cause of the trouble was the political rivalry between the rulers of Almeria and Granada. It so happened that the political adviser and Vizier of the Arab ruler of Granada was a Jew (the son, incidentally, of the more famous Samuel ha-Nagid). The undisciplined Berber soldiery made this the reason for an onslaught on the whole Jewish community.

Even more serious was the catastrophe of the year 1148, when Seville, Malaga, Lucena, and Cordova fell to the armed assault of the Almohads. In the course of this fighting the Moorish invaders from Africa showed their barbarous fanaticism by destroying every single Jewish community throughout Southern Spain.

Civilised Outlook of Muslim Rule in Spain

No historian can avoid the conclusion that the liberal interpretation of the Covenant of Omar, which enabled the Jews of Spain to flourish under Islamic rule, was possible only because that rule, as practised in Spain, represented a way of life eminently civilised. Under Muslim rule in Spain the individual was judged according to his qualities as an individual, and not on account of his membership of a particular group, creed, or race. Science and the arts were enabled to flourish. Enlightened government stimulated tolerance and was prepared to bring the full weight of its authority to bear against any manifestation of mass fanaticism.

Thus it was, at any rate, in the initial stages of Muslim rule in Spain. Even the pious and stern Almoravid Ali, himself a Moor, was content to allow the Jews to lead their lives unmolested as they had done under the Caliphate. For such a man there was nothing unusual in accepting the advice of his Jewish Vizier and physician or of other Jews he employed in the public service. His attitude of mind was typical of the old Arab ruling class in Spain; and it is worth

noting that it was never they who were responsible for anti-Jewish outbreaks but the primitive and easily inflammable masses.

It might be added in parenthesis that history shows many examples of the ease with which the Muslim masses of the Middle East can be roused to a high pitch of excitement, a characteristic which has played no little part in determining the nature of the impact which modern parliamentary institutions and the modern creed of nationalism have made on them.

The Jews in Morocco

A good example of how such emotional instability, when coupled with religious fanaticism, can affect the treatment of Jews is that of Morocco, where throughout the ages the Jews have had to live in a state of degradation so complete that it has evoked repeated comment among travellers from Europe and even from other Muslim countries.

Jewish settlements in Morocco are of great antiquity, some of them —it is believed—preceding even the destruction of the Second Temple. Their influence on the Berber tribes was at one time considerable—so great, in fact, that many of the Berbers adopted the Jewish faith. There are references in several Arab historical works to a Jewish Queen Kohena, under whose leadership Jews and Berbers fought side by side, putting up bitter resistance against the Muslim Arab invaders of Morocco; and, according to legend, the warrior Queen herself fell in battle.

It is recorded that some years later Berber Jews formed part of the Muslim forces which invaded Spain under Tariq.

In spite of this common heritage between Jew and Berber, however, the fanatical Almohads had no qualms about assailing the Jews in North Africa and finally exterminating the old Jewish communities in Spain.

In Morocco the *jizyah* poll-tax was not only exacted with unbending rigour from all males but was even extended to include infants in arms. Every form of extortion was practised by the Qadis, who grew fat on presents and bribes. If the Sultan's empty treasury made it difficult for him to pay his soldiers, the solution was simple: the troops were given a *Mellah* (Jewish quarter) to sack.

In the light of these facts, it is one of the oddities of history that the Emperor Charles V, in the year 1556—the year of his abdication—chose a Jew from Oran, Jacob Cansino, to represent him at the Court of the Sultan of Morocco, and to protect the interests of Spanish subjects in that country. (Incidentally, Cansino's descendants held the office of Spanish Consul in Morocco for over a century—until 1666).

From time to time, records have been found of individuals reacting against the prevailing climate of oppression. At the end of the seventeenth century, for instance, a certain learned Arab from the town of Kairouan, Sheikh al-Yusi, is recorded as having exhorted a certain Mulay Ismail to treat the Jews with justice and to prevent their perse-

cution. But apart from these isolated instances, the record is black. The French Abbé Godard (*Le Maroc,* 1858) writes: ". . . the Jews are said never to pass under the triumphal arch of Titus in Rome. But if they were to react in a similar way to the many bitter memories they have of their treatment in Muslim countries, I dare not guess where they would find a route not closed by like prohibitions."

As late as the end of the last century, Budgett Meakin (*Life in Morocco,* 1899) remarked on the practice he found there of seizing Jewish women and children and having them flogged with the object of extorting ransom from their relatives.

In brief, the Jews of Morocco were exposed to every kind of arbitrary brutality and ill-treatment all through the centuries, right up to 1912 when the country became a French Protectorate.

The Jews in the Fertile Crescent

The name of Saladin (or more correctly Salah al-Din) is legendary, not only in the Middle East but all over the Western world. Although it was he who wrested Jerusalem from the Crusaders, such was his quality as a ruler and chivalrous warrior, that his name was made known by the returning Western invaders all over Europe. Ruling over Syria and Egypt at the end of the twelfth century, Saladin extended a warm welcome to any of his subjects who had distinguished themselves. Among those whom he welcomed was Moses Maimonides, the great Jewish philosopher and one of the founders of the Jewish tradition in medicine which was to flourish in Egypt for a further century.

In Mesopotamia (Iraq), the prosperity of the Jewish community—and especially the flourishing state of its centres of learning (conducted under the direction of the *Gaonim*)—were bound up with the Abbasid Caliphate.

The dissolution of the Caliphate in the thirteenth century brought with it an end to this happy state of affairs. Lack of political unity or of strong government undermined public security. Economic, ethical, and cultural standards began to drop rapidly. Petty local despots succeeded one another with confusing rapidity, the Fertile Crescent being split up between rival Seljuk and Mamluk potentates.

These were sad times for all—Muslim and Jew. With their Muslim neighbours the Jews shared the miseries of dissolute tyranny and the catastrophes of the Mongol invasions. But there is no indication that a greater share of the mounting toll of disasters fell on their shoulders than on those of the Muslims. When the Mongols under Timur built 120 towers of human skulls on the ruins of Baghdad they made no distinction between Jew and Muslim among their victims.

If the Mongol invasion of Mesopotamia made still worse the prevailing state of social decay, lawlessness, and anarchy, so did the intermittent but devastating assaults on the Holy Land by the Crusaders.

Likewise, in Egypt, the disintegration of the Fatimid Caliphate

was followed by chaos, accentuated in the case of the Jewish community, by popular outbreaks directed against it. One of the most important tasks of government in Egypt has always been the control of irrigation waters from the River Nile. Properly organised, this is largely a question of efficient routine administration. It so happened that routine tasks of administration, including irrigation matters, were mostly performed by Copts and Jews. When things went wrong—as, in the absence of efficient government, they not infrequently did—the indignation of the Muslim populace was often vented on these two communities in the form of mob violence and pillage. (H. A. R. Gibb: *Ibn Battuta: Travels in Asia and Africa,* p. 20.)

The Years of Decline

Taken all in all, the picture presented by the Middle East, from the collapse of the Abbasid dynasty in Baghdad and of the Fatimid dynasty in Cairo right up to the arrival of the Turks in 1516, is not a happy one. The fate of the Jewish communities depended on the mood and financial needs of the various local despots. Standards of government continued to deteriorate. Economic life was constantly being interfered with by raids from Beduin and Turkoman tribesmen. More insidious, because more persistent in its corroding effect on the social fabric, was the boundless greed of the feudal landowners, who sucked the populace dry through various forms of financial extortion. The victim was as much the *fellah* or native Muslim cultivator as his non-Muslim neighbour.

As far as the Jewish communities were concerned, it is true that as such, they were not on the whole singled out for molestation, except by the Crusaders. But the Jews had their full share of the general distress and misery of life which are a characteristic of those centuries. How bad things were can be judged from the fact that the total population of the areas affected decreased to one-third of its former number during that period (Hitti: *The Arabs,* p. 696).

The Rise of the Turks

With the advance of the Turks into the Fertile Crescent at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the centre of gravity of Islam began to move from the Arab countries to Constantinople (Istanbul), capital of the Ottoman Empire. Their conquest of the Arab countries was finally decided by their victories, under the leadership of Sultan Selim, in the years 1516 and 1517 near Aleppo and at the outskirts of Cairo respectively.

The change of masters did not make much difference for the Jewish communities. It is true that Selim abolished the old office of *Nagid*—or secular head of all the Jews in Egypt—and made the individual communities independent under their religious leaders. But this measure did not mean any deterioration in the general position

of the Jews. In any case, with the one exception of Syria, Turkish suzerainty over the Arab countries was little more than nominal.

Day-to-day life, therefore, went on much as it had done previously, especially in the North African countries. For, although Turkish rule extended at one time (1573-1705) as far as Tunisia, effective power always lay in the hands of local indigenous rulers.

In various parts of the area wealthy Sefardi families and individuals held important public positions. In Egypt, for instance, a certain Abraham de Castro was Master of the Mint under Suleyman. Jewish physicians were specially prominent, not only in the sphere of medicine itself but also as political and financial advisers to the Muslim rulers.

The commercial connections of the Sefardi Jews, their familiarity with conditions in foreign countries and their linguistic versatility enabled them to render valuable service in diplomatic negotiations and on special missions. But the success and prosperity of such individual members of the Jewish community should not blind one to their always being subject to the vicissitudes of untrammelled despotism, a despotism exercised by Muslims.

Effects of the Sefardi Influx

The influx of Jews from Spain and Italy naturally made a great difference in the size of the Jewish population in the Middle East. For example it is estimated that about 100,000 Sefardi Jews and Marranos (*i.e.*, Spanish Jews retaining their faith secretly in spite of conversion to Christianity forced on them by the Inquisition) immigrated into Turkey proper, over and above the large numbers which settled in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Tripolitania, Egypt, the Holy Land, and Syria.

It is fairly clear that in Egypt they soon outnumbered the native Jewish population. Precise figures are difficult to ascertain in view of conflicting records. Whereas, for example, Meshullam of Volterra, who was in Egypt in 1481 (that is, before the exodus from Spain) gives the number of Jewish households in Alexandria as 60, and in Cairo as 500, Obadyah Bartinora, seven years later, recorded that he found only 25 households in Alexandria and 700 individual Jews in Cairo.

More reliable are the figures for Jerusalem. A statement made in 1522 (that is, after the influx of the Spanish Jews) records that in that year there were 300 Sefardi families in the city, compared with the 70 poor Jewish families which Obadyah Bartinora notes as having found there 34 years earlier.

Not only did the influx from Spain increase the size of the Jewish population in the Middle East, but it also increased its wealth. Many of the immigrants managed to bring with them valuables of one sort or another. Hence the fact that the noticeable growth of prosperity in Middle Eastern Jewish communities in this period was largely confined to the Sefardi immigrants and their

descendants. The majority of indigenous Jews, always poor, continued to live in a state of almost incredible misery and filth.

There were, it is true, wealthy and partly autonomous communities in Oran, Tlemçen, as well as in neighbouring Algiers. But Jewry in North Africa, whether wealthy or poor, was always a favourite target for financial extortion on the part of the despots who held it in their power. In North Africa—and to a lesser extent elsewhere—these incessant depredations led to the gradual decline and impoverishment of the wealthier Sefardi Jews, numbers of whom increasingly began to drop to the level of misery of their indigenous coreligionists. By the eighteenth century this process had affected the majority of the North African Sefardim.

In Persia, the position of the Jewish communities—which were scattered all over the country—was very similar, except that Persia was hardly touched by the influx from Spain.

The Jews Under Turkish Rule

In those areas of the Middle East, however, where the Turks were in immediate and direct control, things were quite different. The Turks adopted Sunni Islam towards the end of their advance across the River Oxus through Persia and into Mesopotamia (tenth and eleventh centuries). They were somewhat more remote from the original source of Muslim religious fanaticism and the religious climate of Turkish rule has been, on the whole, cooler by some degrees than that prevailing among the peoples of its origin and early conquests.

After the high tide of the Mongol invasion in the middle of the thirteenth century had receded, a small Turkish principality appeared around Brusa, in the north-west corner of Asia Minor, traditionally founded by a certain Osman, and began to expand steadily to the north towards Constantinople, and to the south.

In Brusa, the Jews were free to move inside and outside the town, and were entitled to own houses and land. Under the reign of Murad II (1421-1451) their position even improved; and during the succeeding centuries their freedom to live their own life, to acquire property, to exercise their professions unhampered and to move about without restriction, was such as to make one Isaac Zarfati write his famous circular letter to the Jews in Germany and Hungary, inviting them to come to Turkey to settle there. "Here" he wrote, "everyone may live under his own vine and fig-tree." This letter caused many Jews from those countries to settle in Turkey.

The stipulations of the *Koran* and the rules of the Covenant of Omar remained in legal force theoretically right up till the nineteenth century. But it is to the everlasting credit of the Ottoman Empire that the Jews under its direct administration were not subjected to the kind of persecution which so often was the rule elsewhere in the world of Islam.

Contrast With Arab Provinces of the Ottoman Empire

This state of affairs, however, applied less to the Jews living in the Arab provinces. A paper published in Berlin in 1716 by one Gedalya Ssemyaticzer, under the title *Ask for the Peace of Jerusalem,* records that financial extortion backed by violence was still a regular practice in Jerusalem. In the Holy City Muslim hostility kept a keen eye on the strict observance of the dress regulations for both Jews and Christians. Neither were allowed to ride on horseback or to dress in other than plain dark clothes.

New Forces in the Nineteenth Century

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the Middle East felt the first impact of new forces, forces which increasingly subjected the world of Islam—hitherto a self-contained world of its own—to foreign influences. In due course, these influences were to transform fundamentally the political, social, and religious conditions of life in the area and to have far-reaching consequences on relations between Muslims and non-Muslim minorities.

Growing Awareness of Western Might

When Napoleon landed in Egypt in 1798, his was the first incursion of a European Power into the Eastern Mediterranean since the time of the Crusaders. Though his occupation of the Delta and Cairo lasted only four years, the superiority of his small but efficient force, the quality of his arms and equipment, and the ability of his engineers and scholars made an immense impression.

Up to that time, most Muslim rulers had shared with the masses an attitude of supreme contempt towards all non-believers—both those who lived in their midst and those in other countries. The passage of centuries made little difference.

Many years had passed since the Sultan's treaty of 1606 with the Holy Roman Empire which began with the words "Graciously accorded by the Sultan, ever victorious, to the infidel King of Vienna, ever vanquished" (see Sir Harry Luke: *The Making of Modern Turkey,* London, 1936). But foreign emissaries to the court were still treated with marked condescension and often kept waiting for hours in the ante-chambers.

In the course of the eighteenth century, with the progressive decline of the once formidable power of the Ottoman Empire, the reputation and importance of the European powers grew steadily. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Muhammad Ali in Egypt began to introduce European technique, invited French experts to the country, and opened a number of schools, mostly for military and technical education, where European methods were taught. In Constantinople, Sultan Selim III sought French advice for the organisation of a new army and sent missions to European countries to study Western ways.

The West and Internal Conditions in the Middle East

The first noticeable effect of the greater prestige of the Western Powers was apparent in the various ways in which these Powers began to interest themselves in, and increasingly to interfere with, internal conditions in Muslim countries. For both Christians and Jews, this interference meant that at last they were no longer without champions in their dealings with the Muslim majority.

In order to please the European Powers, Sultan Abd al-Majid (1839-1861), in confirmation of a promise made in 1839, issued the so-called *Hatti-Humayun* of 1856. This proclamation declared complete equality of rights for his non-Muslim subjects, and assured " spiritual privileges and immunities " to all Christian residents.

Following the intervention of a representative of the house of Rothschild these rights were extended to other non-Muslim communities. Baseless accusations of ritual murder against certain Damascus Jews in 1840, and the torture of those accused of the crime, led to the visit of Sir Moses Montefiore and of the French statesman, Crémieux, to Egypt and Syria. On their representations the Sultan signed another *firman* for the protection of the Jewish communities. In accordance with her claims to act as protector of Christians in the Orient, France even dispatched troops to Lebanon, following the massacre of the Maronite Christians by the Druze tribesmen assisted by the Muslim populace of Damascus (1860).

The Jews and Western Influence

In the circumstances, it is not surprising that the non-Muslim minorities of the Middle East and North Africa came to identify their own interests increasingly with those of the Great Powers of the West. A visit to Marrakesh by a representative of the Rothschilds of London caused even the Sultan Sidi Muhammad Abd al-Rahman of remote Morocco to issue a *dahir* in 1902, admonishing his governors and officials to treat the Jews with justice.

Muslim reaction to this intervention was both bewildered and haughtily resentful (see J. Goulven: *Les Mellahs de Rabat-Salé*, Paris, 1927, p. 126 *et seq.*). It began to dawn on Muslim opinion that in future the treatment meted out by Muslims to non-believers in their midst would have to be guided not merely by traditional practice, but with an eye to the reactions of the Great Powers of the West.

For their part, the non-Muslim communities—the Jews among them—began to show a growing interest in European life and customs. Hitherto, these communities had lived their daily lives much in the same manner as the Muslims. Apart from countries like Yemen, Persia, and Morocco (where even to-day the majority of Jews live in separate quarters and are subject to many restrictions), the progressive relaxation of traditionally enforced rules on dress meant that the dress of the other Jewish communities in the Middle East—no less than their food,

their houses, their language—all followed the same pattern as those of their Muslim neighbours.

Many Jews had a great sense of solidarity with the country in which they dwelt. During the reign of the Khedive Ismail in Egypt, for example, a Jewish newspaper editor, James Sanua by name, achieved fame by his manner of lampooning—through articles written for the first time in history in colloquial Arabic—the merciless exploitation of the country by Ismail and by the new class of European adventurers, who had flocked to Egypt to take lawless advantage of their protected status.

But with time the lure of European civilisation came to be well-nigh irresistible both for Jews and Christians. On the Christian side, a growing number of mission schools, and, on the Jewish side, the schools opened by the *Alliance Israélite Universelle,* contributed to the rapid adoption of French and other European languages for day-to-day use. Together with these languages, more and more young people began to absorb Western ideas. They took to European clothes, they furnished their homes with Western furniture, and a trip to Paris came to be the dream of all.

If this sequence of causes led many Jews to abandon their traditional Oriental way of life in favour of that of Europe—and thus to cut themselves off from their former social background—perhaps even more decisive was the influence of the Capitulations.

Capitulations

Capitulations, or the granting of extra-territorial privileges to foreigners, were an institution of old standing in the Ottoman Empire. They go back to the famous Treaty of 1521 negotiated by the Venetian Ambassador with Suleyman the Magnificent (Sir Harry Luke: *The Making of Modern Turkey,* pp.5-7). This document became the prototype of similar treaties subsequently signed with all the principal European Powers.

Capitulations allowed the Power concerned to appoint consuls in the Ottoman dominions, and gave them jurisdiction in civil matters over their own nationals. Each foreign colony became a kind of *Millet,* or partly autonomous community, and as regards professional and personal affairs enjoyed the protection of its own consul.

During the nineteenth century, more and more Jews, particularly in Egypt and Syria, in Constantinople, and the coastal towns of North Africa, managed to acquire the nationality of this or that foreign Power. In Algeria, the famous Crémieux decree of 1870 granted French nationality to all the Jews *en bloc.* In this way, many Jews, mostly belonging to the upper and middle class, became foreigners in their own country. This tendency to rely on the ever-growing influence of foreign representatives went so far as to make the Jews of Alexandria, in about 1900, register the statutes of their community with the Austrian Consul-General.

The reaction of the Muslims to these developments took three main forms: first, an attempt was made to resuscitate the Pan-Islamic movement—the feeling of solidarity among Muslims all over the world; second, a demand for domestic reform became more and more insistent; third, nationalism, essentially a Western idea, began to spread. And in various ways these three movements interlocked.

The Pan-Islamic Movement

In pursuance of the Pan-Islamic idea, there came to the mind of the sinister Abd al-Hamid II, the revival of the long-defunct Caliphate. It was devised in order to give a new impulse to the fellowship of Muslims all over the world (*Ittihad al Muslimin*), and, by inviting their sympathy and support, to strengthen his own weak position *vis-à-vis* the European Powers. And, indeed, his various efforts (such as the reintroduction of the former custom of mentioning the name of the Caliph in the Friday public prayer and the dispatch of emissaries and preachers to the most remote Muslim communities in India, Java, and Africa) met with a certain degree of success.

The resuscitation of a new consciousness of the great community of true believers the world over obviously complied with a real demand, and the revived memories of a glorious past provided welcome support for all those who felt that they had slipped into the shadow of the European sun.

The construction of the Hijaz railway, and the consequent encouragement of the pilgrimage to Mecca; the acknowledged authority of the Sultan-Caliph to nominate the Mufti in the various Balkan countries and the Grand Qadi in Italian Libya; the foundation of Muslim societies, among them the Pan-Islamic Society founded in London in 1903: all these efforts succeeded to some extent in reviving the unity of Islam in the face of Western might. The result was that every event which could be felt as a challenge to Islam was likely to arouse a general reaction in the whole Muslim world from Java to Morocco.

Effect of Western Culture on the Muslims

But this same Western influence also brought about profound changes in the very core of Muslim society itself. Through education in missionary schools, the wider circulation of newspapers, and through innumerable other channels, the Western ideas of liberalism, progress, and reform roused the popular imagination, and especially that of the middle class, the *effendis*.

Beginning timidly enough, but later growing into a fairly considerable movement, the drive for the emancipation of Muslim women from confinement in the *harim* and from the veil involved a break with one of the most stringent traditions of Islam—and to this day its effects are limited to a narrow circle of the upper and middle class in the towns in all Muslim countries except Turkey and Persia.

Anxious to assimilate the Western pattern of dress and manners, many sons of well-to-do families went to European countries either to escape the irksome restraint of their own traditional background or to study at Western universities.

It cannot be said that the effect of this zeal for westernisation was entirely wholesome. For when these people returned from Europe to their native countries, they soon discovered that they had in no way become the equals of Europeans. Wherever public life and administration were controlled by a European Power—and after the first World War this was the case in most of the Arab countries—they were made to feel in a hundred ways that they could not hope for recognition as equals.

The lawyer, the physician, the engineer, equipped with his European university degrees, no less than the typist and clerk in a business office, was bound to feel a sense of inferiority and to be aware that in competition with Europeans he was at a general disadvantage.

In consequence, a feeling of bitter resentment, and even hatred, against all Western foreigners filled the hearts of an ever-growing number of middle-class Muslims. Without an adequate appreciation of the tremendous force and depth of this resentment, and the importance of the new middle class in the Muslim countries, it is not possible to understand what has been happening in the Middle East in our own time.

The Pan-Islamic Movement and Arab Nationalism

The influence of the Pan-Islamic movement among the Arab countries grew apace. It provided Islam with a rallying cry against the West, a West which not only assumed for the Muslim countries the guise of a startlingly powerful cultural and political colossus, but for many Muslims was doubly damned as the home of liberal and democratic ideas which were actively seducing their own youth from the traditional outlook of conservative Islam.

In the resentment towards this West was found the unity of purpose without which even the fiction of an " Arab nation " could not have been born. For in history there has never been a single political and social entity binding all the Arab peoples or all the Muslims in a common allegiance.

The Arabs have, it is true, a common language. But even if that language were not split up for colloquial purposes into a number of widely differing dialects, a common language by itself does not constitute the basis for a sense of national identity. Politically, the only common heritage of the Middle East area is the Caliphate, which is in no sense a national institution, but purely a religious one. That is why the attempts of Arab nationalists to arouse among the Arab masses a sense of national fervour sooner or later have had to fall back on the religious appeal of the unity of Islam. That appeal, moreover, has taken the form of unity *against* the non-believer, the Western foreigner,

rather than unity *for* any positive Islamic way of life. Small wonder, then, that Arab nationalist propaganda could not but take a form which antagonised important sections of Western and other non-Muslim opinion.

