Sephardim in Latin America after Independence

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During the colonial period, Jewish life in the Spanish and Portuguese territories in America was manifested mainly in a clandestine way. Judaizers, usually as individuals but sometimes in groups, celebrated Jewish holy days with religious services of sorts and also observed some Jewish laws and customs. Most of these observances, however, became more and more diluted due to the lack of a formal Jewish community in close proximity that could be the source for accurate observance of the ritual laws and fix the proper dates for the celebration of festivals.

As result of the attainment of independence by the nations of Latin America, and the subsequent formal abolition of the Inquisition during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, Jews felt more free to wander into the various countries of the continent. Nonetheless, during most of the nineteenth century only a very small number of Jews opted to live there, and very limited organized Jewish life was attempted. The major waves of Jewish immigration to Latin America began in 1889 when a contingent of over 800 Jews from Russia moved to Argentina with the purpose of establishing an agricultural colony. However, among the first pioneering Jews who preceded the mass migration of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries we find a relatively strong Sephardic presence.

Curaçao

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the largest Jewish community in the Americas was on the Dutch island of Curaçao. These Jews were Sephardim, and they retained strong links with the Spanish-Portuguese community in Amsterdam, from where they or their ancestors had migrated. Most of them were merchants, actively involved in the island's trade with other parts of the world, including the Spanish

territories in South and Central America. Since Curaçao is only 35 miles off the northern coast of Venezuela, it is understandable that considerable trade was transacted with the main ports of present-day Venezuela and Colombia.[1]

During the revolutionary period on the mainland, some of the Curaçao Sephardim, in line with the general policy of the British, who at that time had control of the island, favored the rebels and actively supported the uprising against Spain. Several of them established friendly personal relationships with Simon Bolivar and offered their help to him and his family. A few Curaçaoan Sephardim even enlisted in Bolivar's army.

Shortly after Bolivar's victory, Curaçao suffered a severe economic depression coupled with a dry spell from 1819 to 1825 which ruined the farmers and a smallpox epidemic in 1827 which claimed many victims. Significant numbers of people began looking for new horizons, and many opted to continue their trade and commerce in a different setting. Bolivar, now the ruler of Greater Colombia—as the short-lived union of Colombia and Venezuela was then identified—invited foreigners, including Jews, to settle in the new country. Greater Colombia ratified this policy on May 1, 1829 in a treaty with the Netherlands, granting full religious freedom to all immigrants.[2]

Coro

Small groups of Jews from Curaçao, sometimes only a handful of families, settled in the Venezuelan cities of Coro, Puerto Cabello, Cumaná, and Caracas. The most important Jewish presence was in Coro, a port on the Caribbean about 60 miles south of Curaçao, where Jews first arrived in 1824. Though there were Jews living in Coro almost uninterruptedly from 1824 to 1900, they always remained a small community numbering at the most 130–160 souls. All the Jews in Coro had come from Curaçao, and the traffic between these two points continued throughout the century.

Small as it was, the Jewish community of Coro made a substantial contribution to the town's economic and commercial development, mainly through the establishment of retail stores in which they sold goods imported from Europe, usually in Dutch vessels via Curaçao.

Jews were also involved in exporting goods such as hides and cacao from Venezuela to Curaçao and Europe. A few Sephardim from Coro participated with distinction in the political life of the state of Falcón and also at the national level.

The liberal spirit prevailing in Venezuela during the nineteenth century was what allowed for the early settlement of Jews in Coro. Most prospered, and many obtained Venezuelan citizenship, but nonetheless they were not spared from occasional outbreaks of anti-Semitism. In 1831 a band of hoodlums entered the house of David Valencia, where a few Jews were praying together, and injured some of them physically. They also attacked the homes and properties of other Jews in Coro. While the goal of the hoodlums was to "defend the Christian religion" and force the Jews to leave the country, these attacks did not have major consequences.

Similar incidents took place in February of 1855. This time the issue provoked a diplomatic impasse between Venezuela and Holland, which opted to protect the interests of its subjects, most of whom had left Coro because of the provocations. When the negotiations regarding reparations for the losses sustained by the Jewish merchants broke down, a Dutch fleet was sent to the port of La Guaira, threatening to attack unless restitution was paid. Through the efforts of the British consul in Caracas, the Dutch agreed to withdraw from the port. In later negotiations Venezuela agreed to pay a substantial indemnity to the Jews of Coro.[3]

With respect to the practice of religious rites other than Catholicism, the early Venezuelan legislation specifically singled out Dutch subjects as having all types of freedoms, "as long as they are observed in private homes." This was the major reason for having religious services in individual homes. In 1832 the Jews of Coro were allowed to establish a cemetery, and a total of 182 people were buried there during the period of the Jewish sojourn in Coro.

Interestingly, the tombstones in Coro do not include any Hebrew inscriptions, nor dates of birth and death according to the Hebrew calendar. This is a departure from the usage in Curaçao, where the tombstones contained not only names and dates in Hebrew, but also appropriate sentences or biblical verses in Hebrew. This is a tangible testimony to the rapid assimilation of the Coro Jews. While situated

quite close to Curaçao, where Jewish life was enriched by the presence of rabbis, teachers, educational materials, and ritual objects provided by closer contacts with the "mother" community in Amsterdam, they were substantially removed from that aspect of Jewish life. Toward the end of the century the Jewish presence in Coro ceased to exist, leaving the cemetery as the only testimony to the life of that branch of Sephardic Jewry.[4]

The Caribbean "Diaspora"

The Jewry of Curaçao remained small in size throughout the nineteenth century, numbering between 783 and 1,265 souls, and many of them migrated to Spanish America immediately after the liberation from Spain and the abolition of the Inquisition. As early as the first third of the century we find vessels from Curaçao, laden with cargoes belonging to the island's Sephardic merchants, making frequent calls not only at the Venezuelan ports of La Guaira and Coro, but also in Colombia at Cartagena, Puerto Bello, Barranquilla, and Santa Marta, as well as ports in Mexico, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. A number of the island's Jewish merchants ended up settling in these port cities, establishing a Curaçaoan Sephardic "diaspora" whose constituent groups were dependent for Jewish nurturing on *their* "mother" community in Curaçao.[5]

In 1838, for example, a group of Caracas Sephardim petitioned the Mikveh Israel synagogue in Curaçao for help in acquiring a parcel of land for a Jewish cemetery. This petition was forwarded to the Sephardic community in Amsterdam with the addition of a note urging the Amsterdam synagogue officials to consider the request of the "Dutch subjects of the Hebraic religion" residing in Caracas. The petition was publicized through the Amsterdam community's publication in the hope that funds would be forthcoming from individual members.

This request, like later ones, did not accomplish much, but the reasons for the failure are not clear.[6] In other instances the Curaçao synagogue contributed directly to satellite groups in the South American mainland. Thus 100 florins were sent for a cemetery in Rio Hacha, and in 1868, when the Curaçaoan Jews sent 1,300 francs, through the

Alliance Israélite Universelle, for the relief of the Jews of Morocco and Tunis, they added 129 francs from Curaçaoan Jews in Coro and 500 francs from Curaçaoan Jews in Barranquilla.[7]

Most of these settlements had a very short existence, and their few Sephardic families did not constitute a community. A