These characteristics of present-day Arab nationalism have been long recognised among those who make a special study of Middle East problems. When, for example, the *Institut des Etudes Islamiques* of the University of Paris, in 1936, held a discussion on the question of "Arab National States," it was quite clear from the opinions expressed that Arab Nationalism always presents itself as part of some other ideology—racialism, pan-Arabism, or memories of the old Caliphate (*Entretiens sur l'Evolution des Pays de Civilisation Arabe, Centre d'Etudes de Politique Etrangère*, Paris, Volume III, p. 27). Likewise, as one speaker at the above discussion remarked: "When the masses are set in motion they turn immediately and spontaneously on the Christians or Jews."

Nationalism in Egypt, as early as 1877, adopted the slogan, "Egypt for the Egyptians." A prominent figure in its early stages was the Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, whose approach combined the idea of liberating Muslims from European influence, with Egyptian nationalism in the narrow sense. The revolt of Arabi Pasha in 1881 was soon followed by the first outbreaks of xenophobia, and in 1882 riots took place in Alexandria against Western foreigners. Not long after, British troops were landed in Egypt, remaining there to the present day.

From then onwards, the national movement in Egypt has consistently relied first and foremost on foreigner-hatred: and as late as the sanguinary week of July 18th-25th, 1948, the streets of Cairo were filled with a frenzied mob, which turned indiscriminately on anyone who looked like a Westerner—Jew or Christian.

Whereas in Egypt the Nationalist movement was based on mass support from its earliest day, in Syria and Iraq it originated among a small group of intellectuals, though in Syria it had spread to the masses by the early 'twenties, especially during the nationalist campaign against the French.

In 1913, this group organised a congress in Paris, which included a number of men later to become well known: Jamil Mardam, Prime Minister of Syria in 1948; 'Auni Abd al-Hadi of Palestine, who later became a representative of the Palestine Arabs and a member of the Arab Higher Committee; Tawfiq al-Suwaydi, Prime Minister of Iraq in 1946; Shukri al-Quwatli, President of Syria until the revolt of March, 1949; and Faris al-Khuri, Syria's representative on the Security Council of the United Nations and a member of the *al-Fatat* organisation.

But whether—as in Egypt—the national movement had a mass following from its inception, or whether—as in the Levant States—it originated from a narrow circle of intellectuals, sooner or later the building up of such a movement entailed agitation among the mass of the people. In both cases that agitation followed a narrowly xeno-

phobic pattern and it failed to formulate any constructive programme of reform. The natural corollary of this was an ever-present distrust of minorities which differed in any respect from the mass.

Such was the origin of the new tensions which came to be noticeable between the Muslims and the non-Muslim minorities in their midst; and from the beginning they have affected both Christians and Jews alike.

A sign of the times were the efforts of the so-called " Muslim Brotherhood " to rekindle in the twentieth century the aggressive fanaticism of Islam in its early days. From its foundation in the early 'thirties, the Muslim Brotherhood caused a stir of uneasiness to go through the Christian Arabs of the Lebanon and Palestine, and even to reawaken the dread of discrimination among the Egyptian Copts—a community which has always formed an integral part of Egyptian national life.

The prospect of Muslim-Arab domination is to this day a source of constant anxiety to the Christians of the Levant States, while in Egypt the ill-concealed preference given to Muslim candidates in State appointments is rightly understood by the Copts to bode no good for the future.

For a time, the Christians of the Levant States have been able to obtain respite by making common cause with the Muslims in the struggle against Zionism. But how long that respite will last remains to be seen.

Nationalism and the Jews

As for the Jews, the presence of these new tensions has produced results which differ in various Arab countries. But one result the Jews have all felt: their position—even before the Zionist issue boiled up—became even less secure than before. Even though the Jewish communities in the Middle East belong to the area as much as the Muslims themselves, the domination of the latter has never allowed them to exist in conditions of anything better than toleration within the framework of discrimination. If the incursion of Western political power and Western liberal ideas during the last century militated against discrimination, it has *pari passu* accentuated existing differences between the two communities. Even before the Zionist issue had burst like a bombshell in the Eastern Mediterranean, the increasing Western orientation of the Jews on the one hand, and the increasing xenophobia of the Muslims on the other, were steadily widening the existing gulf between them.

Although the Palestinian Arab Revolt of 1936 evoked sympathetic echoes from public opinion in the neighbouring Arab countries, at that time the problem of Palestine generally was still regarded on the whole as a local issue, the concern, in the first place, of the British, the Palestine Arabs, and the Zionists.

For their part, the Jewish minorities in those countries, with rare

exceptions, did not regard with much sympathy the efforts of the Zionists to build a Jewish national home in the Holy Land. Prominent figures in the Jewish communities of Iraq, Syria, the Lebanon, and, perhaps to a lesser extent, Egypt, on several occasions expressed their opposition to the Zionist idea, regarding it as a menace to the security of Oriental Jewry's life among its Muslim neighbours.

Such Zionist support as existed in the Jewish communities of the Middle East came from the younger generation, especially those who had had a European education, and was largely due to the proselytising work of Zionist emissaries from Palestine. Such views, however, did not find much favour among the leaders of the Jewish communities or among the mass of Oriental Jewry.

At that time, moreover, Muslim public opinion still regarded Zionism as something outside the orbit of relations between Islam and the Jewish communities dwelling in the Muslim countries. The change only came during the war years. Even as late as the Bludan Conference of September, 1937, when it was publicly asserted for the first time that the Palestine question was the concern of all Islam and more immediately the concern of the " Arab nation," this was still true.

The Bludan Conference

The Bludan Conference did not have official backing. It was summoned by a Syrian, Nagib Bey Azmah, on his own initiative as a public figure of some standing. In official and governmental circles, therefore, the response to his invitation was cautious, if not lukewarm. None the less, its proceedings and general setting evinced a number of very interesting characteristics.

It was more than a coincidence that the only representative from the world press was that of the D.N.B.—the official news agency of Nazi Germany. Nor was it without significance that stewards and attendants at the Conference were drawn from members of the pro-Fascist Syrian " Iron Shirts " movement.

But the outstanding point of interest was—in spite of the remarkable restraint shown by representatives of responsible Arab politics—the character of the language used in many of the speeches and resolutions.

It should be borne in mind that the Bludan Conference followed hard on the publication of the Peel Commission's Report recommending the partition of Palestine ; and Palestine, therefore, loomed large in its deliberations. Palestine was spoken of as " the holy region of our fatherland." The identity of the Arab peoples as a nation was either taken for granted or treated as an immediate aim. This Arab national entity was treated as something emerging in spite of the evilly intentioned Western democracies. Palestine was implied to be an issue in the struggle for the Arab nation—an integral part of the " fatherland "—while the country's partition was described as an attempt by foreign Powers to prevent the union of the Arabs.

Amin Husseini, then Mufti of Jerusalem, in a telegram sent to the Conference, drew a parallel between the Zionists in Palestine and the Crusaders, Zionism being depicted as a new onslaught upon Islam by the Western world. Nagib Bey Azmah himself spoke of " the new political designs of the West, which are basically materialistic and devoid of any moral or spiritual character."

The final resolution proposed a boycott of all Zionist goods and a boycott of Britain " if Britain should persist in her aggressive attitude against the Arabs." (See R. Montaigne: *Report on the Bludan Conference: Entretiens Sur l'Evolution des Pays de Civilisation Arabe, Centre d'Etudes de Politique Etrangère,* Paris, Volume III, pp. 42-61). The xenophobic pattern of the struggle against Zionism was openly established at the Bludan Conference.

The step which brought the Palestine issue out of the sphere of unofficial discussion of the kind held at Bludan and made it into a front-rank problem of international politics was the action of the British Government in inviting delegations from Egypt, Iraq, Sa'udi Arabia, Yemen, and what was then Transjordan to join a Palestinian delegation in London for the purpose of discussing the country's future. This step implied a formal acknowledgment that the Palestine issue was the concern of all Arab states and not merely of the Arabic-speaking communities in Palestine itself. The London Conference of 1939 gave the governments of the Arab states the opportunity to set themselves up as the official champions of the various Arab nationalist movements. This fact was decisive in crystallising in the public mind what up till then had been the extremely hazy conception of Arab unity. From there it was but a short step to the formation of the Arab League in 1945.

The Arab League

The Charter of the Arab League, signed initially by Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Sa'udi Arabia, and Transjordan—and later by Yemen —did not, it is true, mention Palestine in any of its twenty-two articles. But in an Appendix to the Charter the claim was expressed that Palestine was an Arab country. What is more, provision was made in the Appendix for the participation of a Palestine Arab delegate in the activities of the Arab League Council. (See Seton-Williams: *Britain and the Arab States,* London, 1948, p. 218, *et seq.*). By that fact, the founder states of the Arab League implicitly acknowledged the decisive importance of the Palestine issue as a means of whipping up a sense of common purpose among the Arab masses on the basis of foreigner-hatred.

Yet even when, in November, 1945, the Council of the Arab League declared a boycott of Zionist goods, the mounting wave of popular feeling on the Palestine issue was only beginning to make itself felt as a further cause for cleavage between the Muslim masses and the Jewish communities dwelling in the Arab countries. Publicly,

indeed, Arab politicians made a point of stressing that their attacks against what they regarded as a European political Zionist movement in Palestine did not mean enmity towards the Jewish communities of the Arab countries. The latter, they avowed, as loyal subjects of their countries, were not the target of Arab feeling.

How far these professions were genuine, and to what extent they were made as a political gesture, will continue to be a subject of argument for many years. However that may be, it is certainly true that professions of this kind, genuine or not, were politically expedient at a time when the demands of the Arab League for an independent Arab Palestine were being coupled with assurances that, in the event of such a State being set up, the Jewish minority in it would have nothing to fear.

Threats Against the Jewish Communities

But by 1947 the tone had changed: Arab politicians quite openly began to utter ominous threats against the Jewish communities in their countries. These threats at first seem to have had the object of bringing pressure on the United Nations Assembly and Security Council in the debates on the Palestine question.

With the entire Arabic press fulminating against the perfidy of Zionism, and with Arab politicians rousing their underfed and enervated masses to a dangerous pitch of hysteria, the threats were certainly not empty.

Typical of the tone adopted in the United Nations by the Arab delegates are remarks made by Faris al-Khuri, representative of Syria, in an interview he gave to a press representative in New York on February 18, 1947: "Unless the Palestine problem is settled, we shall have difficulty," he declared, "in protecting and safeguarding the Jews in the Arab world." (*New York Times*, February 19, 1947.)

Not very different was the tone adopted by Haykal Pasha, the Egyptian delegate to the United Nations Palestine Committee, on November 24, 1947: "At present," said the Pasha, "we regard the million Jews in our countries as brothers . . . your decision might prompt some of our people to regard them as enemies" (*Manchester Guardian*, November 25, 1947). On the same day, *The Times* reported him as saying: "The United States—which has not been able altogether to suppress outbursts of racial passion in the form of lynchings—will appreciate that with the best will in the world the Near Eastern Governments might not be able to control the infuriated Muslims." What is significant in this latter passage is the reference to Muslims rather than Arabs.

CHAPTER II

EGYPT

There has been a Jewish community in Egypt for the past 1,900 years. First concentrated in Alexandria, Jewish settlers later moved also to Fustat (Old Cairo) after its foundation as the country's new capital by the Arab conquerors in the year 641. In spite of the unreliability of figures given by various travellers who visited the country in the course of the last few hundred years, it is none the less obvious that the Jewish population increased considerably during the nineteenth century. According to the latest census, held in 1937, the total Jewish population in that year amounted to 64,484, most of it being concentrated in Cairo and Alexandria. Its distribution throughout the country is shown by the following table:

Cairo	36,155
Alexandria	25,183
Canal Zone	891
Damietta	5
Suez	2,250
TOTAL	64,484

The Jews of Egypt represent not more than about 0.4 per cent of the country's total population which—at the time of the 1937 census —stood at 15,900,000. An estimate made in 1945 revised this figure to as high as 20,000,000. This estimate should, of course, be treated with reserve. But if one assumes a proportionate increase in the Jewish population, the number of Jews in Egypt to-day would amount to somewhere between 75,000 and 80,000.

In few Muslim countries has Western civilisation made itself as strongly felt as in Egypt. The last restrictions of the Jewish *millah,* including the theoretical rights and obligations of the Jews as *Dhimmi,* disappeared in the course of the nineteenth century.

Long before the Egyptian Government, newly freed from Ottoman suzerainty, had recognised by its Law No. 8 of 1915 the equality and freedom of all its subjects, the Jews had begun to play an active part in all walks of life. All that the Law No. 8 did was to give legal recognition to their long-established right to have various matters of personal status, such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance, settled by their own religious authorities in accordance with their own traditions.

The nineteenth century saw considerable developments in the two main Jewish communities—those in Alexandria and Cairo. Many

individual Jews prospered. A large number of communal institutions was established. Schools, well-equipped hospitals, and a variety of charitable institutions of all kinds, as well as sports clubs and social centres, were founded.

Sociologically speaking, the Jews of Egypt can be divided broadly into three classes, the class to which each individual belongs depending to some extent on his ancestry.

At the top are a fairly considerable number of extremely rich and well-known families. Through their wealth, their position in society, their personal connections, and their business links with powerful Muslim and Copt landowners and politicians, they were in a position —until the last two or three years—to play a prominent part in the life of the country.

Jews have been given the title of Pasha. There is to this day a Jewish Senator and there have been a number of Jewish ministers. Joseph Pasha Cattaoui, for example—who, for a long time, was President of the Jewish community in Cairo—has been several times a member of the Egyptian Cabinet. He was also a member of the Egyptian delegation which went to London after the First World War and, as such, took a prominent part in the negotiations resulting in the declaration of Egypt's independence in 1922. A Jewess was Lady-in-Waiting to Queen Nazli, mother of King Faruk.

Below this somewhat exclusive circle there is a fairly large number of very wealthy business men in the cotton trade, banking, the stock exchange, the press, the import and export trade, and other commercial activities. In Alexandria, Cairo, Ismailia, and Port Said, there are many Jewish shopkeepers, doctors, and lawyers, while the number of Jewish employees in business offices—mostly foreign-owned—was, until the recent introduction of discriminatory labour legislation by the Egyptian Government against foreigners, very high.

At the other end of the social scale are the poor Jews, mostly small traders, pedlars, or craftsmen, such as silversmiths and coppersmiths. In Cairo, the majority of these live in the Jewish quarter known as the "Harat al-Yahud"; and, according to the Egyptian magazine *Al Mussawwar* (No. 1239), they number about 9,800.

Most of these poor Jews are descendants of the original settlers in the country. The majority of the middle and upper class, on the other hand, are of Spanish, Italian, and other foreign origin.

The mother-tongue of the poorer classes is Arabic. Those who are better off either use French or, more often, practice a peculiar form of bilingualism whereby it is normal to slip easily in the course of the same conversation from French into Arabic and back again. If their pronunciation of the French language may sometimes sound peculiar to the ears of a Frenchman, their knowledge of it, and of French culture generally, is not much below that of a native Frenchman of equivalent education. This is because Jewish schools in Egypt, and

especially Jewish secondary schools, use French as the basic language of instruction.

The use of French is symptomatic of the general trend towards Western culture—particularly that of France—shown by the Jewish and other non-Muslim communities in Egypt during the greater part of the last hundred years. This Western orientation, already widespread by the latter half of the nineteenth century, has by now thoroughly soaked into the fabric of their daily lives. It brought about a considerable—if sometimes somewhat superficial—change in their habits, dress, and tastes, and thus in their attitude towards the country and the people amongst whom they live. This process was accentuated during the last 50 years or so by the influx of a good many European Jews, mostly from Italy and the Balkan countries.

Inevitably these tendencies have had important consequences on the national status of Egyptian Jews. About 30,000 out of the total —or nearly half—are foreign nationals, even though many of them have never seen the countries whose passports they carry.

The most powerful incentive to the acquisition of foreign nationality was, of course, the extra-territorial privileges of the Capitulations. This institution not only secured the protection by his Consul of any foreign national; it also enabled him to escape the uncertain justice of the Egyptian courts in his lawsuits, and entitled him to take his case to the European judges of the Mixed Tribunals (abolished in 1949).

But over and above the 30,000 foreign nationals, another 40,000 Jews are without any nationality whatsoever. Paradoxically, it is these latter whose ancestry goes back to the original settlers 1,900 years ago. Of the whole 75,000-80,000, only 5,000—less than 7 per cent—possess Egyptian nationality.

In the light of these facts, it is easier to understand that outbreaks of mob violence against the Jews in Egypt—such as those of 1948—were due in the main less to anti-Semitism than to hatred of all foreigners from the powerful West.

Failure to appreciate this point may easily lead to erroneous conclusions, such as those of the American Jewish Committee's *Report on the Situation in Egypt,* 1949, to the effect that the outbursts of brutal and sometimes vicious hatred against the Jewish community were due to a "systematic, thorough-going anti-Semitism . . . too firmly rooted to be expected to disappear. . . ."

This view does not correspond to the facts. It is not the normal anti-Jewish feeling, so firmly rooted in the Muslim masses, which is responsible for these outbreaks but a universal hatred of all Western foreigners, whatever their nationality or creed.

Xenophobia, indeed, made itself felt in Egypt probably earlier than in any other Oriental country. From the outbreak of anti-foreign rioting in Alexandria in 1882, the fires of hatred for the intruding Western stranger have steadily increased in intensity among all classes,

approaching their peak in the years leading up to the outbreak of the Second World War. Its landmarks have been: the disturbances of 1919, the Alexandria riots of 1921, the assassination of Sir Lee Stack in 1924, the series of intermittent demonstrations and riots in Cairo and Alexandria right through the 'thirties, and the Balfour Day Riots of 1945, culminating in the paroxysm of unparalleled mob savagery of 1948.

In those July weeks in 1948, anyone in the streets of Cairo who looked like a Westerner was liable to be set upon by shrieking, murderous mobs of hooligans armed with staves, knives, and broken bottles. So bad did the situation become that, according to some reports, the British Embassy was at one stage seriously considering the reoccupation of the Delta by British troops from the Canal Zone.

Yet right up till the middle 'thirties, any idea of possible tension between the Jews and the rest of the Egyptian population seemed remote. Charles Issawi, in his book *Egypt* (Oxford University Press, 1947), writes: "Until relatively recently there was no marked specifically anti-Jewish, as distinct from the general anti-foreign, feeling." But the intensification of nationalist fervour, combined with the increasing westernisation of the Jewish community, was bound, in the long run, to make the latter a target for the country's gnawing hatred of all foreigners from the Occident.

In due course, the ever-growing tide of anti-Western nationalism took legal form in the now well-known Company Law No. 138 of July 29, 1947. The law stipulated that at least 75 per cent of office employees and 90 per cent of the manual workers in all enterprises in Egypt, whether Egyptian or foreign owned, must be of Egyptian nationality.

The measure caused an outcry among employers, both Jewish and Gentile. They were faced with the alternatives of either replacing staff of proved efficiency and experience by new and usually inferior staff or of keeping on their old employees and complying with the law by engaging sufficient Egyptians to achieve the required proportion. Either way they stood to lose financially. Most were forced, however reluctantly, to adopt the first course; and the first victims of this discriminatory piece of legislation were, of course, the 30,000 Jews holding foreign passports. Many of these were promptly dismissed.

But long before the introduction of this law the spectre of discrimination had already raised its head. Although, for example, the Nationality Law of 1929 provided for the acquisition of Egyptian nationality by anyone born and resident in Egypt, this legal claim was systematically frustrated by administrative obstruction. Thus, the *Journal des Tribunaux Mixtes*, of March 17 and 18, 1948, commenting on the significance of a new amendment to the Nationality Law, emphasised the "necessity to avoid the granting of Egyptian nationality to undesirables and to such persons . . . as cannot be considered Egyptian heart and soul (. . . *egyptiennes de coeur et d'esprit*)."

But who decides on the qualifications of any individual to be "Egyptian heart and soul"? The fact that this decision was in the hands of individual officials, themselves deeply affected by the prevailing xenophobia and working under Governments doing their best to pander to the fanaticism of the masses, explains why so many Jews—born in the country and descendants of many generations of Egyptian residents—have yet had their applications for recognition as Egyptian nationals rejected. These stateless Jews—*sujets locaux*, they are called in Egypt—have been among the most tragic of the victims of recent events.

The difference between the first Nationality Law of 1929 and the Amendment brought out in 1947 reflects clearly the two characteristics of internal developments in Egypt during this period. First, the growing importance of the illiterate population of the towns as a political factor; and second, the flooding of the labour market by an ever-larger number of more or less unemployable Egyptian middle-class youngsters from the technical colleges and universities.

The fact that the Egyptian nationalist movement—the Wafd—was conceived by its founder, Saad Pasha Zaghlul, and developed by him and his successor in the leadership, Mustafa Pasha al-Nahas, as a mass movement has had important effects on the pattern of Egyptian politics. To begin with, it has made it necessary for all political leaders to woo popular support far more ardently than is necessary in the more primitive and more authoritarian neighbouring Arab countries. In particular, they have concentrated on wooing the labouring classes in the main cities of the Delta, a section of the population steadily increasing in number since the introduction of light industries during the 'thirties and the setting-up of British military installations during the 'forties.

The urban working class is important because, in the form of an excitable street mob, its influence on political events can be brought to bear far more rapidly than that of the scattered peasant masses in the villages. But despite a small measure of educational advance during the last twelve years or so, the labouring classes in the towns are little less illiterate and ignorant than the *fellahin* in the villages. What is more, the urban working class is, if anything, more easily roused to a high pitch of mob hysteria in Egypt than elsewhere in the Middle East. To some degree, at any rate, this must be attributed to their unvarying under-nourishment and the fact of their progessive debilitation from disease.

If the urban working class represents a volatile powder-keg, almost as much does the university youth. The expansion of secondary and higher education in Egypt has far outstripped that of elementary education. Hence the presence of growing numbers of qualified middle-class youngsters who have found it increasingly hard to find employment in occupations traditionally staffed from the non-Muslim communities—including the Jewish community.

Some, it is true, could find employment in Government Departments, where xenophobia could ensure an absence of competition from better-trained and more cultivated Westerners. But the number of applications for Government appointments has always been completely out of proportion to the number of vacancies.

These two political powder-kegs—the urban proletariat and the unemployed university youth—naturally liked their politics hot and strong. And what could be hotter and stronger than the galaxy of uniforms, standards, parades, and thundering oratory produced by the Fascism of inter-war Europe?

There were the Greenshirts of the "Young Egypt" organisation (*Misr al-Fatat*), led by Ahmad Hussein. There were the terrorists of the "Muslim Brotherhood" (*Ikhwan al-Muslimin*), led by Hassan al-Banna. Even that stalwart of progressive liberal nationalism, Nahas Pasha, found it necessary to have his "Blueshirts."

If the personal record of Nahas makes it clear that he has little sympathy with the fanatical demagogy of extremist pan-Arab or pan-Islamic nationalism, the same cannot be said of many of his followers. And they, in many cases, developed an attitude towards the foreign communities, little distinguishable from that of the hysterical Greenshirts or the bloodthirsty Muslim Brotherhood.

Egyptian nationalists naturally demanded the restoration of Egypt's full sovereignty, the evacuation of British garrisons from the country, and the abolition of the Capitulations. But they went beyond that; and in their resentment against all foreigners began to turn more and more against any who differed from *Misri Effendi*—the average Egyptian. Not only the Jews but the Greeks, the Armenians, the Italians, the Maltese, the Cypriots—and even the Copts, Christian descendants of the inhabitants of ancient Egypt itself—increasingly became the target of nationalist hatred. The roll of assassinations of prominent public figures attributable to the sinister Muslim Brotherhood became more and more alarming as the years went by.

Thus the Jews, even before the Palestine issue became a matter of general Arab concern, were exchanging uneasy whispers among themselves and with their Christian neighbours. Yet so firmly rooted in Egypt's history was the Jewish minority, so intimate and strong were its connections with every aspect of the country's life, so well established were the excellent personal relations which existed between the "top drawer" of Jewish society with the leading Muslim families of Egypt, that even the uproar over Palestine did not at first affect their daily lives.

A warning of what was to come appeared three weeks before the Balfour Day riots of November, 1945: the young thugs of the "Young Egypt" organisation issued a threat that unless the Jewish community in Egypt would dissociate itself publicly from the Zionist Jews of Palestine it would be considered guilty of a hostile act against the Arab countries.

On the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration—November 2, 1945

—the streets of Cairo were filled with a yelling mob. As expected by the organisers of the demonstrations, paid hooligans began by taking the lead in the looting of synagogues and Jewish shops. And then something quite unexpected happened. The mob, once roused, unleashed itself against anything which savoured either of the foreign or the wealthy. Balfour Day became an orgy of plunder, directed against both synagogues and churches, against all shops, whether Jewish, Christian, or Muslim. No one wearing European clothes, whatever his creed, could safely go out without fear of bodily assault and robbery. The author himself saw a section of the mob trying to set fire to a Greek Orthodox Church.

The discussion of the Palestine question by the United Nations in 1947 brought public feeling in all the countries of the Arab League, and especially in Egypt, to a fever of excitement. The Arabic press of Egypt—never notable for the coolness and balance of its treatment of political events—was foaming with abuse and threats.

The Government, initially not averse to making use of public excitement to strengthen its case in the United Nations debates, soon found that it had unleashed forces beyond its control.

On November 24, 1947—that is, five days before the United Nations decision to partition Palestine—the Egyptian delegate in the General Assembly, Haykal Pasha, made this announcement: "The Arab Government will do everything in their power to protect Jewish citizens in their lands. But we are all aware that mob fury is often stronger than the police. Unconsciously you are on the verge of lighting a flame of anti-Semitism in the Middle East which would be more difficult to extinguish than it was in Germany. . . ."

On December 3, Haim Effendi Nahum—Grand Rabbi of Egypt—told members of the press that Egyptian Jewry would be loyal to Egypt. By then serious fighting between Jews and Arabs had broken out in Palestine and was growing in intensity week by week. But in Egypt nothing happened until May 15, 1948, when the Palestine Mandate came to an end and Britain withdrew from the country.

In the meantime, the most inflammatory posters, showing a fist with a blood-stained dagger—representing Judaism—pointing at the heart of an Arab, were displayed everywhere in Egypt. A virulent Jew-baiting campaign was organised by the Nile Valley Committee for the Defence of Palestine under the leadership of Mustafa Mun'im, a young fanatic, who, during a disturbance caused by him in the public gallery at a session of the United Nations, had bitten off the ear of a United Nations guard. On May 11, martial law was proclaimed and extraordinary powers were conferred upon the Prime Minister, Mahmud Fahmy al-Nokrashi. Egypt, Transjordan, Syria, the Lebanon, and Iraq invaded Palestine with the object of crushing the new State of Israel, whose establishment was proclaimed on the night of May 14.

In Egypt, a number of proclamations were issued to provide for military security. The first, dated May 25—though couched in general

terms—had a special bearing on the Jewish community, with its small proportion of acknowledged Egyptian nationals. It obliged persons wishing to leave the country to obtain special exit visas. Only later did the Government yield to diplomatic representations from foreign Governments and make a few exceptions to the standstill order.

More directly aimed at the Jewish community was Proclamation No. 26 of May 30, 1948. It provided for the sequestration of the property of any persons interned or placed under surveillance and of anyone, even though living outside Egypt, whose activities were considered prejudicial to the security of the State. Likewise, sequestration could be ordered against any company in which such a person had substantial interests.

The Director-General of sequestrated property was authorised to cancel any debts owed by a third party to the owner, and even to liquidate such property. Legal redress was denied to the victims. The Director-General was authorised to dispose of 10 per cent of any property sequestrated, basing his figure on gross receipts without any regard to expenses or costs.

The full effects of this measure on the economic life of the Jewish community can only be fully appreciated by those who are familiar with the uncertain personal probity of Egyptian officialdom. The fact, moreover, that those arrested, or even put under surveillance, were bereft of legal protection provided an even greater opportunity for greedy and corrupt officials, of which few failed to take advantage. The scandal reached such proportions that protests were voiced even in the Arabic Press: the magazine *Al-Mussawwar,* as quoted by the French language *Bourse Egyptienne* of October 19, 1948, published an article denouncing the maladministration of sequestrated property.

By the end of 1948 there had been over 70 cases of sequestration —almost all of them affecting individual Jews and Jewish-owned companies. Further sequestrations were only abandoned when the full extent of the damage being done thereby to the country's economy came to be appreciated and when the chorus of diplomatic protests had reached a pitch where Egypt could no longer ignore the detrimental effect of this state of affairs on her reputation in the world.

More direct than that of these legislative measures was the effect of arrest and internment. During the night of May 14-15 a large number of people covered by the blanket accusations of " Zionist " or " Communist " activities were rounded up in Cairo, Alexandria, and Port Said and interned.

It is unlikely that the figure of " up to 2,000 " for the number of persons thus arrested, given by the Arabic press at the time, is correct. More reliance can be placed on the later figure of 1,300. What is interesting to note is that of these only 370 could, by any stretch of the imagination, be suspected of either active Zionism or active Communism.

Denunciations, intermittent searchings, arrests, interrogations, and

internment made the life of the Jewish community a nightmare. On July 18, 250 Jewish families, resident in the neighbourhood of the Royal Palace of Abdin, were ordered to vacate their homes within 24 hours; and the Chief Rabbi had to order the preparation of a synagogue as a reception-centre for them. The flats thus made vacant were immediately handed over to Muslim Egyptians. This was part of an attempt to relieve the housing shortage, in so far as it affected Muslims, by the compulsory expulsion of Jewish families from their homes, this action being based on the flimsy pretext that these families were resident within a few hundred yards of " a military objective." The term " military objective " was sometimes interpreted to include a petrol-pump.

Here, again, diplomatic protests, especially from the French Consul in Cairo, put an end to this practice. But even then, Proclamation No. 41, of July 26, by ordering the registration of all inhabitants of certain designated areas, rekindled the daily uncertainty and anxiety about possible expulsion of many hundreds of Jewish families.

A favourite practice of the Cairo underworld was to accost Westerners in the streets and offer them " protection " against the fury of the populace. If the foreigner refused to pay the sum demanded for such " protection," the man who had accosted him would emit yells of *Yahud'* (" Jew ") ; and, even though the person accosted might have been, in fact, a Christian, a horde of hooligans waiting around the corner would pounce on the foreigner and leave another bleeding casualty in the gutter.

This state of affairs had disastrous effects throughout the whole fabric of Jewish life in Egypt. The proclamation already referred to made it possible for Muslims in partnership with Jewish business men to swindle their partners without fear of punishment. Various clubs, societies, and organisations hastened to dissociate themselves from any of their members who happened to fall a victim to the prevailing hysteria. Thus, for example, the Egyptian Grand National Lodge of Freemasons announced that " though brotherly love of all human beings was one of the fundamental tenets of freemasonry, the Lodge had its patriotic feelings." And it, therefore, decided " to have absolutely nothing to do with any Jews " (*Al-Misri*, October 26, 1948).

It became so difficult for Jewish business men to obtain import and export licences that many gave up the attempt. Numerous Jews received threatening anonymous letters demanding money. In Helwan, a suburb south of Cairo, a number of Jewish families received anonymous warnings to vacate their homes if they wanted to avoid molestation.

In Cairo, Alexandria, and Port Said, the Jewish communities had to make forced donations of considerable sums of money to the so-called " Palestine Fund." The Alexandria community is said to have given £E60,000 and that of Cairo, £E40,000. Over and above that, hundreds of individuals were terrorised into contributing to the Arab

fund for the war against the Jews in Palestine. The total of these extortions must remain a matter of guesswork, but it is certainly considerable.

At this point, it is worth examining a little more closely the outbreaks of terroristic and mob violence of the summer of 1948. Over five months elapsed between the United Nations decision to partition Palestine and the country's evacuation by the British (which was accompanied by the simultaneous proclamation of the State of Israel) on May 15, 1948. During this period, in spite of a vitriolic press campaign of astounding mendacity, there were no large-scale outbreaks of violence against the Jewish community in Egypt. It was only five weeks after the invasion of Palestine by the Egyptian army that the first outbreak occurred.

In the early hours of June 20, 1948, the Jewish quarter of the old city of Cairo (*Harat al-Yahud*) was shaken by two successive explosions. When the smoke and dust had cleared away, four blocks of poverty-stricken, Jewish-occupied tenements lay in rubble. The official estimate of Jewish casualties was 34 dead and 60 injured, 10 seriously. The press promptly published officially-inspired insinuations that the perpetrators of this murderous outrage were Jews; and squads of police were sent to search Jewish houses in the vicinity. In due course, a story was put out that the searchers had unearthed a cache of arms and explosives.

About four weeks later, a bomber of the Israel Air Force, believed to be aiming at the Royal Palace of Abdin as a reprisal for Egyptian bombing of Tel Aviv, missed its target, dropping a stick of four bombs on one of the densely-populated poor quarters in the vicinity. The error had tragic consequences in killed and wounded; and no further Israel bombing of Cairo took place.

To anyone whose knowledge of events was derived exclusively from Egyptian broadcasts, the Egyptian Press, or the speeches of the politicians, the fact that the Israel Air Force had any 'planes left at all—let alone a big bomber capable of raiding Cairo itself—was inexplicable. The severe censorship of any scrap of news suggesting that the war in Palestine was going badly for the Arab invaders, plus the bombastic and misleading speeches of ministers, had led every Egyptian to expect that the overwhelming strength of the Egyptian forces would drive the "Jewish bandits" into the sea in a matter of days.

After four weeks of allegedly uninterrupted victories, a population less gullible than the Egyptians would have wondered why fighting was still going on at all. But drunk with the verbosity of their leaders, the Egyptian masses had not even the most remote suspicion of the true state of affairs in Palestine. The Government found themselves in an appalling quandary.

After the first shock of the air raid, there was a second and even worse shock to follow—the truce in Palestine. The Government, how-

ever, was not at a loss for long: it managed to turn the air raid to good account by using it to divert the bewilderment of the populace at the truce into a tremendous outburst of bloodthirsty mob hysteria against the Jews and, for that matter, all "treacherous foreigners."

On the day following the Israel air raid, a violent explosion wrecked two big Jewish-owned department stores in the Sharia Fuad al-Awwal, one of Cairo's main shopping centres. For more than an hour after the explosion every light and heavy anti-aircraft gun in the Cairo area blazed into the empty sky, presumably with a view to making the populace believe the official claim that this was another air raid. In fact, there is little doubt that the outrage was the work of Egyptian nationalist terrorists.

But the manœuvre did have this effect: throughout the subsequent week the streets of Cairo were filled with gangs of bloodthirsty ruffians in search of European victims. As soon as one was spotted, up went the yell *Yahud*'—whatever in fact the unfortunate foreigner's creed might be—and he was lucky to escape with his life. In and around the Jewish quarter of the old city a real manhunt took place. Three rabbis were murdered. People were dragged out of their cars, trampled upon, beaten up, stabbed, and stoned. Terrified eye-witnesses even told of women being raped in the streets in broad daylight.

The exact number of victims has never been disclosed. Censorship, of course, prevented the Press from even mentioning the riots. But it is estimated by foreign newspapermen that over 200 foreign nationals, apart from Egyptian Jews, were killed or seriously injured. Among those, the best known was the French boxing trainer, Gaillard —who had been invited to Egypt to coach the country's boxing team for the Olympic Games. He and another Frenchman were horribly done to death with knives and broken bottles within sight of the Anglican Cathedral. Another victim was an American visitor—Stephen Haas—who was stoned to death in the presence of his wife, while she herself was badly injured.

The Egyptian authorities must bear a heavy responsibility for these happenings. By the complete inertia of their security forces they demonstrated the fact that they condoned the actions of the mob. Eye-witnesses have testified that even when police were in the vicinity of outbreaks, such intervention as they allowed themselves took the form of either taking part in the assaults of the mob or obstructing the rescue of victims—as happened in the case of Stephen Haas.

Only repeated protests by the American, British, French, Italian, and Greek diplomatic representatives—culminating in the threat of intervention by British troops from the Canal Zone—compelled the Egyptian Government to bring the rioting to an end.

This, however, did not restore public order. As soon as the mob had been cleared from the streets, bomb outrages began once more. On July 28, explosives planted on the first floor of the David Ades building in the centre of Cairo caused a certain amount of damage, but

fortunately no casualties. As in previous cases, the outrage was falsely attributed to the Jews; and a former Jewish employee of the store on the ground floor was arrested. On August 1 two violent explosions occurred within ten minutes of each other at the two big Jewish-owned department stores of Gattegno and Benzion. Twenty-eight people were injured, while the normally staid Arabic *Al-Ahram* permitted itself to publish the mendacious insinuation that the outrages were the work of Jews. Two days later, the newspaper had second thoughts, and its leader took the form of a condemnation of terrorism. This seemed to reflect a change of official policy; and, indeed, the Government proceeded to offer a reward of £E10,000 for information leading to the arrest of the culprits responsible for the Gattegno and Benzion explosions.

For the rest of August and for most of September there were no more outrages. But on September 22 yet a further explosion occurred in the business centre of the old city—the Sharia Muski, killing 19, and injuring 62. The Cairo police, typically enough, immediately raided the Jewish quarter of the old city and arrested 50 " suspects." Exactly one month later an explosion took place in the Sharia Muski yet again, killing 19 Jews and injuring 47.

The last bomb outrage of that year occurred on November 11. Indeed, this was the last act of violence perpetrated by the Muslim Brotherhood before it struck at, and murdered, the Prime Minister himself, Nokrashi Pasha. On November 11, the *Societé Orientale de Publicité*, one of Egypt's biggest newspaper publishing concerns, whose capital is British, but whose managing director happens to be a Jew, had its editorial offices blown up. These were the editorial offices of two English language papers (*The Egyptian Mail* and *Egyptian Gazette*), two French language papers (*Le Progrès Egyptien* and *La Bourse Egyptienne*), the British community's gossip magazine, *The Sphinx*, and a Wafdist Arabic evening paper, *Al-Balagh*.

The underlying causes of these events, then, are complex and attributed to different causes by different people. The Chief Rabbi of Cairo, for instance—and, indeed, many leading Egyptian Jews—have told Jewish visitors from abroad that there never has been in the past, and never will be in the future, any permanent ill-treatment of Jews in Egypt, that recent events are due entirely to public agitation over Palestine, and will be merely an unhappy memory once the Palestine question has been settled peacefully one way or another. Other observers —like the author of the Report on Egypt published by the American Jewish Committee—are of the opinion that anti-Semitism " has become too firmly rooted to be expected to disappear." What are the facts ?

It is certainly true that the position of the Jewish community in Egypt has deteriorated during the last 100 years or so. But the causes of this deterioration have little to do, in the first instance, with any specifically anti-Jewish feeling among the Egyptian masses.

First among the causes must be reckoned the growing intensity of

nationalism, with its crystallisation into xenophobia, both among the under-privileged masses and the unemployed university youth. Next, the increasingly Western orientation of the majority of Egyptian Jews, aggravated by the acquisition of foreign nationality by so many of them, has led to their alienation from the rest of the indigenous population.

Although specifically anti-Jewish feeling had initially little relevance to this development, the factors just mentioned did provide a basis for resentment against the Jews as such, once public feeling was stirred up by the question of Palestine. It was only latterly that, in the eyes of the masses, Egyptian Jewry and the Jews of Palestine were linked as common enemies.

One other cause should not be ignored. Throughout history the Jews have always been a favourite scapegoat for embarrassed rulers; and the ruling class of modern Egypt is no exception. Faced with the growing murmur of popular discontent at social and economic conditions, this class—which is predominantly Muslim—sought to divert such unrest by undertaking the disastrous military adventure in Palestine. It is only now that this aspect of the fighting in Palestine is coming to be appreciated—even in Egypt.

Early in January, 1950, for instance, an article by Salama Musa in the Wafdist *Sawt al-Ummah* (quoted in *The Jewish Chronicle* of January 27, 1950) declared that: "The Saadists (Nokrashi Pasha's followers) entered the war in Palestine with a complete ignorance of its consequences. . . . They wanted to establish martial law in Egypt and to distract the people's attention from their distressing conditions."

Likewise the rulers of Egypt have not been above blaming on to exploitation by Westerners—especially Jews—the backwardness and poverty of the populace. Consequently, the more the extent of the failure in Palestine came to be known, the more it became necessary for those responsible to focus public feeling against the country's non-Muslim minorities.

It is significant that it was the Government and not the people who —on the invasion of Israel on May 15—introduced the first discriminatory measures against the Jews. What is more, in spite of the unprecedented violence of press, official and nationalist party propaganda against the Jews—and in spite of the campaign of terrorist outrages conducted by the Muslim Brotherhood and the Nile Valley Committee for the Defence of Palestine—it took a further six weeks to whip up a sufficient degree of mass hysteria for full-scale rioting to begin.

All the circumstances of the chain of events which followed the air-raid by the Israel Air Force on July 16 suggest that a manœuvre was carefully organised by the Government. These events—the anti-aircraft barrage on July 17, the explosion on the 19th with its staged thunder of anti-aircraft guns, and the official story about an alleged "aerial torpedo," and finally the unleashing of a mass blood-hunt for Jews (which characteristically enough turned spontaneously into a blood-hunt for foreigners in general)—all add up to a damning indict-

ment. The staggering inactivity of the security forces for a whole week and the fact that many of them made common cause with the rioters, makes the case against the Government conclusive.

In the light of these facts, it is wrong to speak of any deeply-rooted anti-Jewish feeling in Egypt. On the contrary, the whole course of events points to the conclusion that there would have been no specific anti-Jewish—as distinct from generally anti-Western—feeling were it not that the Palestine question had temporarily crystallised Egyptian xenophobia into anti-Semitism.

The riots were not due to a grudge against the Jews as such. They were deliberately fostered by the Government; and even the Government was unable to prevent them turning into outbreaks against every kind of Western foreigner.

On the other hand, it would be going too far to accuse the Egyptian Government of carrying out what the report of the American Jewish Committee describe as " a programme of annihilation of the freedom, the fortunes, and the security of the Jewish minority."

The arbitrary behaviour of the Administration, the arrests, the sequestrations—these cannot be denied. But it is still obvious that the Government did not lose its head entirely. The numbers of arrests of Jews was, after all, comparatively small ; likewise the number of sequestrations, many of which have since been rescinded. If one bears in mind how easily the passions of the populace in the East are roused, and how easily they subside, one can understand better how—in spite of the violence of recent events in Egypt—a peaceful settlement of the dispute between Israel and the Arab States might lead to the restoration of the former comparative security enjoyed by the Jewish minority in Egypt.

On the other hand, the possibility cannot be excluded that the violent outbreaks which have been described will leave the Jews of Egypt in a state of isolation from their Muslim neighbours, and with a consequent sense of insecurity more or less permanent. For now, when the full extent of the humiliating defeat of Egypt's military forces in Palestine is coming to be generally known, and the shame of the behaviour into which the Egyptian people allowed themselves to be led is coming to be appreciated, it may well be that Egypt will, in days to come, regard the Jews with resentment as living reminders of her *dégringolade.*

Be that as it may, there have been ample signs in recent months that the Egyptian Government is doing its best to make up for its behaviour in recent years, and to retrieve something of the country's reputation in the civilised world. In spite of occasional individual outbreaks of gutter journalism, the Egyptian Government itself seems to have made up its mind to try to repair some of the damage.

Thus, in August, 1949, exit visas—hitherto sold by a certain official at a cost of £E50 each—were abolished, thus making it possible even for those Jews who could not afford a £E50 bribe, to leave the country.

By the end of January, 1950, a report from the Cairo correspondent of *The Jewish Chronicle* stated that all but two of the detainees in internment camps had been released, while 26 sequestrated properties had been returned to their rightful owners.

According to the Arabic paper, *Al-Ahram,* as many as 15,000 Egyptian Jews have been given permission to leave the country—on condition that they never return.

How things will develop remains to be seen. But the Wafdist landslide in the elections of January, 1950, cannot but rouse hopes for a continued improvement in the situation. Mustafa Pasha al-Nahas has never made any secret of his personal antipathy for the shameful events of 1947, 1948, and 1949. So great is his personal prestige, moreover, that even though his own traditional liberalism of outlook may not be shared by all his followers, he may yet succeed in weaning a sufficient proportion of Egyptian public opinion away from fanaticism and thus avoid the disaster which must otherwise lie in wait both for the Jews and the country itself.

CHAPTER III

IRAQ

An examination of the development of Muslim-Jewish relations in Iraq reveals two noteworthy features, apparently at variance with each other. On the one hand, probably in no other Muslim country has the Jewish minority been so closely associated with the whole fabric of social and political life as in Iraq. On the other hand, in none has anti-Jewish feeling in recent years been so general and nowhere have anti-Jewish measures been applied so systematically.

The Jews in Iraq constitute, as far as we know, the oldest Jewish settlement outside Palestine. Indeed, even if the origin of the House of Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees is disregarded, Jewish settlements in Iraq can be said to have first taken place about 600 years before Jews from Palestine emigrated to Egypt. The majority of the Jews now living in Iraq are the direct descendants of those Jews who, after the destruction of the First Temple 2,500 years ago, were led into exile in Babylonia and remained there after the return of some of their number to Jerusalem with Ezra.

But the great antiquity of the Jewish community is not, of course, the sole reason for the exceptionally close bonds which unite Iraqi Jews to their country and their non-Jewish neighbours. "They have made themselves an integral part of the nation. Both in business and in politics they have always played a big part." (E. Main: *Iraq*, 1935.)

Their close association with all aspects of the life around them is in part due to the fact that the proportion of the Jewish minority in Iraq to the rest of the population is far higher than in other Muslim countries. Whereas the Jews in Egypt represent only 0.4 per cent of the total population, in Iraq they amount to about 2.5 per cent, and as much as 25 per cent in the capital, Baghdad.

It should be noted that it is more difficult to determine the total number of Jews in Iraq than in Egypt. For while in Egypt the Jewish population is almost exclusively concentrated in the big towns, in Iraq it is dispersed up and down the country, including some scattered among the Kurdish tribes in the North.

The Kurdish Jews live somewhat apart from the rest of the Jewish community, just as the Kurdish minority lives apart from the Arab population. Both are different from the Arabs in general character and daily habits. The language of some of the Kurdish Jews is Syriac (a form of Aramaic), while those in Mosul speak Kurdish. They are mainly traders and craftsmen and live scattered among the various Kurdish villages and towns. In the Amadia district, however, there can be found a number of Jews engaged in tilling the land. It is

difficult to make even an approximate estimate of how many Jews live in these villages—perhaps 5,000-6,000 at most. They have remained relatively untouched by the events of the past few years, which have had such a revolutionary effect on the rest of the Jewish community.

The total Jewish population of Iraq is estimated at 120,000. Although this figure may be out of date, it is probably not far wrong, if allowance is made for emigration, on the one hand, and increase in the birthrate, on the other. Of these, between 90,000 and 100,000 live in Baghdad. But neither is it the larger number of Jews in the country as a whole nor their concentration in the capital which accounts for the difference of their position, at least in the past, from that of their coreligionists in Egypt.

Most important is the fact that Western influence on Iraqi Jews, being no stronger than it was on the town-bred Muslims, was much weaker in Iraq than in Egypt. Middle-class Jews in Iraq took to European dress at about the same time as the Muslims. Likewise, in their daily habits, their houses, and, last but not least, in their language, there was no marked difference between the two communities. Arabic has always been, and still is to-day, the mother-tongue of both Jew and Muslim.

True, as a result of the higher educational facilities provided by the activities of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* and the Anglo-Jewish Association, knowledge of French or English is more common among the Jews than the Muslims. But this difference has never been sufficient to detract from the central fact that Western influence on the Jews has not been much stronger than on other Iraqi communities. All this is in strong contrast to the situation in Egypt and—again unlike Egypt—there has been no noticeable immigration of Jews from European countries.

During the nineteenth century the Jewish community in Iraq was fairly prosperous; and freedom to develop was assisted to no small degree by the two proclamations issued by the Sultan of Turkey in 1839 and 1856. At that time there was already a considerable number of well-to-do families. The schools of the *Alliance* helped to raise the community's educational standard. When the first Chamber of Deputies was opened in Istanbul in 1876, it included a representative of the Iraqi Jews (Menahem Danyiel) and, later, after the Constitution of 1900, the community was represented by Hezkiel Sassoon, a retired senior Ottoman Government official.

During the First World War, however, the Jewish community suffered great hardships at the hands of Turkish governors. Just prior to the fall of Baghdad in 1917, some of its leading members suffered death, torture, and imprisonment.

When, therefore, the Arabs rose against the Turks and made common cause with the Allies, the Jews regarded the fight for liberation as their own. They welcomed the establishment of the new Iraq under British Mandate, and many immediately offered their

services in the building up of its administration. From the establishment of the new country, the Jewish community, and especially its leading members, have been as much bound up with its development as their Muslim neighbours.

Hezkiel Sassoon was appointed Minister of Finance and continued to hold this office in several successive Cabinets. A Jew, David Jamra, was appointed Vice-President of the Court of Appeal. Other Jews occupied important posts in various departments, particularly those concerned with the administration of ports, railways, and finance.

The large number of Jewish officials in the public service was due to the fact that the sudden demand for officials and clerks could only be satisfied in the main from the Jewish and Christian minorities, with their higher educational standards. During the period of the Mandate (*i.e.*, until 1932), and even in the first years of Iraq's existence as an independent State, the high proportion of Jews in Government service caused no offence. Their talents and skill in office work were most valuable to a Government seeking to prove Iraq's readiness for independence.

The Jewish communities in Baghdad and Basra are among the wealthiest in the entire Middle East. The names of some of the leading families, such as the Sassoons and the Khadooris, are known even in other countries. There also exists a large middle-class of small bankers, retailers, agents, merchants, civil servants, clerks, and physicians and lawyers, together with other members of the liberal professions. There are—among the poorer elements—many small shopkeepers, and likewise many craftsmen of one sort or another—masons, carpenters ; and also domestic servants. There is no special Jewish quarter in Baghdad, Jews being found in all parts of the town, though they do tend to congregate in certain streets of different quarters.

The community is well organised. In Baghdad it has established a great number of welfare and social services, a hospital, and about 25 schools. By 1930, 7,200 pupils were attending the ten schools under *Alliance* administration. Thanks to these services, the state of health and the general standard of education of the Jews are far above the average level in Iraq. Ninety per cent of the candidates from Iraq for the London matriculation examination, for instance, used to be Jews.

The community is governed by a lay council of 60 members, who are entitled to impose certain taxes (*e.g.*, on meat) and to allocate the necessary funds to the various institutions. These funds have made it possible to admit pupils to elementary schools free of charge.

There is also a religious council, under the Chief Rabbi, Haham Benjamin, which maintains the communal courts dealing with all such matters as marriage, divorce, inheritance, and the like. Until his resignation at the end of 1949 the overall Head of the community was the universally respected Haham Sasson Khadoori.

This partial communal autonomy arises from Article No. 79 of the Constitution of Iraq. The internal organisation of the Jewish

community is regulated by a special law passed in 1931, which laid down the composition and functions of the various institutions of the four communities in Baghdad, Mosul, Basra, and Diyalah (near Baghdad).

The position of religious minorities, including the Jews and Christians, was laid down by the electoral law of 1924, which allotted four deputies to represent each of these communities in the Chamber of Deputies. There has been some argument as to whether the law permits individual Jews or Christians to be elected as representatives of general constituencies. But the argument has been purely academic, since no Jews or Christians have ever presented themselves as candidates

Apart from this, Iraqi law recognises equal citizenship for non-Muslim minorities and their right to a full share in the public affairs of the State. This right had until recently always been respected and was much valued by the leading personalities of the Jewish community.

Except for a natural interest in developments in Palestine, there has never been any feeling of solidarity with the political aspirations of Zionism. The repeated assurances of loyalty to Iraq, which the Chief Rabbi and other leading Jewish personalities have felt it necessary to make during the Palestine crisis, were not merely the result of outside pressure but were statements of fact. (For the declarations of the Jewish community in Baghdad, and of the then Head of the community Sasson Khadoori, see *The Jewish Chronicle,* December 30, 1949 ; *New York Times,* April 9, 1947, and March 27, 1948 ; and *Manchester Guardian,* December 10, 1947.)

It is against this background of a prosperous Jewish community, closely associated with the country since time immemorial, and not less interested in the common well-being and development of Iraq than their Muslim fellow-citizens, that the gradual deterioration in mutual relations and the growing aggressiveness of the Muslim majority towards the Jews must be examined.

The first signs of the storm to come appeared—far earlier than in any other Muslim country—in 1928, when the first Lord Melchett, on a visit to Palestinė, journeyed on to Baghdad. Wild rumours circulated about the nature of his visit, which was alleged to be connected with designs concerning the National Home in Palestine. This caused hostile demonstrations. As far as the Jewish minority in Iraq itself was concerned, however, there was not at that time the slightest indication of any hostility on this ground towards it. Neither was there any suspicion of Zionist sympathies among Iraqi Jews.

There was also an economic factor. Not only were Jews prominent in the public service but most of the employees in large Arab business firms were also Jewish, owing to the difficulty of finding suitably qualified personnel among the Muslim population. Since secondary and higher education in Baghdad had always been freely available to Jews, and many had been granted State scholarships for study abroad,

the community's educational standards were higher than those of the Muslims.

In the first years of Iraq's newly-won independence, this liberal attitude began to wane. In 1935 the Iraqi Government prohibited the teaching of Hebrew. Only after repeated remonstrances was permission finally granted for the use of Hebrew, but for strictly religious instruction only. By 1937, Philip W. Ireland, in his book on Iraq, was already remarking on the increased difficulties encountered by non-Muslims wishing to enter the Government service. Doubtless this restriction was occasioned by the increasing number of qualified young Muslim candidates in search of appointments. In July, 1939, the importation of any "Zionist" literature was banned.

On the whole, it would be true to say that these measures were occasioned less by any policy directed against the Jewish minority, as such, than by a nationalist reaction against Zionism, which the Iraqis saw as a rival nationalism to their own, and rooted in Europe at that. In any case, Iraq was the only Muslim country where the recommendations of the Bludan Conference were carried into effect.

By the outbreak of the Second World War, the Palestine-Arab Revolt, the continuous spate of Axis propaganda, and, finally, the arrival in Baghdad of Amin al-Husseini, ex-Mufti of Jerusalem, from his Syrian exile, had combined to heighten enormously the prevalent anti-Zionism and to merge much of this feeling with the strong latent Anglophobia of the people.

Axis propaganda was especially effective among officers of the Iraq Army; and Axis wooing of Arab nationalism explains in part both the anti-British revolt of 1941, headed by Rashid Ali al-Gaylani, and the rapid intensification of more specifically anti-Jewish, rather than anti-Zionist, feeling.

Apologists for Rashid Ali claim that he himself was opposed to the Jew-hatred of the Nazis and their supporters. Be that as it may, it is undoubtedly true that no physical harm came to the Jewish community while he himself was at the head of the Government. But during the three-day interval between his flight and the arrival of the British in Baghdad a terrible massacre broke out.

A raging mob, maddened by agitators to the highest pitch of frenzy, fell upon Jewish shops and houses, burning, looting, and murdering. According to official sources, 110 Jews were killed, 240 wounded, while 586 Jewish business premises were looted and 911 Jewish houses destroyed. Unofficial accounts put the number of deaths at 150 and the number of wounded at more than 900. Less serious outbreaks also occurred at Basra, Mosul, and other places in the provinces.

This dreadful massacre could not but leave an ominous mark on the memories of both Jews and Muslims in Iraq. From this point dates Jewish emigration in any serious number, most of it to Palestine.

When, in 1945, with the formation of the Arab League, the

Palestine question became a vital—if not the only—foundation of common purpose in the Arab national movement, the Jewish minority in Iraq inevitably came to be identified with what the feverish minds of the populace had come to regard as a menace to Arab aspirations. Even before the United Nations voted in favour of the establishment of a Jewish State, Jews in Iraq were being accused of the most fantastic crimes and subjected to many restrictions.

In May, 1947, for instance, an Arab newspaper alleged, in spite of an official police denial, that a Jew had given poisoned sweets to an Arab child. In December of the same year another Jew was arrested on suspicion of having placed a tube containing cholera germs in a stream (*Daily Telegraph*, December 29, 1947). From the beginning of 1947 Jews were not allowed to leave the country unless they gave the Government a guarantee in the form of a £2,000 deposit. In the summer of 1947 Muhammad Fadhil Bey al-Jamali, then Iraqi Foreign Minister, stated bluntly to the United Nations Committee on Palestine that " the fate of the Jews in Muslim countries depends on developments in Palestine." The threat materialised when Iraqi troops joined in the invasion of Palestine.

The State of Emergency, which was then declared, was used as a *carte blanche* for all kinds of anti-Jewish measures, largely at the hands of the apparatus of State. Sentences without appeal were passed by courts martial, thus avoiding the necessity of introducing special legislation which might have had to be explained and justified later. As much was openly admitted by the Prime Minister, al-Pachachi Pasha, when he reassured some members of the Opposition (who had expressed their fear of the possible misuse of the Government's emergency powers) that these measures would be applied to Jews only.

The sole attempt to provide the Government with a legal basis for its anti-Jewish policy was an amendment to Article 51 of the Criminal Code. The first paragraph of this amendment enumerates those doctrines whose propagation is punishable in Iraq. In August, 1948, the crime of " Zionism " was added to the list. In fact, however, this legal gesture was quite superfluous, as the system of discrimination against the Jews had long been perfected. The sum of £2,000 deposit, guaranteeing the return of Jews wishing to go abroad, was increased to £3,000 on May 15, 1948; and even then an exit permit, granted only in exceptional cases, was necessary.

Many Jewish officials were arbitrarily dismissed from their posts in the public service, though some of the more senior among them were given the privilege of being either retired on pension or simply suspended from their duties. Even in the prevalent atmosphere of excitement the absurdity of these dismissals was felt. A case in point is that of Ibrahim al-Kebir, the Jewish Controller-General of the Treasury, who was retired on pension only a fortnight after he had been sent to London to negotiate a new financial agreement between Britain and Iraq.

Finally, following the Israeli victories in Palestine, the Government vented its spleen on the Jews of Iraq by issuing, in October, 1948, a circular instructing all Government departments to dismiss their Jewish employees. In this way most of the Jewish public servants were got rid of without notice, pension, or compensation. Only a small number remained.

It must be said that most reports published in the West about the requisitioning of Jewish buildings in Iraq have been greatly exaggerated. Only two Jewish club-houses were taken over for more than a short time, to be used as shelter for Arab refugees from Palestine. All other requisitioned buildings were eventually returned to their owners.

So far as can be ascertained, the only other anti-Jewish measure taken by the Iraqi Government openly is a decree issued on July 17, 1948, by the Iraqi Minister of Defence, Sadiq al-Bassam Pasha, whereby all Jewish-owned banks were forbidden to have any transactions with foreign countries.

So long as legislative anti-Jewish steps were on a comparatively restricted scale, the campaign was left to the police and to military courts. This gave an opportunity to narrow-minded officials and officers to vent their spite on the Jewish community. Police searches of Jewish houses, denunciations, arrests, the application of brutal " third degree " methods to those accused of " Zionist activities " or " endangering the security of the State " were the order of the day. Old letters containing a reference to Palestine, and even the mere mention of that country's name in conversation, were liable to lead to arrest. In one case, a map of the Holy Land attached to a Bible was taken as evidence of " Zionist affiliations."

It goes without saying that these police raids presented a tempting opportunity for blackmail; and not a few officials made good use of it.

On the other hand, this also must be said: thanks to the Government's ban on demonstrations, there were no mob onslaughts on Jewish property. The only evidence of lawless disorder is provided by the practice of small groups of Muslims which, under the pretext of collecting funds for the Palestinian Arab refugees, went from one Jewish shop or house to another, robbing the intimidated and unresisting owners.

But these incidents were insignificant compared with the large-scale campaign of financial extortion carried on by the Government itself. The careful use of trials by court martial provided the authorities with an excellent cloak under which they were able to squeeze the wealthy elements of the Jewish minority as a source of funds wherewith to cover the heavy cost of military adventure in Palestine, an adventure made all the more costly by the fact that it was undertaken at a time when the country's long-standing financial difficulties were particularly acute.

Even a cursory glance at the list of trials is sufficient to make two

things stand out clearly: first, the absurd vagueness of the indictments; and, second, the Government's determination to make the best possible financial use of the proceedings.

In many cases, the Iraqi press, reporting these trials, did not even find it necessary to state the nature of the crimes of which the accused had been found guilty. Here are two typical examples:

> Hezkiel Zaki has been condemned to two years' imprisonment and fined 500 dinars. (*Al-Shaab*, February 7, 1949.) (1 dinar = £1 sterling.)
>
> Sadik Nahum has been found a danger to the security of the State and fined 3,000 dinars as a guarantee of good conduct (*Liwa al-Istiqlal*, March 14, 1949.)

When mention was made of alleged "offences," their nature is revealing of the prevailing state of affairs. One man was condemned for having made some remarks "against the honour of the army." An accused group were found guilty of having "shown sympathy with the Zionists. . . ." The fact that in many cases the expressions "Zionism" and "Communism" were made to mean the same thing is symptomatic of the flimsiness of these charges.

It is difficult to establish the exact number of cases in which Jews were accused of "Zionist activities" or "Zionist sympathies." In many instances the courts martial had before them Muslims and Christians as well as Jews, jointly charged with "Communist activities." But wherever a Jew was concerned, the sentence invariably included a heavy fine. In the light of this, there can be no doubt that the main duty of the courts martial was to obtain funds for the empty Treasury.

The following are a few examples of typical cases:

> The court martial rules that Shaul Yahya must deposit a guarantee of 200 dinars as it is alleged that he has committed acts which have disturbed public order. (*Saut al-Ahrar*, December 19, 1948.)
>
> R. Sassoon Ghazale and Nissim Rahim must pay 500 dinars guarantee for their good conduct and the maintenance of order, as it is alleged that Nissim Rahim has received a letter from his aunt, Therese Rahim, who is now in Palestine. (*Al-Shaab*, December 30, 1948.)
>
> It is ruled that Ezra Hezkiel and Murad Abraham must each pay 1,000 dinars as a guarantee that they will observe good conduct. (*Al-Shaab*, January 6, 1949.)

And there were many similar cases. The almost invariable stipulation that these fines should be paid to the Ministry of Defence leaves no doubt as to the purpose for which the money was used.

The most vivid example, both of vague indictment and of the Government's financial greed, was the case of the Jewish multi-millionaire, Shafiq Ades, of Basra (the only one of the accused, by the way, who was sentenced to death and hanged in public).

Although his trial was reported and discussed in detail by all the newspapers, it was never clearly established whether there was any connection between his sale of surplus British military equipment to

Italy in 1946 and the alleged discovery of the same material in Palestine two years later. The proceedings were held mostly behind closed doors, and the court went so far as to refuse the defence counsel admission to the courtroom. Among many other curious details in this trial, this extremely wealthy capitalist was accused both of "Communism" and "Zionism"! The point to note is that Ades's sentence enriched the Government's treasury by £5,000,000.

The day of his execution was turned into a festival. It was declared a public holiday; thousands of people flooded into Basra from the countryside, and photographs depicting every detail of the hanging appeared in all the newspapers.

There is little doubt that the majority of contributions towards the fund raised for the prosecution of the Palestine campaign and, later, for the assistance of Arab refugees, came from Jews. During May and June, 1948, Baghdad radio broadcast a long list of Jewish names and their contributions. According to reliable estimates, these total about 500,000 dinars.

Over and above the swelling of the Iraqi war-chest, most of the methods adopted in the anti-Jewish campaign suggest that generally the Government, with popular support, was actively engaged in extorting as much money as it could from the Jewish community.

Early in July, 1948, for instance, 40 leading Jewish business men were arrested on a charge of trading with the Soviet Union and thus allegedly supporting a Communist régime. It so happens that many Muslim commercial firms had engaged in similar transactions, many of which had taken place several years before. It also happens that these transactions were the direct result of the Soviet-Iraqi trade agreement. But in the case of the 40 Jews these factors were quietly ignored. The true motives for their being charged became quite obvious when it was learnt that all 40 were released on payment of various sums of up to 10,000 dinars.

In October of the same year the Treasury issued an order to the effect that all Iraqi Jews living abroad would forfeit their property unless they returned to Iraq at once.

The total sum which the Government obtained by means of fines, confiscations, "guarantees," and forfeiture of property was certainly a substantial proportion of Jewish-owned wealth in Iraq. It may be computed at something well over £10,000,000. This official draining of Jewish resources, moreover, was accompanied by a great deal of private blackmail, made possible by the helplessness of the victims.

To a Western observer this record might appear proof of systematic persecution. The thinly disguised extortions from the Jewish community, the arbitrary, and often stupid accusations, the onslaught on a helpless minority whose loyalty could not reasonably be questioned —all this would appear at first glance as something more than an attempt to make certain of public security in an emergency; the record seems to bear all the signs of deeply-rooted anti-Jewish hostility. But

if that were true, how would it be possible to explain the excellence of the relations between the communities but a few years ago and the obvious recognition in former years of the Jewish population as an integral part of the nation?

The answer must be sought in the workings of the Eastern mind. There would be no room in a survey of this kind to attempt a description of the subtle blend of human passions, age-old habits, and deep-seated prejudices which have gone into the forging of the Oriental tradition of thought or to estimate how that tradition of thought has reacted to the impact of Western civilisation, with its conception of law and human rights. It is, however, necessary to draw attention to certain points.

To begin with, the Arab States which emerged from the First World War represented an attempt to create the whole fabric of the Western nation-state out of a galaxy of various semi-independent tribes, self-conscious and self-centred city populations, rival clans, powerful landowners, interspersed with minorities of different races and religions. This complex had no common tradition beyond the allegiance of the majority to Islam.

The consequence was that from the beginning the Arab States rested on social foundations of the most insecure kind. Symptoms of this have been a very characteristic shrill aggressiveness of national outlook and an almost comic attachment to national dignity, coupled with an exaggerated anxiety lest the State's new-found independence should be threatened in any way or its sovereignty infringed.

In the case of Iraq, no sooner had the new State come into existence than this excessive national sensitiveness resulted in a wave of feeling against its very creator and helper—Britain. And when King Faisal, whose great ability and authority had succeeded in surmounting many initial difficulties, died just at the end of the mandatory period (1933), the struggle for key positions in the Government was intensified, thereby adding a new element of insecurity.

Rival tribal chieftains, with their dependants and hangers-on, began competing with each other for the favours of extremist parties, and contributed to making every change of Government an event of greater or lesser violence. Rashid Ali's *coup d'état* in April, 1941, was merely one of a series of such changes; it was only the most striking because of its dangerous political and strategic implications in the middle of a world war.

This ever-present latent tension was aggravated by the inability of succeeding Governments to cope with urgent problems of social reform, agricultural development, finance, and administration. As early as 1942, the budget showed a deficit of £1,334,733, despite the big royalties paid to the Government by the oil companies for the exploitation of the oilfields. During the first six months of 1948, imports exceeded exports by £17,000,000, while the country's whole foreign trade amounted to only £27,000,000. Hence the prevailing nervousness

in official circles of Communist propaganda, a fear which frequently reached hysterical proportions.

To cap everything, there has been the problem of minorities. The absence of ethnical homogeneity has always been the weak spot of newly created States; the more so when religious and racial differences alienate the minorities from the majority, making the latter—rightly or wrongly—always suspicious of the minorities.

Ever since the formation of the State of Iraq, the Kurds, a close-knit minority numbering more than 700,000 in the mountains of the North, have repeatedly revolted against the Government in Baghdad—and not without grounds.

The unsatisfactory nature of the State's relations with the minorities was made worse by a shocking event in 1933. In that year, a large group of Christian (Nestorian) Assyrians, who had crossed into Syria and wanted to re-enter Iraq, was brutally massacred by a detachment of the Iraqi Army.

The event sent a wave of horror among all the Christian minorities dwelling in the country. (Under considerable official pressure, the Christians—coreligionists of the victims—and, of course, the Jews, were forced to contribute large sums towards a fund in aid of the survivors, whereas the amount of money subscribed by the Muslim majority was, in the absence of any such pressure, small.)

In any case, the position of any minority dwelling amongst a Muslim population must always be delicate. Constitutional guarantees and protection by law will never induce the Muslim masses, with their innate conservatism and lack of education, to abandon their inborn distrust of the non-believer.

In the case of Iraq, whose rise as a nation-state was threatened at the outset by minority troubles, this factor was particularly important, especially as the predominance of British influence for many years had made the populace hyper-sensitive about the country's national independence.

As for the Jews, so long as general attention was not focused on them specifically, their position was no worse than was normal for any non-Muslim minority in an Islamic country. If anything, their age-old connection with the country, their important economic and social position, and the obvious absence of any separatist tendency among them made their position rather better than that of most of the other minorities.

But the steadily growing atmosphere of political insecurity and distrust was bound in the long run to bring about a deterioration. That deterioration became serious as soon as it became possible for the Muslims to suspect any sense of solidarity between Iraqi Jews and those in Palestine.

On balance this much can be said: the nature and extent of recent persecution does not mean that, in altered circumstances, there can

be no ultimate return of the peaceful relationship which existed between Muslims and Jews in Iraq formerly.

Indeed, once the fever of the anti-Jewish campaign had passed its peak—that is, by the end of 1948—there is plenty of evidence to show that many educated Muslims had begun to have second thoughts. Here and there Jewish officials who had been dismissed were asked to resume their posts. The return to the premiership of Nuri Pasha al-Said (the most experienced and esteemed of all Iraqi politicians) raised hopes of better relations, especially as the fanatically nationalist Minister of Defence, Sadiq al-Bassam—the man largely responsible for the sinister activities of the courts martial—was forced to resign.

It was then that the Jewish representative in the Senate, the universally respected Ezra Danyiel, was able to appeal to the Government for justice and to remind the Senate of the long-standing loyalty of the Jewish community. On the whole, this speech had a favourable effect, and resulted in official assurances that in future the rights of the Jews to treatment as citizens enjoying equal rights with other citizens would be respected. Since then, Jews have been able to reopen their businesses.

Yet the future must remain uncertain. As this Survey goes to press, reports are being published to the effect that the Iraqi Government has now decided to allow Iraqi Jews to emigrate—on condition that they give up their Iraqi citizenship. It is not clear, at the time of writing, whether there are any other conditions attached. In view of what has happened in recent years, however, there can be little doubt that a large-scale exodus from Iraq to Israel is to be expected in the near future.

As for those who remain, it would be idle to pretend that their future prospects are bright. In so far as they can expect a measure of stability and security, this must—to a large extent—depend on the Governments of Israel and Iraq reaching, if not agreement, at any rate a satisfactory *modus vivendi*. At the present time there is not even an armistice agreement between the two countries; and Iraq, which does not border upon Israel territory, has shown no anxiety to improve relations.

CHAPTER IV

LEBANON

Of all the Arab League countries, Lebanon was the most reluctant to take part in the recent outbreak of anti-Jewish persecution. It was also the first member-nation of the Arab League to restore normal conditions after the conclusion of the armistice with Israel and to abolish restrictions which had been imposed upon the Jews during the fighting.

Lebanon differs from the rest of the Arab countries in a number of ways. First, there is no Muslim majority. Its population is composed of a number of minority groups, none of which individually constitutes a clear majority. The Muslims, both Sunni and Shia, together number only about 445,000, against approximately 600,000 Christians (Maronite, Greek Orthodox, Armenian, etc.) and 75,000 Druzes. The latest census —held in 1944—gives the number of Jews as 6,261, a figure probably increased since then by the steady influx of Jews from Syria to something over 6,700.

A number of Christian Arabs in Lebanon have, it is true, played an important part in the revival of Arab nationalism, mostly in the field of literature. But that has not prevented the Christian community as a whole from regarding the movement with a certain feeling of uneasiness. Albert Hourani (*Syria and Lebanon*, Oxford, 1948, p.128) describes the uneasy relations between Christians and Muslims in Lebanon as follows:

> Arabism has not yet determined its relationship with Islam. . . . Thus there is a tendency for many of the nationalists, although not their most thoughtful leaders, to regard members of the minorities as imperfect Arabs because they are heterodox Muslims or not Muslims at all; equally there is a tendency among the minorities to be suspicious of nationalism as a movement for unrestrained Sunni (Muslim) ascendancy.

Apart from the tendency of the greater part of the Arab nationalist movement to rely on Islam as a rallying cry, its generally anti-Western orientation has provided a further obstacle to wholehearted support in the country. For no country in the Middle East has taken so easily to Western civilisation as Lebanon.

The fact that so high a proportion of its inhabitants are Christians has always made it a specially fruitful field for Western educational missions. The French *Mission Laïque* and the American University in Beirut have both played an important part in raising the general level of education, and there is scarcely a middle-class family in

Lebanon that has no relatives in the United States, France, or some other Western country.

Lebanon joined the Arab League, very hesitatingly, because it wanted the League's support in its campaign for complete independence from France.

Typical of Lebanese uncertainty in support of Arab nationalism is the fact that the Maronites, who number 328,000 and are the largest single group in the country, have never shown opposition to the Zionist Movement in Palestine. Both the Maronite Archbishop of Beirut, Mgr. Ignatz Moubar, and the Maronite Patriarch have even, in the past, welcomed the progress and civilisation which the Jews have brought to the Middle East.

The Lebanese Jewish community is mostly concentrated in the capital, Beirut, with a smaller number living in Tripoli in the north, and in Tyre and Sidon, in the south. They are as deeply rooted in the country as any other group, the first Jewish settlements dating back to biblical times. Like the Christian population, they have gladly accepted the influence of Western civilisation. Most of them are bilingual in Arabic and French. For many years they have suffered no restrictions in either commerce or the liberal professions, and thus form a fair proportion of the middle class, some Jews holding high positions in the Government service. Jews are not confined to any special area, though most of the poorer Jews live in streets which, in former times, used to be a Jewish quarter.

As a member of the Arab League, Lebanon found itself willy-nilly bound to take part in the invasion of Israel. Once the fighting in Palestine had started, the Government was forced to apply security measures similar to those introduced in all countries of the Arab League.

All foreign Jews, including the students at the American University and the French college, were ordered to leave the country in January, 1948. When military operations started in May, 1948, about 200 political suspects were arrested. According to a Reuter message sent from Beirut at that time, however, they included only a few Jews.

The hysterical Jew-baiting which then broke out throughout the Muslim Arab countries naturally affected also Lebanese Muslims. On May 15, an anti-Jewish demonstration assembled in the early hours and a mob, armed with bricks, incendiary bombs, and whips, proceeded towards the Jewish quarter. The President of the Jewish community received a telephone call from the head of the Christian Arab community, suggesting the Jews should take steps to guard their houses.

When the mob reached the Jewish quarter, they were halted by guards who had been posted there by the Christian Arab community. At the request of the President of the Jewish community, the authorities sent armed troops, who prevented the rioters from entering the quarter.

Only one large shop—the joint property of three Muslims and one Jew—was damaged.

There were only a few incidents during the months of fighting in Palestine. On one occasion alone were there casualties—when a bomb thrown at the school of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* injured a few Jews.

When, during the operations in Galilee, large numbers of Arab refugees entered the country, and Israel forces occupied some territory in Southern Lebanon, Muslims in the Sidon area seized Jewish-owned buildings and installed refugees therein. After some days, however, the Government ordered the police to provide protection for the Jews and to restore the buildings to their owners. Jews were not allowed to leave the country, but special permits were issued for travelling to Syria on business.

On the advice of well-disposed Government officials, the Jews did all they could to keep quiet and to escape notice. The wish to avoid any offence led the Jewish newspaper *Al-Alam al-Israeli* (The World of Israel) to change its name to *Al-Salam* (Peace). On the other hand, the Jewish community had to yield to the pressure of public opinion and to contribute considerable sums towards the Arab Palestine Fund; the total amount is estimated to be not less than £L500,000 (about £55,000). Yet things never reached the stage where they could not carry on their occupations; and the merchants among them were always able to keep their businesses running.

As soon as the fighting was over, the Lebanese Government was the first to restore normal conditions for the Jewish population. The ban on travelling abroad was lifted, and a number of senior Jewish officials who had been dismissed were reinstated, some even being promoted. Nine Jews who had fled to Lebanon from Iraq (where they had been sentenced to death *in absentia*) and three other Jews, who had previously lived in Palestine, were permitted to leave the country for Israel.

There is every evidence that with the return of normal relations with Israel, the Jewish minority in Lebanon will enjoy again the freedom, the full and equal rights, and the friendly relations with their neighbours which existed before the invasion of Palestine.

CHAPTER V

SYRIA

In Syria, where the idea of Arab independence found some of its earliest protagonists, nationalism has been marked by a special degree of ill-temper, perhaps because the masses of the larger towns—Damascus, Homs, Hama, Aleppo, etc.—at an early stage became an object of political manœuvring.

Anti-foreign feelings had been aroused as early as 1925, when clashes with the French Mandatory régime led to the bombardment of Damascus. After the Palestine Arab Revolt of 1936, Syria became a refuge for Palestinian Arab terrorists on the run. Fawzi Kaukji—an Albanian adventurer specialising in gun-running and gang warfare on behalf of Arab extremists—Amin al Husseini—the ex-Mufti of Jerusalem—and many other "wanted" disturbers of the peace found fertile soil for their activities in Syria.

Here the connection between Arab nationalism and Muslim fanaticism was particularly close, and even sermons in the Mosques frequently descended to the level of vicious and inflammatory diatribes against non-believers. As early as October, 1945, the leader of the "Young Muslims' Association," Sheikh Mustafa al-Sibaj, in a violent speech after the Friday midday prayers in the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, threatened the Jews in Arab countries with disaster "if the Palestine problem is not solved in favour of the Arabs."

These characteristics of Arab nationalism in Syria have had their effect not only on the Jews but on the Christian minority also. Hence the attractiveness of neighbouring Lebanon, with its security of life for minorities, as a goal for Christian emigration. The same was true as regards the Jews of Syria, a steady stream of whom has been moving to Lebanon for the last 25 years. The early trickle has recently become so great in volume that, by now, it is believed that only a few remnants of the Jewish population are left in the two big towns of Aleppo and Damascus.

The last census—that of 1943—gave the number of Jews in Syria as 29,770 out of a total population of 2,860,411 (of whom 2,424,817 were Muslims). The majority of the Jews used to live in Aleppo and Damascus, with about 17,000 in Aleppo (compared with 35,000 in 1910) and 11,000 in Damascus. The remainder, rather isolated, dwelt mostly in the north-eastern province of Jezirah, where they had settled in 1924, along with Armenians, Kurds, and Assyrians from Turkey and Iraq.

Of the 29,000 Jews in Syria in 1943, about 15,000 had left the country by 1947. At that time, there still remained about 10,000-11,000 in Aleppo and about 2,500-3,000 in Damascus. Less than 1,000

were left in the Jezirah district. An additional 5,000-6,000 Jews emigrated at the beginning of 1948, leaving a total of about 9,000, with 4,500 in Aleppo, 4,000 in Damascus, and 500 in the Jezirah district. Further emigration took place that year ; and it is estimated that there are now fewer than 6,000 left in the whole country.

This exodus was the culmination of many years of intimidation, material decline, and moral isolation. The smaller community in Damascus had always been poor. About 80 per cent earned their living as labourers and pedlars; approximately 15 per cent were able to maintain a slightly higher standard; while only 5 per cent were able to make a good living, mostly in commerce. The Aleppo community had in bygone days been prosperous and had been an active and important element of the city's once flourishing commerce. The rapid deterioration of conditions, however, made itself felt particularly strongly among the Jews of Aleppo ; and since the wealthy were the first to leave the country, the remainder were impoverished even more swiftly.

Although knowledge of French is widespread among educated Jews, the every-day language of the majority is either Arabic or Ladino. There are two *Alliance Israélite Universelle* schools, one in Aleppo and the other in Damascus. Since the convocation of the first Parliament in December, 1936, there has been one Jewish representative in the Chamber of Deputies. He was, it is true, allowed to retain his seat even when persecution of the Jews reached its height. But, isolated as he was in a sea of feverish hostility, there was little he could do to alleviate the situation.

In 1945, a meeting of Islamic religious leaders in Damascus, presided over by the Mufti of Damascus, sent a telegram to the Allied Governments, threatening that a Holy War against the Jews would be declared by all Islamic countries if Jewish immigration into Palestine continued. Within a month, this action and similar incitement from high quarters, coupled as they were with a violent anti-Jewish press campaign, bore fruit.

On the Muslim holiday of Qurban Bairam, on November 18, an infuriated mob, goaded on by a group of students, broke into the Great Synagogue in Aleppo, smashed the candle burning in front of the Ark, battered some old Jews who were praying, and burnt the prayer books.

This was the signal for the outbreak of a general anti-Jewish campaign, made the worse by the incessant agitation carried on by nationalist orators among the Arab masses. There was the ugly murder of Jacques Franco, Assistant Headmaster of the *Alliance* School in Damascus. Suspicion that his death was the result of the prevailing unrest has never been entirely removed, even though there is insufficient evidence to prove it. There was the forcing of Rabbi Moshe Nahum, of the Jewish community of Jezirah, to make a statement protesting against Jewish immigration into Palestine. There was the humiliating spectacle of the heads of all three Jewish communities

being compelled, in November, 1945, to take part in the demonstrations against the Balfour Declaration, and Jewish shopkeepers being ordered to close their shops as a sign of solidarity with the Muslims. However little concerned Syrian Jewry may have been with Zionist aspirations in Palestine, its feelings on the subject could hardly have been strong enough to cause its leaders—" of their own free will "—to announce that they intended to hold a banquet in honour of the notorious Fawzi Kaukji—a wartime officer of the German Waffen S.S.

Not even in Egypt did public hysteria against the helpless and isolated Jewish minority go to such lengths as it did in Syria. Doubtless this fact is due to the combination of a half-educated university youth and an illiterate, hungry, and disease-ridden urban populace. In Syria, as in Egypt, such a combination has given an extraordinarily explosive character to the nationalist movement.

When the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on the Palestine issue visited Syria, its members were struck by the cowed and intimidated manner of the heads of the Jewish community. One member of the committee, Mr. Bartley Crum, in his book *Behind the Silken Curtain* (p. 239), gives the following description of the scene when three representatives of the Jewish community arrived to give evidence:

> The committee of three chosen Jews appeared. Only one spoke. There had been testimony in Jerusalem before us by Oriental Jews charging that Jews in the Oriental countries were given only second-class citizenship. Our sub-committee expected the Jewish spokesman they now heard on the scene to need far more than 20 minutes to tell his story. Instead, he used 45 seconds of his allotted time. He raced through a one-sentence written statement, in which he said that the Jews of Syria were happy and not discriminated against; that their situation was excellent under the present Syrian Government; and that they had absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with Zionism. The three presented a picture of terrified men. . . .

The tragic farce of the repeated declarations of solidarity with the Muslims forced on the leaders of the Jewish community did not diminish the flood of persecution. Thus Shukri al-Quwatli, the President of the Syrian Republic, made no effort to halt anti-Jewish discrimination, even though in 1946 a Jewish delegation made special representations to him. On the contrary, in 1947, the Syrian Government promulgated new restrictions, prohibiting Jewish inhabitants from leaving their areas of residence.

The effect of this order was to paralyse even what remained of Jewish economic activity; and it should be noted that the order appeared even before the partition of Palestine was decided on by the United Nations.

Within four days of the United Nations decision being made public, the mob was sufficiently worked up for anti-Jewish rioting to break out in Aleppo. On December 2, 1947, a crowd, spurred on by agitators, burnt down the four big synagogues in the city plus

14 smaller ones, and destroyed 150 houses. An unknown number of Jews was butchered to death.

By the time Palestine was invaded by the Arab States, the Jewish communities in Syria were completely isolated. No Jew dared to have any contacts abroad or, for that matter, with any foreigners resident in the country. Commercial activity came practically to a standstill, since Jews were forbidden to open their shops or to carry on with their employment.

The property of a transport company, owned by an Iraqi Jew, was confiscated, and the entire Jewish staff arrested. Fifteen Jewish girls who worked in the telephone exchanges in Aleppo and Damascus were dismissed. The Chief Engineer of Damascus, who had held this position for 12 years, suffered the same fate, together with five Jewish school teachers. The school building of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* in Damascus was requisitioned for the military. The already impoverished community was forced under threat to donate about £S10,000 (at that time equivalent to £1,100) to the Arab funds.

Throughout the months of fighting, a relentless campaign demanding the confiscation of all Jewish property went on. The Damascus Jews felt themselves fortunate in being spared a repetition of the earlier Aleppo riots, though in August, 1949, 11 were killed when a bomb was thrown into a synagogue.

For some time the situation of the Jews in Damascus was extremely grave. Being prevented from earning a living, the community was so impoverished that it was feared that many would die of hunger and disease. Had it not been for the assistance of the Jewish community in Beirut, the Damascus community might well have perished. Later, their straits were further relieved by American help.

With the overthrow of the Syrian Government by Husni Zaim in March, 1949, all restrictions on the movements of Jews, as well as on the sale of property, were abolished. The new ruler declared that he would deal severely with any person attempting to discriminate against the Jews. The lifting of the travel ban was immediately followed by a new wave of Jewish emigration to Lebanon.

The confused situation arising out of Zaim's murder, and the succession of political *coups* which followed, make the prospects of the Jewish community uncertain. But even if the new Government were to abstain from any official discrimination against the Jews of Syria, the atmosphere has been poisoned to such an extent that a return to normal conditions and peaceful relations seems most unlikely. On the face of it, nothing will alter the passionate wish of practically every Jew in Syria to shake the country's dust off his feet.

CHAPTER VI

PERSIA

Persia, though a Muslim country with a Jewish minority as big as that of Iraq, has been far less concerned with the question of Palestine than any other Muslim country in the Middle East except Turkey and, perhaps, Yemen.

When the troubles of recent years broke out in the Arab countries, Persian Jewry was not only not molested but even given protection. Quite a number of Jews from Iraq took refuge in Persia and were able to proceed to Israel. Indeed the Persian Government several times refused demands from the Iraqi Government for the extradition of Iraqi Jews.

Though a number of attempts have been made to incite the Muslim population in Persia against the Jewish community (on the basis of a common Muslim drive against Jewry) they have failed. In January, 1948, for instance, Sayyid Abu al-Qasim Kashani—a religious leader who had been interned during the war by the Allies for his pro-Axis political activities—organised a demonstration in favour of the Palestinian Arabs in the courtyard of the Shah Mosque in Teheran. Thanks to Government precautions, however, the Sayyid was prevented from inciting the 10,000-strong crowd to disorder.

Certain members of the *Majlis* (the Persian Parliament) have on occasion brought the Palestine question before the House, and a number of poisonous anti-Jewish speeches have been made. But this tendency was never sufficiently strong to have any practical results, many members stressing that Persian Jews were Persian citizens and, as such, had the right to protection against discrimination.

The Persian Government has granted recognition to Israel, thus becoming the second Muslim country in the Middle East to recognise the new State.

This action is typical of the relative aloofness from the Arab countries which has marked Persian policy in all spheres, particularly since the inauguration in 1926 of the late Reza Shah Pahlevi's campaign to modernise the country.

This growing aloofness towards the Arab-Muslim tradition has expressed itself in all kinds of ways. The newly-established Iranian Academy, for instance, has shown a marked tendency to go back to the original cultural traditions of pre-Islamic Persia, and to purify the Persian language by eliminating a great number of Arabic expressions.

Moreover, there is a deep-seated religious difference between the majority of Arabs and the Persians. The Persians belong mostly to the Shia sect of Islam Most Arabs, by contrast, belong to the rival Sunni sect.

That, on the other hand, does not mean that the Sunnis have

a monopoly of Muslim fanaticism. Even if the Shia tradition in Persia is responsible for a certain gap between most Persians and most Arabs, as a sect the Shias have, if anything, a worse historical record in their treatment of the Jews than the Sunnis. Thus, at a time when the Jews of the Arab world were enjoying relatively enlightened treatment, their coreligionists in Persia were the object of the most dire persecution.

Indeed, it would not be too much to say that in the course of the centuries hardly any other Jewish community has had to suffer as much hardship. Again and again, under a succession of savage and turbulent rulers, amidst court assassinations and national upheavals, whole communities have been slaughtered, while even the others lived in conditions of the most brutal restriction, penury, and degradation.

On several occasions Jewish communities have only escaped annihilation by adopting Islam. In the towns of Meshed and Shiraz, for instance, a fair proportion of the Muslim population are descendants of former Jews who had been compelled to embrace Islam.

The American missionary, Henry A. Stern, who visited Shiraz in 1849, says that all the silk merchants in the Wakil bazaar were Jews forcibly converted to Islam. And even in places where no Jews are left to-day, the peculiar dress of the population still indicates that their ancestors were Jews.

It is, therefore, most likely that years ago the Jewish population of Persia was considerably more numerous than to-day. Through mass conversions, the extermination of communities and the high rate of mortality, it has been gradually reduced to its present number of about 100,000.

Every traveller to the country who has seen the crowded Jewish quarters in the towns, the so-called *Mehallah*, has been shocked by the unspeakable wretchedness and inhuman destitution of their inhabitants. The following description is given in an article by J. Kopellowitz, which appeared in the *Menorah Journal* of January, 1930:

> The people who live in the ghetto are, almost without exception, sickly and short-lived. Eye and skin diseases are common. The men are wretched physical specimens, and the women age early. Hunger and pestilence brood over the whole community and early take heavy toll of life. The people move about amidst indescribable squalor and filth. The streets and yards are heaped with refuse, and the air is filled with stink. Dirty and ragged children, under-nourished and covered with sores, play in the narrow streets and alleys and around the garbage heaps, breathing daily the foulest air. The shops that line the streets are tiny cells, dark and dirty; their wares are thrown in a heap, without any attempt at cleanliness or order. The houses are all mean, but those of the poor are mere hovels, built almost underground. Smoke and grime cover the walls and the sun never penetrates.

The majority of the Jews in Persia still live in these crowded and filthy *Mehallah*. It is difficult to decide whether the existence of these ghettoes is due to the exclusion of Jews from other districts or whether this agglomeration in one quarter was chosen by the Jews themselves as the best means of self-protection.

It is only recently that in Teheran and a few other places Jews have begun to live outside the *Mehallah*. This move may well have been encouraged by the action of the *Alliance Israélite* at the beginning of this century in deliberately establishing its first schools outside the Jewish quarter. A few years later, in 1906, the convocation of a representative assembly and the ensuing promulgation of a Constitution, led to the laying down for the first time of the principle of equal rights for all sections of the population. A small number of Jews, who were able to avail themselves of the new-found freedom, gradually began to prosper in commerce. The result has been that the last 40 years have seen the rise of a fairly considerable middle-class and of a very few really well-to-do families.

In view of the absence of any reliable official figures, only an approximate idea of the distribution of the Jewish minority in Persia can be given, and these estimates should, therefore, be treated with reserve. Thanks to the generous assistance of Mr. Ya'akov Melamed of Teheran, the figures worked out over a period of four years by the Jewish community in Teheran for purposes of social and relief work, have been made available to the author. They are as follows:

Place	No. of Families	No. of Persons
Teheran (1949)	8-10,000	40-50,000
Shiraz	2,000	15-17,000*
Isfahan	1,100	10,000
Kermanshah	500	3½-4,000
Hamadan	400	3,000
Meshed (1948)	—	2,500
Khuanssar (1946)	250	1,750
Borujird	200	1,500
Kashan (1942)	—	1,380
Golpayegan	190	1,250
Saghez	150	1,060
Rezaiyeh	150	1,000
Takab (1940)	100	1,000
Abadan	200	800†
Nahavand	115	750
Bijar (1947)	70	500‡
Babel	70	500
Tuyserkan	75	500
Bushire	60	400
Malayer	40	350
Ahwaz	70	300
Rafsanyan	43	300
Mahabad	25	250
Kerman	?	?
Yezd	?	?

*14.3 per cent of the town's total population.

†Mostly workers employed by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company.

‡An estimate for Bijar for the year 1910 puts the number of families at 150, and the total Jewish population at 1,000. This implies that if the two sets of figures are in any way comparable, the Jewish population has been halved in the course of 36 years.

According to these figures, the number of Jews in Persia is between 88,000 and 100,000. Allowance must be made, however, for those places where the number of Jews is unknown (as in Kerman and Yezd) and several smaller groups scattered about the country which have not been taken into account. The total, therefore, may be higher.

The presence of as many as 40,000-50,000 Jews in Teheran suggests that there is a good deal of migration from the provinces to the capital, since, hitherto, most figures have not put the number of Jews in Teheran at higher than about 10,000. Doubtless the usual attractions of the capital for inhabitants of the provinces account for this move.

Thanks to the capital's better educational facilities, Teheran is the only place where even a part of the Jewish population lives in conditions approximating to those of a European middle class. A few Jews have entered the Government service; there are a number of Jewish doctors and a few wealthy merchants. The great majority of the Jews in Teheran, however, live in conditions little better than those of their brethren in the provinces.

Apart from the disease-ridden and the beggars, most of the poor make their living as pedlars. Usually they obtain their wares on loan from Muslim or Jewish retailers at exorbitant rates of interest. The pedlar's return scarcely suffices to pay off his debts and he is, consequently, always at the mercy of the merchants. In turn, the pedlar must extend credit to the peasants, and the collection of debts in the villages is a difficult and often dangerous task.

A good many other Jews are craftsmen employed in weaving, carpentry, shoemaking, as coppersmiths, and so forth. A small number have small shops where various textiles and hardware are sold. The average earnings from all these occupations are incredibly low. Apart from that, there are, in some places, Jewish peasants and even small landowners.

The Jews, as a whole, are no less superstitious than the Muslims. A common occupation, mostly undertaken by women, is the selling of charms and amulets against illness, danger of one sort or another, and to ward off the Evil Eye.

The crushing poverty of most Persian Jews, the appalling incidence of disease, and their debility (caused by malnutrition) have shut out from their lives everything which does not directly concern the fight for survival. Educational standards are correspondingly low, and most of them are illiterate.

Their religious life is chiefly a matter of ceremonial. Apart from the most primitive treatment of religious affairs, there is hardly any social organisation within the community. Welfare institutions, too, hardly exist. The only exceptions are the miserable poor-houses in Shiraz, Isfahan, and one or two other towns.

On the other hand, a distinctive characteristic of Persian Jewry is the exceptional richness and strength of family life. Indeed, a family in Persia can almost be compared to a tribe, so clannish are its members

and so wide its ramifications. It includes uncles and cousins, relations by marriage, and distant relatives several times removed. The head of the house is usually the eldest male. In most cases he is also the wealthiest, since in the ghetto, thrift and slow accumulation, rather than speculative gain, are the means by which wealth is acquired.

As usual in the East, it is incumbent upon the head of the family to provide for its members as far as possible—either by finding employment for them in his business or by direct donations from his own pocket. Here is still preserved the oldest Hebrew social unit, older than the twelve tribes. It is the "House"—*Beit Avraham*—governed by its patriarchal head.

This description of social conditions is less applicable to Teheran. The capital's greater contact with the Western world, and particularly the activities of the *Alliance Israélite*, have brought some life and light into the secluded, stagnant, and oppressive atmosphere of the Jewish minority.

The establishment of the first *Alliance* schools in Teheran at the beginning of this century came shortly before the first Persian Constitution recognised, at least nominally, the Jews' equality of rights. The effect of the Constitution was to strengthen enormously Jewish self-respect, and at the same time to enhance the status of the Jews in the eyes of the Muslims.

The field covered by the schools was limited and the educational task enormous. But illiteracy among the Jews has gradually decreased to about 75 per cent, even though Jewish secondary education could be much improved. To-day, there are some 22 *Alliance* schools in Persia, with approximately 8,000 pupils. The Anglo-Jewish Association has also contributed towards education in the Persian Jewish community.

In addition, the last few decades have seen the establishment of other Jewish schools, numbering about 30. The total number of pupils attending these latter schools, however, is less than that of the *Alliance* schools. Their syllabus is in accordance with the requirements of the Persian Ministry of Education.

Although the mother tongue of Persian Jews of all classes is Persian, the influence of the *Alliance* schools and the more international atmosphere of the capital have contributed greatly towards the dissemination of European languages, especially French and English.

In view of the limited capacity of the *Alliance* classes and the growing demand for education, many Jewish parents send their children to Government schools, which are open to Jewish as well as Muslim children.

About a hundred Jewish students attend Teheran University. Although to-day there are no obstacles to higher education for women, the fact that this has only been so for a comparatively short time explains why Jewish girls have so far attended courses only in nursing. It should be remembered that only 15 years ago no Persian woman,

Muslim or Jewish, could go out without the *Chador*—a long-draped garment concealing by its shapelessness any suggestion of seductive curves—plus a black veil.

Late as Western habits and ideas spread among Persian Jews, they have none the less done something to vitalise their hitherto hemmed-in lives. Young people, in particular, have been quick to adopt the standards of the West, with their doctrines of emancipation and their comparative absence of restrictions.

All the more bitterly have they resented the many disabilities under which the Jewish community has had to exist for so long; for the deeply-rooted prejudice of the Muslim towards the Jew, and his traditional contempt for the non-believer, could not be abolished merely by the introduction of a new law.

Even to-day, for instance, a Jew cannot be elected Member of Parliament in the ordinary way, and only one Jew is allowed to represent the Jewish minority. A new Bill, still under discussion, at the time of writing, providing for the election of an Upper House or Senate, entitles Jews to vote for Muslims, but does not allow them to stand as candidates themselves. By virtue of a recent resolution of the Council of Ministers, no Jew can become a judge. Many other restrictions make it almost impossible for a Jew to enter the civil service. The National Bank of Persia to this day refuses to employ Jews.

Apart from these official and legal disqualifications, there is a good deal of social discrimination, of which the Jews are deeply and increasingly conscious.

Under these conditions it is only natural that Zionism has made considerable headway all over the country, and particularly among the youth in Teheran. Nothing can better arouse the self-respect and confidence of the still humiliated Persian Jew than the idea of Israel—an independent Jewish nation.

The Jewish Agency is extremely active through its branch in Teheran. Modern Hebrew has been introduced into the syllabus of the Jewish schools, with the consequence that a growing number of people have acquired some knowledge of it.

For a time the Zionist Organisation published a weekly called *Ha-Geulah* ("Redemption"). When this was discontinued, another magazine called *Israel*, edited by Dr. R. Cohen (Persian delegate at the 22nd Zionist Congress), appeared. The revolutionary fervour of this paper, however, oscillated between Zionism and extreme Leftism. It was forced to cease publication when the Arab States invaded Israel. The mixture of extreme Left-wing politics and Zionism in this periodical is symptomatic of the alternative solutions to current problems which present themselves to the Jewish youth of Persia.

CHAPTER VII

AFGHANISTAN

It is difficult to find reliable information about the few thousand Jews who live in remote Afghanistan. Such facts as have been gleaned are mostly derived from scattered references in the press and other publications.

As regards their number, for instance, each source gives a different figure. The Report of the Jewish Agency to the Anglo-American Commission of Inquiry speaks of 3,000-4,000 Jews distributed between the capital, Kabul, and the town of Herat. In August, 1949, however, Mr. H. Cynowicz, of Bombay, is said to have sent an appeal to the Israel Government on behalf of as many as 6,000 Jews in Herat (reputedly the main Jewish centre in Afghanistan), asking for help in arranging emigration to Israel. According to other reports, there are only 2,000-3,000 Jews in the whole country.

It may be that the higher figure is nearer the truth. A Western Jew who left Afghanistan only recently has stated that in 1933, about the time of the assassination of King Muhammad Nadir Shah (father of the present ruler), the Jews numbered some 12,000-15,000. Naturally, in a country where an accurate census is impossible, where communications between different regions are scanty, and where much of the population consists of wandering tribes dwelling in tents, it is possible that there are in the more remote regions Jewish communities which are unknown to the outside world.

It is clear that, on the whole, the Jews of Afghanistan live in conditions very similar to those of the more remote regions of Persia, except that in their case there seems to be more evidence of anti-Jewish bias on the part of the Government. Scattered among the primitive Muslim population, whose religious observance has remained untouched by any modern influence, the Jews in Afghanistan are still subject to all the forms of discrimination which rigorous adherence to the *Koran* requires. They have to pay the *jizyah* poll-tax imposed upon infidels, and the payment is accompanied by humiliating ceremonies as laid down in *Sura* IX, 29 of the *Koran*. Until recently, they were not permitted to buy food in the market or to send letters abroad. There are no Jews in the Government service or in the police. Though every Jew must report for military service at the age of 20, he is not permitted to carry arms and is not given a uniform, the Jews being employed only in the lowest type of menial work.

In these circumstances, it appears rather curious that Afghan historians speak of the Afghan people as descendants of one of the Lost Tribes of Israel, referring to them as *Bani Israel* (the Sons of

Israel) (see Sir Percy Sykes: *A History of Afghanistan*, London, 1940, Vol. I, p. 12). Native chroniclers recount how, after being expelled from the Holy Land by Nebuchadnezzar, the ancestors of the present inhabitants of Afghanistan settled in the Herat area, where they were converted to Islam.

It is hard to say whether the Jews of Afghanistan are the object of persecution greater than that normally to be expected from a country still dominated by the unimpaired observance of Islamic tradition. It is, however, clear that their position has worsened in the course of the last century.

A hundred years ago, though the Jews of Afghanistan lived in *Mahalli Yehudiyeh* (Jewish quarters)—which were sealed off at night—they were not singled out for molestation. They are said to have numbered at that time as many as 40,000, divided into about 60 communities. The decline in their position appears to have begun about the year 1870, when the Herat Jews were ordered to pay a heavy *harbieh* (war-tax) and to supply 300 labourers for service with the armed forces. Thousands took this as a sign of coming persecution and fled to Persia.

As late as 1927, the number of Jewish communities in Afghanistan was still as high as 60. But already the Government had taken advantage of the recognition of the country's independence in 1919 to issue regulations excluding Jews from all occupations except trading. Following the assassination of Nadir Shah in 1933, anti-Jewish measures—doubtless stimulated by the advent of propaganda from Nazi agents—were intensified. Jews were expelled from various parts of the country, such as Andukhi, Mazar-i-Sherif, and Maimana, and concentrated mainly in Herat and Kabul.

The expulsion appears to have been accompanied by robbery of those expelled and conducted with a certain amount of brutality. After Nadir Shah's murder the Jews were forbidden to travel about the country, except with special permits. Although the community is not now confined to any ghetto, the number of houses in which Jews may dwell is limited. A specified number of shops in the bazaar is allotted to them, but they are not allowed to trade in any commodity other than piece goods. A few are said, however, to continue doing other types of business by going into partnership with Muslims.

In a number of instances, Jewish organisations in the West have had occasion to make representations to the Afghan Government on behalf of Jews who have been arrested without any specific charge; and although travellers state that there were no violent mob outbreaks against the community at the time of the Arab-Jewish war, it is significant that the country's only newspaper, which is Government owned, is full of anti-Jewish diatribes. Some reports claim that the Afghan Government is itself actively interested in arousing anti-Jewish feeling.

The view that the Afghan Government is not blameless in its

treatment of the Jewish community is taken by the World Jewish Congress. Representatives of this body have sought to obtain the support of the British and United States Governments with a view to alleviating the plight of the Afghan Jews. In an article in *Jewish Affairs* (January, 1950), Dr. Joseph B. Schechtman describes how, in 1946, when Afghanistan applied for membership of the United Nations, these representations led to an inquiry being made by the American Ambassador in Kabul, Mr. Palmer. The Ambassador was assured, on a personal basis, by the Under-Secretary of the Afghan Foreign Office that there was no persecution of Jews in the country and that they were permitted to practise their religion freely—which they did, he complained, "noisily." The Foreign Under-Secretary further informed Mr. Palmer that, in the opinion of the Afghan Government, the status of the Jewish community was "not pertinent" to Afghanistan's application for membership to the United Nations. That view appears to have been accepted, since Afghanistan became a member of the United Nations in November, 1946.

It is hard to say to what extent the introduction of State monopoly in most branches of commerce and the formation of chartered companies after 1933 were conceived as anti-Jewish measures. Undoubtedly these steps came as a devastating blow to the already artificially restricted field of Jewish economic activity. Few Jews could afford to become shareholders in the companies; and since a large proportion of the community was engaged in commerce, its economic position has become hopeless. With the exception of a very few well-to-do merchants, the great majority of the Jews in Afghanistan live in a state of poverty and destitution no better than that of their brethren in the provinces of Persia.

Since the time of the great famine of 1944, about a thousand Jews have braved the threat of punishment and emigrated to India. Following representations by Jewish relief organisations, the Government of India gave them permission to stay until arrangements could be made for them to move farther. Up to the end of June, 1949, something over a half had left for Israel—308 being flown over *via* Aden in the course of "Operation Magic Carpet." The economic state of those who remain can be judged from the fact that in August, 1949, the Central Jewish Board in Bombay received an appeal from the Jewish community in Herat (with a request that it should be sent on to the Israel Government) for help in averting the threat of famine.

There seems to have been little or no research into the origin, customs, traditions, religious life, and social organisations of this forlorn Jewish community. From the fact that many Afghan Jews speak a Persian dialect some hold that the community is of comparatively recent origin—not more than a hundred years old—and that it was formed through immigration from Persia. Others think that it goes back much further in history. This school bases its views on the fact that in build and appearance the Jews are indistinguishable from

Muslim Afghans, from whom they can be usually differentiated only by their black turbans which, according to legend, are worn as a sign of mourning for the Fall of Jerusalem.

At the time of writing, it is not clear whether the pleas of the Afghan Jews and the representations of Jewish bodies in the Western world will succeed in persuading the Afghan Government to permit emigration to Israel. There is little doubt that if permission were given a very large number would leave without hesitation. When news of the foundation of the new State reached the country, it is said to have roused a new spirit of hope—almost Messianic in its fervour—reminiscent of that among Jews in other remote Muslim countries.

CHAPTER VIII

THE JEWS IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA

There are four Jewish minority groups living in the Arabian Peninsula: the small community in Bahrein, the Jews of the Hadhramaut, the Yemeni Jews, and the Jewish community in Aden. The last two groups have now been transferred in great numbers to Israel in the course of the so-called "Operation Magic Carpet" of 1948 and 1949. In both countries only a few remain. In Sa'udi Arabia there are no Jews.

BAHREIN

The small Jewish community in Bahrein settled there in the late 'eighties of the last century, when the territory was already a British Protectorate. At the end of the year 1948 the entire community consisted of about 70 families—422 souls in all. Originating from different countries—mostly from Iraq, Persia, and India—the Bahrein Jews are engaged in commerce and handicrafts. Most of them appear to be in a position to earn more or less sufficient for their needs, while 10 families are said to be wealthy and 13 poor. There is one synagogue, where a member of the community holds services, but no school.

Until very recently the community lived a fairly peaceful life. In the sense that Jews have never been employed in the rather primitive public services, it could be said that by Western standards they do not enjoy equal rights with the Muslims. But, being engaged in trade, the Bahrein Jews do not feel this disability as much as might be supposed. More recently, however, the Balfour Declaration and the growing importance of the Palestine issue have gradually exacerbated relations. By the time the United Nations decided to partition Palestine, therefore, the community's original sense of security as a tolerated minority had been to some extent undermined. Also, according to some reports, the situation had been further worsened by the presence in Bahrein of outside agitators (presumably from Iraq), who are said to have played on the religious feelings of the Muslim populace. These reports claim that agitation of this kind was responsible for goading the Muslim population to hold a demonstration against Partition.

The usual results followed. Once the demonstrations had got under way, they were difficult to control; and on December 4, 1947, the populace had been worked up to a sufficient pitch of excitement to attack Jewish homes. Widespread looting took place and the synagogue was completely gutted. Fortunately, there was only one fatality, an aged Jewess being killed. A number of others were injured. These riots in Bahrein coincided with the far more serious outbreaks in Aleppo and Aden.

It is hard to reach any considered opinion on the significance of these events, and on the general position of the Bahrein community owing to the scantiness of available information.

HADHRAMAUT

A large proportion of the population of Hadhramaut is nomadic; and the Jews in the area fit in to the tribal pattern of life. A number of tribes have groups of Jews under their protection. Generally speaking, each tribe relies on its Jews for craftsmen and artisans. Thus, the Jews, while being a tolerated minority inferior in status to the Muslims, are also a valuable minority; and if a Jew belonging to one tribe should be harmed by a member of another tribe, then the Muslims of his own tribe would at once be up in arms in his defence. On the other hand, for the Muslim the Jew is an object of complete contempt and treated accordingly. It is an archaic pattern of existence, hard for the Western mind to appreciate. But it would be wrong to assume that the status of the Hadhrami Jews—who have never known anything better—is an intolerable burden for them.

A typical example of a Jewish community in the Hadhramaut is that of Habban, a small town lying about 225 miles, as the crow flies, north-east of Aden, and about 150 miles west of Mukalla.

According to local legend, the Habbani Jews settled in the area before the destruction of the Second Temple. The surrounding country being wild and undeveloped, the community is isolated. None the less, religious tradition and the knowledge of Hebrew are kept alive. Thus the Habban Jewish community has in its possession copies of the *Mishnah*, the *Talmud*, and even the *Shulkhan Arukh*.

As elsewhere in the Hadhramaut, the Habbani Jews are the craftsmen and artisans of the tribe. Among them the silversmiths are particularly prized. The Muslim tribesmen bring them silver in rings or in the form of coins to have it smelted or worked into ornaments. Few Habbani Jews go in for breeding livestock—an important occupation in the area. When their services are called for in the surrounding villages and encampments, the Jewish craftsmen use the normal means of transport in this remote district—camels, mules, or donkeys.

The Habbani Jews observe Jewish ritual strictly in accordance with the practices and customs of Judaism in Arabia. They are polygamous and have Arabic names. Jewish women, like their Muslim sisters, go about veiled; and, of course, never leave home unaccompanied. The handful who have succeeded in making their way to Israel say that in the past the Jews have lived in peace with the Muslims and been on good terms with them. More recently, however, their position appears to have deteriorated considerably. The present ruler of the Habban tribe has imposed upon the local Jews discriminatory taxation and other forms of financial extortion. He has even gone so far as to demand their conversion to Islam. Whether this deterioration is confined to Habban or is general in the Hadhramaut is not known. Van den

Meulen's reports of the strong feelings expressed by tribal chieftains on the Palestine issue, however, suggest that the latter is more likely to be true.

YEMEN

Yemen is one of the few remaining parts of the Arab world where Western influence and Western technology are to this day hardly known. That may explain in part the fact that the country has remained somewhat outside the vortex of Arab political developments, even though she is a member-State of the Arab League. At any rate, as far as is known, the position of the Jewish community has not been influenced in any way by the dispute over Palestine. No special measures against the Jews have been introduced, nor has there been any mass violence.

In Yemen, the Jews are *Dhimmi;* and their position has changed as little through the centuries as has the general state of political, social, and economic conditions in the country. Under the autocratic rule of the Imam, they have enjoyed those privileges which Islam offers to a protected minority. But they, like the population in general, have remained unaffected by those liberalising influences of the West which have done so much to revolutionise conditions in most Muslim countries.

Although the Jewish community enjoys a wide degree of autonomy in the running of its internal affairs, a Jew can never consider himself equal to a Muslim. It is true that as long as he pays the *jizyah* poll-tax regularly his life and property are protected by the Imam. Yet it must be remembered that for the strictly pious Shia Muslim the unbeliever is something unclean, with whom contact is insulting. Thus, the Jew in Yemen is forbidden to touch, or allow his garments to touch, any passing Muslim. He must always stand up in the presence of a Muslim. He may not ride a horse or wear brightly coloured clothes in public. He may not testify against a Muslim in court. This state of affairs naturally does not appear abnormal to a community which has never known anything better; and when the first Yemeni emigrants to Israel wrote home describing the conditions of life in their new country, their letters were hardly believed. On the other hand individual Jews have at times risen to positions of widespread political influence with corresponding advantages for the whole community. Further, many of these discriminatory regulations were more honoured in the breach than in the observance.

The Jews of Yemen claim descent from those who accompanied the Queen of Sheba on her return from her visit to King Solomon. There were certainly Jews in the country at a very early date, and their missionary activities resulted in the conversion of the Himyarite dynasty and many tribes throughout South Arabia. While many Jews were converted to Islam after the Muslim conquest, they survived as a religious community in contrast to the Christians of Yemen—a numerous community which either became absorbed with the Muslim population or emigrated to Abyssinia. Apart from the survivors of

the Jewish tribes of Medina, who were banished by Muhammad and some of whom made their way to the south, there were small groups of Jewish immigrants, such as those who accompanied the Portuguese from India and others, from Egypt, who followed in the trail of the Mamluks. But, whatever their descent, the Jews of Yemen are a well defined entity with an interesting Judæo-Arabic dialect, literature, folklore, and history.

As in the Hadhramaut, most of the Yemeni Jews are either traders, craftsmen or labourers, except that in Yemen the population is less nomadic and the great majority are desperately poor. About three-quarters are employed as tailors, shoe-makers, weavers, potters, joiners, and metal workers. Jewish gold- and silver-smiths have a deservedly high reputation for fine filigree work. There are also Jewish agricultural villages, which have been described in a very favourable light by the Christian-Arab writer, Amin al-Rihani.

The Jews of each tribe in the Yemen provide the Muslims with manufactured goods. They repair their ploughs and weapons, weave their cloth, and so forth. They depend on the harvest which the peasants are able to gather. Being usually paid with a portion of the agricultural yield, they can just about keep themselves alive if the harvest is good. But if the harvest is a failure, the peasants not unnaturally think of their own families first, and the Jewish craftsman may not get the share due to him.

According to the Jewish Agency's memorandum on *The Position of Jewish Communities in Oriental Countries*, of 1947, the Yemen Government has set up factories for the manufacture of textiles, soap and other products, and ordered Jewish craftsmen to impart their skill to Muslims, by whom the Government intends them eventually to be displaced. No confirmation of this report, however, has been obtained from other sources.

In spite of difficult and unstable conditions, the Yemeni Jews have preserved a lively religious and family tradition. They show no trace of moral decline and their sense of cleanliness and order is in striking contrast to some of the other Jewish communities in the Muslim world. In Israel, Yemeni Jews are known for their industry and diligence.

The total number of Jews living in Yemen is uncertain. Wars and famine have repeatedly wrought havoc in the country; and the Jews, being on the whole more dependent on stable conditions of law and order, have been among the first victims. None the less their extremely high birth-rate has repeatedly made up for these losses.

More recently their ranks have been thinned out considerably by emigration to Palestine. By the beginning of 1949, about 20,000 Yemeni Jews had emigrated. Since then, another 42,000 have moved out of the country, so that the present Jewish population cannot be much more than 8,000.

The biggest community is that of San'a, the capital, where there is a separate Jewish quarter surrounded by a wall. Until the recent

exodus, it is said to have housed about 8,000. There are smaller communities in various towns like Sa'da, Dhamar and Kaukaban. The rest are scattered in numerous villages, mostly situated in the interior of the mountain plateau. A good many of these must have been almost emptied of Jews by the recent mass emigration.

From all accounts it would seem that the personal régime of the late Imam Yahya was not among the worst known to the Yemeni Jews, who speak of him with some respect. It is said that the Jews living in the capital under the Imam's personal control were far better treated than those in the provinces. In 1942, when news reached the Yemeni Jews in Palestine that the old Imam was seriously ill, prayers were offered by them for his recovery.

The most likely reason for the widespread desire of the Jews in Yemen to emigrate is the fact that they believe that the time of the Messiah has arrived. At the same time, account must be taken of their pitiful economic condition and their status of inferiority. It would seem likely that the accounts they have received from early emigrants to Palestine of the conditions of life to be enjoyed there have had considerable influence.

There was great anxiety at the time of the 1948 revolt, when the late Imam Yahya's chief adviser—Abdullah ibn Ahmad al-Wazir—revolted against his master, who was already then at an advanced age. In due course, after a long struggle, however, the Imam Yahya's eldest surviving son—the Emir Saif al-Islam Ahmad—defeated the rebels in battle, and, after imprisoning their leader, was proclaimed Imam in succession to his late father.

The new Imam—who, on ascending the throne, changed his name from Saif al-Islam Ahmad to Ahmad al-Nasir li-Din Allah—appears to have been more ready to listen to representations from Jewish organisations in the West. Thus, while up to his accession Jews who left the country did so at their own peril and risked arrest on the outward journey to Aden, instructions have now been issued that they should be allowed to leave without hindrance. Hence the fact that between August, 1949, and the time of writing, about 42,000 Yemeni Jews have been flown from Aden—where they had gone as soon as the ban was lifted—to Israel.

The British authorities in Aden have done much to assist the emigrants by putting a military camp in the colony at their disposal, and have been generous in the supply of medical facilities.

So general an exodus has meant that yet another Jewish community of great antiquity has been to a great extent disbanded.

ADEN

When the Aden riots broke out on December 2, 1947, the Jewish community numbered 8,550. That, at any rate, is the figure given in the official British *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Disturbances in Aden*, though other sources put the total at somewhat

fewer. Be that as it may, of the total only 4,700 belonged to the original Jewish community of Aden: the rest—about 3,800—were Yemeni Jews in transit to Palestine. On arrival in Aden, after a most hazardous journey across the desert, the Yemeni emigrants were usually destitute and in a complete state of exhaustion.

Formerly they used to be quartered either in the Jewish part of the Crater district of the town or in the Jewish quarter of Sheikh 'Othman, about eight miles inland from the Crater. More recently, so much has their number increased, that a separate camp, known as Hashad camp, was for a time set up for them a mile and a half from Sheikh 'Othman. The Hashad camp, which has now been replaced by another—made available by the Aden Government—was subsidised by the Joint Distribution Committee and directed by a woman physician (a remarkable woman in many ways), Dr. Olga Feinberg.

Many of the Yemeni Jews in Aden are employed as coolies, casual labourers and hawkers, a number dwelling in the Coolie Lines and in caves in the rocks. The rest are mainly craftsmen (as they were in Yemen)—gold- and silversmiths, weavers, carders, thatchers, and so forth.

The Jewish community of Aden proper, numbering until recently between 4,000 and 5,000, is centred in the Crater, where Jewish shops, many of them in the Suq, are mingled with those of Muslims, Hindus, and Parsees. A few of the wealthier Jewish merchants have shops in the Steamer Point district, where the Government offices and better-class shops are situated.

Thanks to the generosity of the Menahem Messa family, until the riots, the community had a large and well-equipped school and a spacious new synagogue. In addition, there was another somewhat smaller school. Owing to the lack of qualified teachers, however, the standard of education is low. The new and richly decorated synagogue was also used as a kind of clubhouse, and was an habitual rendezvous when services were not in progress.

The relations between the old Jewish community of Aden and the Muslims used to be tolerably good. But the growing influx of Yemeni Jews led to the development of a certain degree of tension between them and the Muslim coolies, many of whom—incidentally—are themselves of Yemeni origin. It is also likely that inflammatory nationalist broadcasts from Egypt and other Arab stations in the Middle East, blaring out daily through loudspeakers in Aden cafés, have played their part in stirring up anti-Jewish feeling.

Following the appeal of the Arab League for a three-day protest strike against the decision of the United Nations to partition Palestine, an anti-Zionist demonstration in Aden developed into a riot. Jewish shops and houses in the Crater and in Sheikh 'Othman were attacked, many being burnt and looted.

From the official report of the Commission of Inquiry, it is evident that the reason why the British authorities were unable to bring the

disturbances to an end for three whole days was that the Aden Protectorate Levies completely failed to do their duty. This locally-raised force, recruited from the Muslim tribes of the Protectorate area, not only failed to stop the rioters, but themselves took part in the looting of Jewish shops. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that the high number of Jewish casualties is due to the fact that the Levies turned their weapons on the victims of the riots instead of on the rioters.

Feelings run high in these matters, and there is always a temptation to attribute to bias in official quarters events caused merely by incompetence. It must be said, on the other hand, that the authorities themselves have done little to dispel suspicion of bias on their part. For instance, on December 5, 1947, the Governor of Aden sent a cable to the Colonial Secretary in London, part of which reads as follows:

"Alleged hostile activity of Jews created new dangerous tension, especially after killing of a Levy and an Indian Muslim Government doctor almost certainly by Jewish snipers."

The subsequent Commission of Inquiry, however, established that there was not the slightest evidence of the existence of any Jewish snipers whatsoever, and that the Indian doctor had in fact been shot by Levies (*Report*, pp. 14 and 21).

During the riots, both Jewish schools and four of the synagogues were burnt to the ground. Of the 170 Jewish shops in Aden, 106 were totally looted and another eight partially looted. About 220 Jewish houses were destroyed or damaged. Eighty-two Jews were killed, and a similar number wounded. Financially, the losses suffered by the Aden Jews are estimated at £1,150,000.

The riots had a devastating effect on the Jewish community, economically as well as socially and psychologically. The compensation (partly in the form of loans) offered by the Aden Government to help those who had lost everything to start afresh was totally inadequate. Moreover, widespread bewilderment and distrust had undermined the very basis of normal peaceful social relations between Jews and Muslims.

The American Joint Distribution Committee consequently decided on a large-scale evacuation plan—"Operation Magic Carpet"—as a result of which almost the entire Jewish population was ferried by air to Israel. At the time of writing, there are only 1,200 Jews left in Aden, of whom about a quarter have expressed a wish to emigrate.

CHAPTER IX

TURKEY

The Jews of Turkey have played a prominent and colourful part in the country's history for many hundreds of years.

Members of the Jewish community in Brusa, the seat of the Ottoman Sultans until the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, obtained a *firman* from Orkhan I (1326-1359), permitting them to build a synagogue. The building still exists. The Jewish community was recognised as a self-administering body, and was not subject to any serious restrictions.

Under Murad II and his successor, Muhammad the Conqueror (1451-1481), a number of Jews held important positions at the court of the Sultans, being even granted the privilege of exemption from taxes. The court physician, Ishaq Pasha, was granted the official title of *Hakim Bashi* ("Physician-in-Chief"), while the Jewish physician of Sultan Muhammad II combined with this post two other important appointments—those of Treasurer and Minister of Finance. The same Sultan established the office of *Haham Bashi*, the official representative of all Jewish communities—a position which equalled that once occupied by the Exilarch in Baghdad, and of the *Nagid* in Egypt.

It was perhaps the existence of this office at the Sultan's court which later caused Sultan Selim I (1512-1520) to abolish it in Egypt. The *Haham Bashi* was administrative head of all Jewish communities: it was he who apportioned taxes and supervised their collection, appointed rabbis, and acted as supreme judge in civil matters within the community.

Naturally enough, this liberal régime made the Turkish Empire very attractive to the Jewish refugees from Spain; and, after 1492, an ever-growing stream of Sefardi Jews joined the indigenous Jewish population. In the middle of the sixteenth century, the Jewish population of Constantinople may have numbered as many as 50,000 and worshipped in up to 44 synagogues. (Dubnov: *Die Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes*, Vol. VI, p. 19.)

Not only were many of the newcomers wealthy, but a large number, especially of the Marranos, were also skilled craftsmen in various trades, including the manufacture and use of firearms. Likewise, they brought with them the secrets of the printing press.

In the course of the fifteen years between 1505 and 1520 more than one hundred books on Jewish subjects were printed. A report by a French traveller, Nicolas de Nicolay (*Les Navigations, Pérégrinations et Voyages Faites en Turquie*, Paris, 1576) mentions

also many books in Latin, Greek, Italian, and Spanish as products of Jewish printers. The printing of books in Turkish or Arabic, on the other hand, was forbidden.

Nicolay and other travellers also describe the wealth of commercial activities among the Jews in Turkey.

Jewish Influence at the Sultan's Court

Such was the influence of prominent Jews, both at court and in the Sultan's administration, that foreign ambassadors and diplomats took special care to establish the best of personal relations with them. Jewish influence in the Empire reached its peak in the sixteenth century under the Sultans Suleyman (1520-1566) and Selim II (1566-1574).

The nephew of the widow of a wealthy Portuguese banker, Mendes, a certain Juan Miguez (who later became better known under the name of Joseph Nasi), was able, for instance, to induce the Sultan Suleyman to make a successful protest to the Venetians against their refusal to let the widow take her fortune with her from Venice to Constantinople.

It is interesting to recall that it was the same Joseph Nasi who later became Governor of the Tiberias area in the Holy Land and was given the privilege of settling Jews there. Unfortunately, plans for large-scale settlements had to be abandoned because of the hostile attitude of the local Arabs. In compensation, Sultan Selim gave Nasi the island of Naxos and all the Cyclades as his possessions, together with the title of Duke—*Dux Aegaei Pelagi.*

In the court intrigues of the Seraglio the Jews played their part in full. But if they intrigued, it was by no means in each others' favour. For example, the friendship of Sultan Selim for Joseph Nasi evoked the jealousy of the Grand Vizier Sokolli, whose confidant was another influential Jew, the physician and Talmudist Solomon Ashkenazi. As a Venetian, Sokolli resented the political hostility adopted towards Venice by Nasi. Nasi nearly fell a victim to the unscrupulous intrigues of a physician called Daud—also a Jew—though whether there was collusion between Daud, on the one hand, and the Vizier and Ashkenazi, on the other, has not been definitely established.

Court intrigue has always seemed to have a special attraction for women; and the Sultan's *Harim* was no exception. Jewesses in the *Harim*, enjoying greater freedom of movement than Muslim women, were particularly useful as go-betweens.

They earned for themselves something of a reputation, sometimes of a rather doubtful character. The most famous of these Jewesses was a widow, Esther Kiera, who was on terms of great intimacy with the favourite wife of Sultan Murad III (1574-1595). Turkish officials, as well as foreign emissaries, offered her enormous sums of money in order to win her support. However, she was destined to share the usual fate of so many who were caught in the

spider's web of the Seraglio. For when she used her influence to support one of the candidates for the office of Commander of the Cavalry, a rival candidate instigated the Sultan's bodyguard to assassinate her and, at the same time—to avoid any risk of vendetta—her three sons.

Provocative Display

All in all, the behaviour of some of these wealthy Jews was provocative. Their splendid palaces, their retainers—and particularly the richness of dress and jewellery of their women-folk in public—aroused ill-feeling among the Muslim population. All too easily were the latter reminded of the fact that these Jews were, after all, still non-believers whom tradition allowed to live among the true believers—but humbly and under certain conditions.

When Sultan Murad's personal attention was called to these facts, he abruptly decided on draconic measures of retribution against the Jews. The project was only abandoned after Solomon Ashkenazi, with the help of the Grand Vizier, had exercised all his arts of persuasion and had liberally bribed both the Sultan's mother and the head of the Janissaries. Thereupon, the rabbis hastened to issue an order forbidding Jewish women to wear jewellery or costly clothes in public places.

It is no wonder that the privileged social position of the Jews, which was so closely bound up with the whole political system of corruption and favouritism, could not last. Since the political influence of the Jews depended on the ebb and flow of personal intrigue, it quickly suffered from a change of fortune at court. In due course, it declined.

But although the Jews lost their conspicuous social and political power, they still flourished in commerce, and—apart from the burden of special taxation which they shared with the other non-believers—they continued to live and work, on the whole, unmolested.

The episode of the false Messiah, Shabbatai Zevi, is characteristic of the broadmindedness of the Turkish authorities in general and of Sultan Muhammad IV in particular; and it is also typical of their mature political shrewdness. Although Shabbatai Zevi had openly proclaimed that he would dethrone the Sultan and reconquer the Holy Land for the Jews, and although the uproar among the Jewish masses had already reached disturbing proportions, he was left unmolested.

When he came to Constantinople at the head of a large crowd of adherents, he was merely confined to a fortress opposite Gallipoli, where he was allowed to receive visitors. And even when eventually he was denounced to the Sultan as a dangerous usurper and impostor, the Sultan, in order to render him harmless, tried the simple ruse of getting him converted to Islam—and it succeeded (1666).

Like the Greeks and the Armenians, the Jews have constituted, particularly in Constantinople (Istanbul), a most lively and active

element of the population and one which, in some respects, was more favoured than other minorities. Attacks against the Jews which repeatedly emanated from the Greek minority in Smyrna, Rhodes, and other places during the nineteenth century, were severely dealt with by the Turkish authorities. (See A. Galante: *Turcs et Juifs*, Istanbul, 1932, pp. 16 *et seq.*)

As early as the first half of the nineteenth century, the Turkish Sultan was at pains to show that he intended to reform the constitution and administration of the Empire on the model of European liberalism. The decree of Gulhane in 1839, and the *Hatti-Humayun* of 1856, not only guaranteed equitable treatment to non-Muslim subjects (if only on paper), but also led to a more equitable system of taxation, the adoption of an annual budget, the promise (unfulfilled) of regular payment of officials, and an attempt (unsuccessful) at the elimination of bribery.

A further step towards constitutional reform, and the first establishment of popular representation, was taken in 1876, although the Sultan Abd al-Hamid prevented it from becoming effective until the Young Turk movement, "Union and Progress" (*Ittihad ve-Terakki*), forced it through by the revolution of 1908. In the National Assembly there were a number of Jews (as deputies of the Jewish communities of Smyrna, Constantinople, and Salonika).

But when the Turkish nationalists went so far as to adopt the Western idea of nation in its entirety, and to consider the Turkish element as the real representatives of the nation, they alienated the small number of Arabs who had formed the Arab-Ottoman Brotherhood in Constantinople in 1908 with the aim of letting the Arab provinces benefit by the enactment of a liberal constitution.

When the Young Turk movement prepared for the overthrow of the Abd al-Hamid régime in Salonika, it found active support among the Jews and *Dönme* (converted Jews). After the First World War, the question of special guarantees for the protection of the non-Muslim minorities was raised by the Allies in the course of the negotiations leading up to the signature of the Treaty of Lausanne between them and the Government of Mustafa Pasha Kemal. The Jewish community, however, in a letter addressed to the Turkish Government, gave up all claim to special treatment.

The new Turkish Constitution abolished the *Millet* system of partial communal autonomy. Matters of personal status, such as marriage, now came under the jurisdiction of the ordinary civil authorities. At the same time, the community lost its former right to levy its own taxes and, consequently, its various communal institutions became dependent entirely on voluntary contributions.

It should be stressed that these measures were not directed against the Jewish minority, but were part of the general secularisation of the Turkish State. They affected all minorities and, likewise, the religious institutions of the Muslims themselves.

The tendency towards a breaking-up of any sense of unity among the component parts of the Ottoman Empire became sharper during the First World War. It received a death-blow when, not long after the end of the war, Mustafa Pasha Kemal decreed the disestablishment of Islam in the New Turkey.

Once this had happened the effects of political fragmentation were made even stronger. Each of the new Arab States sought its own level in the post-war world, while Turkey evolved a policy based on the national interests of a secular State. How far this was to take her from the Arab States is shown by the absence of any feeling of solidarity with them during the most critical period of tension over Palestine, and the fact that in due course the Turkish Government went so far as to recognise Israel.

Recently, a movement in favour of the revival of Islam has gathered some strength in Turkey. But since the days of Atatürk, the Government's greater European orientation, its policy of abandoning any claim to the territories of the old Ottoman Empire, its abolition of the Caliphate, and the secularisation of the State through the disestablishment of Islam, have all contributed to a great weakening of former cultural and political links with the Arab countries.

When the evidence is examined, it is clear that—contrary to reports published in various newspapers (including some in Israel)—the Turkish Government did not take any discriminatory measures against its Jewish minority during the invasion of Israel by the Arab States; and it cannot be fairly said that the obstacles which the Turkish Government put in the way of young Jews of military age wishing to join the Israel forces constituted discrimination against the community.

Apart from this temporary restriction, the Turkish Government has certainly put no obstacles in the way of those wishing to emigrate to Israel. Such emigration, in fact, has assumed proportions so great as to reduce the number of Jews in Turkey by between 25 per cent and 30 per cent. Although there had been already a certain amount of Jewish emigration during the last twenty years—mostly to South America and the United States—its scale was not considerable. Since the proclamation of the Jewish State, on the other hand, the stream of emigrants to Israel has grown to a flood, consisting mostly of the young and the poor. Nor has this movement come to an end.

As a result of the exodus, the number of Jews in Turkey has dropped to 50,000; or 0.28 per cent of the country's total population (about 18,000,000). An earlier estimate, made in 1947, gave the number of Jews as 80,000-90,000, that is, roughly, 0.5 per cent of the total population. If the figures published by the Jewish Agency are correct, the inference is that the drop is almost exclusively due to this movement.

Mr. V. Elyashar, of the Israel Government's Immigration Department, recently stated that during the twelve months between July, 1948, and July, 1949, the number of Jews from Turkey arriving in Israel was 22,000.

The majority of these immigrants are from the smaller towns, the Jewish community in Istanbul having remained little affected in number by the move. As there are between 40,000 and 45,000 Jews in Istanbul, there must have been, prior to the exodus, some 40,000 Jews in the smaller towns, most of whom have now emigrated.

Jews have disappeared entirely from towns like Marash and Alexandretta; and Adrianople (Edirne), Chanakale, Adana, and Mersina have lost about half their Jewish population. Although there are still Jewish communities in Brusa and Smyrna (Izmir), it is doubtful whether all the 25 synagogues in the latter town are still in use.

The recent revival of Muslim religious teaching has also had its effect on the Jewish community, reversing to some extent the earlier measures of secularisation. In June, 1949, the Turkish National Assembly passed an Act, introduced by the Jewish Deputy, Mr. Solomon Adatto, giving the Jewish community autonomy in its own affairs. Religious instruction, up till then restricted to synagogues, can now be given in schools as part of the regular curriculum.

In the two most important communities, those of Istanbul and Smyrna, there are two distinct councils, one for religious affairs and one for lay matters. The latter deals with the administrative and financial side of questions like community schools (which include, in Istanbul, a secondary school), hospitals, and other welfare institutions.

A large number of Jewish children attend Government schools and go on to State universities. The general educational level of Turkish Jews is high, thanks to the strong influence of the schools of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle.*

Although most Jews living in the bigger towns, like Istanbul and Smyrna, are poor, there are also some middle-class Jews in comfortable circumstances, and a few rich families. There are so many Jewish doctors, lawyers, and engineers that new graduates are obliged to settle in the provinces. Jews, likewise, play a prominent part in industry and various branches of commerce, though there are hardly any in the civil service.

In the course of the last two decades, the Jewish population of Istanbul has grown slightly through the immigration of Jews from Central European countries. These latter have not merged with the existing community, which is predominantly Sefardi. Nor have they joined the existing small group of *Ashkenazim,* numbering about 2,000. Instead, they have organised their own community, being referred to by Turkish Jews as "the foreign community."

The Jews do not live in separate quarters in Turkey, but are dispersed among members of other faiths. The equality before the law which the Constitution lays down for them, as for others, is no mere empty phrase.

In one particular respect the change in the New Turkey is unquestionably for the better. In the past, military service for non-Muslims was made a burden for them through various forms of discrimination.

Thus, for instance, they were assigned only menial tasks and were not allowed to carry arms. " Even young men of the greatest ability failed to pass the examinations for advancement into the officers' training school, if they were not of the Faith," writes B. E. Webster (*The Turkey of Ataturk*, Philadelphia, 1939, p. 281). But nowadays these disabilities have been rescinded, at least as far as the Jews are concerned. They are admitted to all arms of the service, as well as to the officers' training school.

Yet it must not be forgotten that the Jews in Turkey are a minority ; and throughout history all minorities have been a particular problem in the country. The fact that for so many centuries the minorities—Christian as well as Jewish—have lived in partly self-contained communities under the *Millet* system has left its heritage. It was not easy for the minorities to merge with the predominantly Muslim Turkish nation. Conversely, the Muslim Turks find it hard not to differentiate between the population as a whole and the minorities, including the Jews. In this heritage from the past lies the key to the undoubted sense of uneasiness which, in spite of all the Government's efforts, continues to be felt by the minorities. Psychological and linguistic difficulties—many Turkish Jews, for instance, speak Ladino among themselves and have a noticeable accent in Turkish—accentuate this factor.

It is true that there are a number of individual Jewish writers and scientists who have made important contributions to Turkish cultural life. The poems of the Jewish woman poet, Gentille Arditti Pullov, are written in Turkish; and the inventor of the Turkish shorthand system, A. Benroya, is also a Jew. But, characteristically enough, the four Jewish periodicals published in Istanbul are all written either in French or Ladino. Alone, the weekly *Chalom* has compromised to the extent that its leader is written in Turkish. The French language daily, *Le Journal d'Orient*, is Jewish owned, and its editorial staff is composed entirely of Jews.

The Turkish Government took the sting out of the religious question by breaking its former traditional ties with the Caliphate and remodelling its national life on Western patterns. In consequence, the general status of the minorities was improved. But from a different standpoint this very emphasis on the new Turkey as a purely *national* unit without religious implications was again bound to render the position of the minorities difficult.

For whereas, previously, Islam—as the religion of the Empire—could not, and did not, expect the minorities to blend themselves into " the Nation," the new republic, like any modern nation-state, could only recognise a single homogeneous national unit. The pronounced self-consciousness of all the minority groups could not fail, therefore, to affect their relations with the State.

Rightly or wrongly, the Turkish authorities are extremely sensitive about the possibility of dual loyalties among the minorities. In the

light of existing world tensions, the presence of a tightly-knit community of Armenians in a country bordering on the Soviet Republic of Armenia makes this understandable. Similarly, the Greek minority cannot but incline in a number of ways towards neighbouring Greece. If some Turkish Jews regard themselves as members of a community wider than that bordered by the frontiers of Turkey, the State must view that fact as an obstacle to its aim of welding together a closely integrated nation. The Turkish authorities are, therefore, tireless in their efforts to break up the sense of separate identity which exists among all the minorities.

For example, Turkish law does not allow any affiliation of local groups to foreign organisations, and, consequently, Turkish Jewry has been prevented from being represented on Jewish international bodies such as the World Jewish Congress. The same law forbids Zionist activities.

By itself, that cannot, in fairness, be interpreted as discrimination. More definite evidence of discrimination against minorities may be seen in the extraordinarily small number of Jews in the civil service. The semi-official trade association, *Birlik*, which issues import and export licences, is also alleged to discriminate against non-Muslims; and it is further alleged—though denied in other quarters—that contracts for public works are given almost exclusively to Muslims.

In November, 1942, the Turkish Government made a most drastic attempt to dislodge the minorities from the unduly strong position they held in the national economy. A law was passed imposing a capital levy both on individuals and on commercial and industrial enterprises.

The law itself did not provide for discrimination against any particular group in the population, but in practice, large-scale discrimination did take place when it came to be applied. And while Muslims were generally assessed at 5 per cent to 7 per cent of their capital, the rate for non-Muslims was far higher, rising in some cases to 90 per cent. The special commissions entrusted with its execution were responsible for fixing the amount to be paid in each case; and their decision was final. If the taxpayer failed to make his payment within one month, he was sentenced to forced labour or was employed on public works, while half his pay was withheld towards the amount due to the Government.

The effect of this drastic procedure was that a great number of people were either forced to sell their property or had it compulsorily auctioned. Out of the names of 70 persons mentioned in the Turkish press as having been arrested for failing to pay within one month, 35 were Jews and the rest Greeks and Armenians. Eventually, the press openly admitted that the levy had been imposed to break the economic power of the minorities.

Since 1942 there has been no repetition of this or similar moves. On the contrary, certain measures discriminating against minority groups have been rescinded.

The fact that, in spite of their long-standing attachment to the country, the Jews in Turkey still constitute a distinct and separate element of the population is responsible for any actions of the Government which may at first sight—and mistakenly—suggest prejudice against them. The truth of the matter is that the Government—understandably enough—is anxious to create a united and homogeneous nation and for that reason must look askance at any element which seems hard to absorb. The Jewish minority problem is merely part of Turkey's general minorities' problem.

CHAPTER X

LIBYA

Jewish emigration from Libya to Israel has been proceeding in recent months at a rate which, if maintained, will mean that the territory's Jewish minority—like that of Aden—will have disappeared within a very short time. Apart from the many young people who earlier had set out of their own volition for Israel (*via* Tunisia or Italy), more than 2,000 emigrants embarked in Tripoli during the 15 weeks between March and June, 1949. On January 27, 1950, the Tripoli correspondent of *The Jewish Chronicle* reported a rate of emigration of 2,000 per month.

The Jewish community of Libya, unlike many others in the Muslim world, until recently lived in a state of comparative well-being and contentment, as well as complete harmony and peace with its Muslim neighbours. Yet observers are agreed that the general position of this community has now become untenable. Hence the emigration organised by the American Joint Distribution Committee. What are the causes?

The most immediate reason is the rapid deterioration of the country's economy since the end of the war. This has, it is true, affected the Muslim population no less than the Jews ; but upon the Jewish community it has inflicted a degree of impoverishment so great that recovery is impossible. An exceptionally severe drought during 1946 and 1947 has made conditions still more difficult.

Whereas in 1943 the number of Jews in Tripoli paying communal dues was still 2,700, by 1947 it had dropped to 600. At the same time, the number of persons receiving regular financial support from community funds increased from 300 in 1943 to 7,500 in 1948. This means that in 1948 of a total population of about 23,000, about a third was not in a position to earn even the most modest livelihood.

Over and above the economic decline account must be taken of the general feeling of insecurity which has existed among the Jews of Libya ever since the murderous anti-Jewish riots of 1945 and 1948.

The two outbreaks, but particularly the more severe one of November, 1945, have undermined the whole basis of the manifold personal relations and business connections which used to exist between Jews and Muslims, and of normal life within the community itself. Particularly among the smaller Jewish settlements scattered along the coast and south of Tripoli this tension has hung like a cloud.

Until January, 1949, more than 7,000 Jews still lived outside the town of Tripoli, distributed among 13 villages, the biggest group (numbering 1,240) living in Amrus, the smallest (numbering 85) in Beni

Ulid. Between January, 1949, and June, 1949, however, about 2,000 (that is, more than a quarter of this rural Jewish population) flocked to the town of Tripoli. There, devoid of all means, and without any opportunity of earning their living, they swelled further the number of those who had to be supported by the community.

Many of the Jews in the rural areas were pedlars, buying their wares from small Jewish craftsmen and selling them almost exclusively to Arabs. Distrust of the Muslims since 1945 has done much to break up this economic pattern. In addition, the Jewish craftsmen—silversmiths, carpenters, and so forth—have been impoverished by the general slump.

Although the Jewish population in Libya never prospered on the same scale as the wealthy communities of Egypt and Iraq, a fair proportion used to live in relative ease, about a third of the urban Jews being middle class.

The annexation of Libya by the Italians in 1911 brought in a régime under which the Jews were not only allowed the kind of partial communal autonomy usual in the Middle East, but were also completely free from discrimination and indeed, enjoyed a higher status than the Muslims. It may well be, as some observers claim, that the Italians tried to win over the Jews in order to drive a wedge between them and the Muslims.

Before the recent exodus the Jewish population of Tripolitania represented about 4 per cent of the total population. (In 1948 there were approximately 30,000 Jews, 40,000 Italians, and 650,000 Muslims.) In the city of Tripoli itself, however, where there were 25,000 Jews, they were as much as 17 per cent of the city's total population of 145,000.

In Cyrenaica, the proportion was similar. Benghazi had about 3,500 Jews, representing 11 per cent of the population, while the number of Jews living in smaller places like Barce and Derna amounted to 1,500. The Jewish inhabitants of both parts of Libya are almost exclusively indigenous, apart from a few who arrived in recent years as Italian colonists.

Since it seems out of the question for any future government to spend sums of money as vast as those invested in Libya by the Italian Fascist régime, the country's prospects of economic recovery seem dim indeed.

Under the Italians, European habits spread among some of the urban Jews. These now wear European dress, and can speak Italian, although among themselves many of the *Sefardim* speak Ladino. But the majority follow a way of life little different from that of the Muslims, speaking Arabic—with perhaps here and there a Ladino expression thrown in. This is particularly true of the Jews in the provinces. The presence in the country of Palestinian units of the British Eighth Army during the Second World War has led an increasing number of the younger generation to learn modern Hebrew.

Here mention should be made of one unusual group among the

Jews in the countryside. About 50 miles south of Tripoli there used to live the cave-dwellers of Tigrinna. This community which, strictly speaking, consisted of only three large families, was headed by its young Chief Rabbi, Sheikh Khalifa Hassan, and altogether numbered no more than 345. Its settlement in the hillside caves has been in existence for at least 500 years.

Though outwardly indistinguishable from their Muslim neighbours —with whom they lived in friendly contact—these people always kept alive Jewish religious tradition. Sheikh Khalifa Hassan was held in high esteem by both Muslims and Jews ; and the officers of British Military Government maintained the best of relations with the tiny community. Well content and happy though they were, the general urge towards migration was bound in the end to affect even them ; and, according to a recent Reuter message from Jerusalem, the Tigrinna cave dwellers have now, under the leadership of their Chief Rabbi, arrived in Israel.

The Jews of Libya are prolific. According to the official census of 1948, the increase of the Jewish population in Tripoli was even higher than that of the Muslims. In that year, while there were 24 births per 1,000 Muslim inhabitants, there were 35 per 1,000 among the Jews. The corresponding figures for deaths were 32 per 1,000 for the Muslims and 22 per 1,000 for the Jews.

Under Italian law the Jewish communal council in Tripoli had a special legal status. It was officially recognised as an autonomous municipal authority. This position has been confirmed by the British Military Government. The council is entitled to levy direct taxes on the sale of kasher meat and wine. The Rabbinical Court has jurisdiction in matters such as marriage and divorce ; but its powers do not extend to questions of inheritance, which are covered by the Italian civil code (still in force under the principle of " care and maintenance " in territory under British Military Government).

The community's educational standard is better than that of the local Muslims. The position was worsened by the closing down of schools on the outbreak of war. A survey taken in 1946 revealed that out of a total of about 6,000 Jewish boys and girls between the ages of 12 and 18, approximately 4,500 had not received any education at all for the preceding six years.

Schools have now been reopened ; and it is typical of the new outlook that in all the Jewish community schools the language of instruction is Hebrew. At one time after the war as many as 2,000 children attended the Hebrew school in Tripoli. With the beginning of the general exodus, however, a number of teachers of Hebrew have left for Israel, and two classes have already been compelled to close down.

Until 1945 nowhere in the Muslim world were the relations between Muslims and Jews more peaceful and undisturbed than in Libya. The general pattern of living, social standards, language, dress

—all were so similar that it was difficult for a foreign visitor to see any difference between a Muslim and a Jew.

Particularly in Cyrenaica were relations cordial. Nahum Slouschz, in his descriptions of his travels in North Africa, reports that Senussi tribesmen, who—believing him to be a Christian—had at first shown signs of hostility, changed their attitude when they were informed that he was a Jew.

The Palestine issue was never an important one for the Muslims in Libya. Political questions, like independence and the desire to be rid of the Italians, were the concern of Jews and Muslims alike. Even after the 1945 massacre, when discussions were taking place about the country's future, a serious attempt was made to wipe out the horrible memory of the outbreak and to effect a *rapprochement*. A delegation of Arab notables, which called upon the British Civil Administrator, included a Jew. The psychological shock of the massacre, however, was too great and the tension did not subside.

The events of November, 1945, took everyone completely by surprise. There was not the slightest indication of any unrest between Jews and Muslims. Conditions in Libya were so different from those in other Muslim countries that it is hard to explain how the explosion occurred.

What happened was, briefly, this: On November 4, 1945, an Arab crowd launched a murderous attack on the Jewish quarter in Tripoli. The British authorities there seem to have been so unaware of the possibility of anything of the sort happening that it took them three whole days to bring the outbreak to a stop. It was only on November 7, when troops were rushed in, that order was restored.

From Tripoli the riots spread to the provinces. Men, women, and children were murdered, houses and synagogues burnt, shops and workshops looted. When violence finally ceased, 130 dead were officially counted. The damage to property, destruction of stock and theft of tools left a considerable section of the Jewish population in a state of utter destitution.

This sudden and unexpected outbreak of wild hostility from people, with whom, for many generations, they had lived in perfect harmony, left the Jews in a state of consternation and even many Muslims in complete bewilderment.

Some attempt was made to restore the good relations which had always existed before. Muslim leaders made a call for peace and expressed their deep sorrow at what had happened. They emphasised in their public statement that the Palestine question had nothing to do with Jewish-Muslim relations in Libya.

But to no avail; the former easy confidence and trust between the two communities, once shattered, did not return.

It is difficult to ascertain exactly what touched off the 1945 outbreak. Possibly those responsible for the Balfour Day riots in neighbouring Egypt a few days previously might be in a position to give

an explanation. For connections between Libya and Egypt, interrupted only during the desert battles of 1940-1943, have always been close. It may be that some of the Libyan revolutionaries, who had taken refuge in Cairo from the Italians, brought with them on their return home, after the expulsion of the Italians, some of the anti-Jewish ideas so current in Cairo Muslim-Arab nationalist circles. Likewise, it is possible that some of those Muslims who had collaborated with the Italians, wishing to ingratiate themselves with Arab nationalism, may have thought that, by working up an anti-Jewish massacre, they could whitewash their past.

Be that as it may, someone must have incited the mob. And a mob is never difficult to rouse in the Middle East. In the prevailing poverty of the masses, the Muslim crowd always has a generous sprinkling of hoodlums and cut-throats, ever eager for a chance of loot. That, plus the masses' lack of stability, born of undernourishment and disease, makes them characteristically explosive material.

Barely had the immediate shock of the first massacre died down when another outbreak occurred. In June, 1948, a group of Arabs from Tunisia, on their way to join the Arab forces in Palestine, arrived in Tripoli. It was, apparently, their inflammatory agitation of the Tripoli mob that started the trouble, though some accounts claim that the fault was initially that of a group of Jewish youths, who are said to have jeered at the Tunisians.

On this occasion, however, the mob did not have it all its own way. The Jews, mindful of 1945, were not caught unawares, defending themselves with courage and vigour; and the authorities, acting this time with commendable promptness, put an end to the outbreak in a few hours, and stifled an attempt to start it up again on the following day. The disturbances were confined to Tripoli. Damage was, nevertheless, considerable. The death roll was 14 Jews and 30 Arabs. The 400 Tunisians were sent packing back home by the authorities.

It is quite obvious that hardly any of the factors which, in other Muslim countries, have contributed to the gradual deterioration of Jewish-Muslim relations were present in Libya. There was no economic rivalry, no covetousness of "Jewish wealth," no alienation of Jewish loyalties by foreign influence, and no public excitement over Palestine. Neither was there any serious degree of Muslim-Arab nationalist fanaticism nor any Muslim Government to use the Jews as scapegoats for its political difficulties.

One can only conclude that the root cause must be sought in the basic pattern of Muslim-Jewish relations as laid down by Islam. The incidents in Libya seem to present a typical example of how Muslim distrust and dislike of the non-believer can, after many generations of deceptive calm, flare up into a murderous outbreak overnight.

Once certain inhibitions go only a few hints here and there aided by a little bribery may produce a holocaust. In this case, the anti-

Semitic measures of the Italian fascist régime in the later war years, made the more vicious by the presence in Libya of the Germans, eradicated one inhibition. The segregation of Jewish schoolchildren, and later the terrible internment of the Jews of Cyrenaica, showed the Muslim population for the first time a little of the depths to which the governments of Europe could go in their treatment of the Jews. "The West is powerful. Therefore the West is right." Untouched as yet by the anti-Western reaction, which by then had gone a long way elsewhere in the Middle East, for the Muslims of Libya the equation was simple and easily understandable. What the Europeans had done, they, too, could try. . . .

The resulting general feeling of insecurity was further intensified by smaller local incidents which made the Jews scattered among the Muslims in the interior of the country feel their isolation acutely.

They began to flock into the town, seeking protection. From January to June, 1949, more than 25 per cent of the rural Jewish population in Tripolitania moved to Tripoli. The following figures illustrate this move in greater detail:

Place	No. of Jewish inhabitants in January, 1949	No. of Jewish inhabitants in June, 1949
Amrus (Suk al Giuma)	1,240	1,074
Beni-Ulid	85	59
Kussabat	410	388
Garian-Tigrinna	464	244
Homs	902	670
Jefren	391	273
Misurata	912	516
Sirte	180	164
Tagiura	202	180
Tarhuna	191	146
Zawia	676	470
Zliten	604	457
Zuara	794	550
Total Jewish population	7,051	5,191

The general economic decline of the country completed the disaster. In these circumstances the proclamation of the new State of Israel, and her victories over the invading Arab States, appeared to Libyan Jewry as a call which could not be denied. A large-scale exodus began. By the beginning of 1950, of the 35,000 Jews formerly in Libya, about 15,000 had emigrated to Israel, while thousands more were on the point of leaving. Thanks largely to the efforts of the American Joint Distribution Committee, it is likely that by now only a small remnant of the former Jewish community is left.*

*Reports received in March, 1950, stated that at that date only 14,000 remained, while a further 9,000 had registered for emigration. By and large, it is the wealthier Libyan Jews who intend to remain beyond January, 1952—the date by which Tripolitania will attain full independence.

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION

From the point of view of this survey, the Muslim countries in the Middle East can be divided into several groups. One is formed by the member-States of the Arab League. Their flouting of the United Nations decision on Palestine, their invasion of the country and the various discriminatory measures taken by their Governments against their own Jewish communities put them in a category of their own. In some of these countries, persecution of Jews included mob assault and murder, one such outbreak having been apparently tolerated, if not actually supported, by the Government concerned. At the same time, whereas in Yemen—a member of the Arab League—there were no such outbreaks, anti-Jewish riots did take place in some territories not members of the Arab League—notably Bahrein, Aden, and Libya.

The position of the Jews in Yemen has points of resemblance with that of Jews in Persia and in Afghanistan (both outside the Arab League) inasmuch as in these countries the traditional discrimination of Islam against Jews is still, on the whole, practised. But there is this difference: that the Constitution of Persia guarantees equal rights to all sections of the population, whereas such guarantees do not exist in Yemen, for the simple reason that there is no written Constitution.

In Yemen and Afghanistan—unlike the body of the member-States of the Arab League—there still prevails the original Muslim attitude towards the non-believer—and in this case the Jew—while, by contrast, both countries, like Persia, have kept aloof from the anti-Jewish propaganda activities of the four main Arab League Governments.

Finally, Turkey, like Persia, having no active interest in the Palestine question, was not involved in the anti-Jewish campaign of violence which in some Muslim countries brought the Jewish minorities to so critical a situation. But the reason for this attitude is very different in the case of Turkey from that of Persia. Turkey is not only remote from the problems of Arab nationalism; she is also a secular State, where Islam has ceased to be the State religion. Accordingly, the position of the Jewish minority in Turkey is exclusively a question of internal policy and independent of the wave of national-religious excitement which has been ravaging the Arab world.

All the four countries which made their own Jewish minorities a target for their Government's anti-Zionism—Egypt Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon—did so in violation of their own Constitutions and of their international obligations.

The Egyptian Constitution of 1923 states in Article 3 that all Egyptians are equal before the law and that they enjoy equally all civil and political rights, without distinction of race, language, or religion. Articles 12 and 13 guarantee the free exercise of all religions and beliefs.

But the Egyptian Government has made null and void these constitutional rights in the case of the Jews. It has withheld Egyptian nationality from most of them, even though the Jews are as indigenous as the Muslims. As for political grounds—the argument that nationality was refused because of the Palestine issue—such grounds can be dismissed for two reasons. First, the Government was refusing Egyptian nationality to Jews long before the Palestine issue became a burning one in Egypt; and, second, there was little support for Zionism among Egyptian Jews until recent outbreaks against them undermined their sense of security. That being so, there can be no possible ground for the Government's refusal other than the race and religion of the Jews.

As for Iraq, the termination of the Mandate and the admission of the country as a member of the League of Nations, in 1932, were granted on condition that the Iraqi Government gave formal guarantees for the effective protection of her minorities. In response to this request, the Iraqi Government issued a special Declaration. Chapter 1 of this Declaration contains a guarantee for the protection of indigenous minorities, their equality in civil and political rights, freedom in the use of any language (in Iraq the secular teaching of Hebrew is forbidden), and so on. These stipulations were recognised as being among the fundamental laws of Iraq and were declared to constitute obligations of international concern.

The Syrian Constitution of 1930 states in Article 6 that all Syrians are equal before the law; that they are to enjoy the same civil and political rights, and shall not suffer discrimination on grounds of religion, race, or language.

Article 9 of the Lebanese Constitution, promulgated in 1926, guarantees similar rights to individuals and communities.

With the exception of Lebanon, the Constitutions of all four of these Arab League States contain, side by side with the guarantees of equality of rights, a statement declaring Islam to be the official religion of the State. But, in fact, can these two principles—equality before the law, on the one hand, and Islam as the religion of the State, on the other—be reconciled with each other? This question has seldom been raised before. But if Islam is acknowledged as the official State religion, it follows that the laws of the State must conform with, and not contradict, the precepts of the *Koran*. And the *Korán* specifically lays it down that non-believers shall *not* enjoy the same rights as Muslims. *Sura* ix, 29, expressly states that the non-Muslim shall be in a position of subservience under Muslim rule, and imposes upon him a special tax. Whereas a Muslim may marry a non-Muslim woman, a non-Muslim cannot marry a Muslim woman. A non-Muslim cannot be a witness in the courts of law against a Muslim.

It cannot be denied that the whole approach of Islam towards non-believers under Muslim rule is one of discrimination. And in so far as discrimination is not practised in some Muslim countries, it is because their régime, being liberal—either by the natural inclination of

their leaders or through a desire to follow the pattern of modern constitutional principles in the West—does not, in fact, observe the religious precepts of Islam. Such liberal interpretation does not detract from the truth that, in principle, equality of civil and political rights for all sections of the population is incompatible with the recognition of Islam as the official religion of the State.

This conflict between the principles of Muslim superiority and human equality is one reflection of the gap which divides the mentality of the East and the spirit of humanist Western society.

Apart from the short-lived experiment of Reza Shah Pahlevi in Persia—and the even shorter-lived experiment of King Amanullah in Afghanistan—Turkey is the only Muslim country to have attempted to cut this Gordian knot of principle. And this involved a complete break with Islam, a break with a centuries-old tradition and the remodelling of the nation's whole life according to the pattern of the West. Most of the other independent Muslim countries, still trying to preserve the traditional character of their religious and social life in the face of Western forms of Government, Western technique, and Western patterns of thought, are living in an atmosphere of constant spiritual strain which contributes to the prevailing lack of stability of their populations.

Even the basic idea of the Western humanist approach to Government—the Rule of Law—is foreign to the Oriental mind. In the administration of the law, in the public service, it is the personal authority of the individual and his influence, together with the favours of the powerful, that count.

Together with many innovations of Western technique, the Muslim countries have introduced many Western political principles and institutions. But thoughtful Muslims, even if they do not always openly admit it, have a growing suspicion that the attempt to clamp on to the Middle East all the trappings of Western democracy, when Muslim society is based on quite different principles, has merely resulted in artificially stifling the natural bent of Islam. These Western ideas and institutions have never penetrated, much less transformed, the Oriental way of life, even among those who have been favoured with an education. As for the poverty-stricken, superstitious, and conservative masses, these things have no meaning whatsoever.

Thus the impact of Western ideas, habits, political principles, institutions, and technique upon the world of Islam was bound to produce a double-edged effect, comparable in some ways to the effect which Christianity and Judaism had upon the Prophet Muhammad himself. On the one hand, the ruling classes of the Muslim countries, attracted by Western might, have sought to assimilate Western ideas. On the other hand, this very recognition of the power of an alien conception was bound to remind them of their own inferiority and thus to evoke a growing feeling of bitter resentment.

Roughly up to the First World War, the might of the West was an irresistible magnet. After 1918, a reaction gradually began to set in.

Up to the First World War the position of minorities was improved by the spread of liberal ideas, and the influence of the Western powers did something to remove the traditional disabilities under which they lived in most of the Muslim countries. After the First World War, however, the reaction against the West coincided with the spread of the doctrines of self-determination, independence, and equality under the League of Nations, and the predominance of the Western powers in the Middle East was undermined.

The international cry for the equality of nations, the shattered self-confidence of the West, the recognition in principle of the right of self-Government—these and many other factors made every Muslim—all too conscious of the extent to which he himself had become dependent on Western institutions, Western technique, Western knowledge, and Western ideas—hypersensitive to any suggestion of Muslim inferiority or dependence.

He was told that he was as much entitled to self-determination and the right to his own life as those foreign nations whose ubiquitous influence rendered this wellnigh impossible. Resentment and hostility towards the West grew rapidly, outstripping such attractiveness as its civilisation retained. A bitter feeling of hostility against foreigners spread thoughout the Muslim world. Particularly strong did it become among that element—the semi-educated *effendis*—which owed its very existence to the introduction of Western secondary school education in the Middle East.

These schools have produced an ever-growing number of young students whose pretensions are out of all proportion to their actual qualifications. For these young people, prospects of employment are, at best, uncertain. Not only are there far too few openings in Government service, but everything else being equal, they have little chance of holding their own in open competition with better-trained and more cultivated foreigners in the professions and commerce. It is an established fact that it is not only foreign-owned companies which prefer to employ non-Muslims in technical and administrative posts. Companies owned by Muslims themselves prefer either European or other non-Muslim employees; and the same is true in the case of doctors or lawyers, among whom non-Muslims are nearly always preferred.

Thus a favourite field of activity for these young *effendis* has been politics. They, mainly, are the members of the various political clubs and secret organisations like the " Muslim Brotherhood " and the "Arab Youth "; it is they, above all, who are the organisers behind mass demonstrations and riots, the dispensers of financial bounty to the hoodlums who act as group leaders in the turbulent mobs of the cities.

They form an element whose influence on public life can hardly be over-estimated, since it is they who form the substance of the " democratic " masses, they who are mainly responsible for what is called " public opinion," and it is from their ranks that come the assassins of such Muslim statesmen as, in their opinion, have made

too great concessions to foreign Powers. They are the main promoters of xenophobia and the main source from which springs the threat to all minorities.

The sense of frustration and bitter disappointment of these young middle-class *effendis* makes them turn against everything Western. This fact, plus their groping for some principle, some power which is genuinely their own, an element of unity among those who think like them, always brings them back to Islam.

As long, therefore, as national ambition remains strong in Muslim countries, and as long as it asserts itself mainly by opposition to everything Western, nationalism will always be prone to change into religious fanaticism, single-minded in its exclusion of anything non-Muslim.

And, indeed, there can be no doubt that, on the whole, the fragmentation of the former Ottoman Empire into a number of artificial independent pseudo-democratic nations is largely responsible for the deterioration in the position of minorities.

If this is true for all the minorities (including the Christians), it is, of course, doubly true for the Jews. It was already true even before the national pride of the Arab countries suffered a major defeat by the victorious emergence of Israel. The Palestine question itself, from its very inception, had the effect of singling out the Jews from among the other minorities and of making their position even more delicate than it had ever been before. At the same time, it enabled some of the other minorities to demonstrate their own loyalty to the Muslims at the expense of the Jews.

If the situation of Jewish minorities in Muslim countries is considered against this background, it is evident that the general anti-Jewish attitude in these countries is not to be mistaken for what is called anti-Semitism elsewhere.

It is true that the anti-Semitic propaganda of the Nazis spread by agents like Dr. Grobba and others in Iraq, Palestine, and Syria, had some effect (and may, indeed, have had a great deal to do with the outbreak of anti-Jewish rioting in Baghdad after the flight of Rashid Ali). On the whole, however, this kind of propaganda can only be said to have had a passing and superficial effect.

The relations between Jews and Muslims in the Middle East differ radically from those between Jews and Christians in Western countries. The Muslim attitude towards the Jew, who is as genuinely indigenous to those countries as any Muslim, is principally determined by the fact that the Jew is a non-believer. It is, therefore, in principle, not different from the attitude adopted by the Muslim towards any other non-Muslim. There exists even to-day little specific anti-Jewish feeling, though it is an open question whether the incursion of Nazi racialism during the last two decades will not lead to its growth. Anti-Semitism, that form of cold and theoretical hatred which endows its imaginary object with abstract qualities, is entirely a European creation and does not yet exist in Muslim countries to any marked degree.

Nevertheless, tremendous changes have taken place in the position and distribution of Jewish communities throughout the Middle East. It is certain that their status has been radically altered by the existence of a Jewish State in the midst of the Muslim world, and it would be a grave mistake to suppose that the defeat of the Arab armies in Palestine and the outbreak of public hysteria which Muslim politicians have been responsible for rousing on the whole Palestine issue will have no lasting effects. In the course of recent events, the position of some of these old communities has already become so delicate that they have abandoned the homes where their ancestors have dwelt for many centuries. In Libya, Yemen, and Aden, for instance, the Jewish communities are in course of disappearing almost entirely, while the evacuation of Jews from Syria is progressing at a great pace.

So radical a solution of the problem is only possible where the size of a Jewish community is not out of proportion to the funds available to the American Joint Distribution Committee. In moving 8,400 Jews from Aden to Israel a sum of more than $600,000 was spent. Any similar operation in countries like Egypt and Iraq would be far more complicated, even if the financial aspect of such a move is disregarded.

In all probability, Jewish minorities, though depleted in numbers, will continue to live in Egypt and Iraq. The question arises: what will their position be in the future? And is there any possibility of protecting them against persecution? There is always the danger that Governments will exploit the precarious position of their Jewish minorities and turn them into an instrument of political manœuvring. On the other hand, neither of these Governments can, in the long run, afford to disregard world opinion as expressed by international bodies and the Western powers, provided that world opinion asserts itself with vigour.

Up to a point, prospects for the future are made brighter by the fact that liberal Muslim opinion is coming to view recent events with genuine regret. Moreover, it should be remembered how easily public opinion can be swayed—both for good and for evil—in the Muslim countries. The masses are still prepared to follow the lead of the ruling classes ; and, in spite of the anti-Jewish feeling which still lingers among them, there is no reason why a change of attitude on the part of the ruling elements should not be followed by the bulk of the population.

A precondition for any such development, however, is the establishment of peaceful and friendly relations between the Muslim countries and the State of Israel. So long as this is absent, the danger of the Muslim Arab Governments making use of their helpless Jewish minorities as a bargaining counter in negotiations with Israel remains. The fact that the Cairo Conference of the Arab League passed a resolution in April, 1950, forbidding member-States to negotiate with Israel has been a severe blow to those who have hoped that time would heal the breach and create favourable conditions for a stable peace.

CHAPTER XII

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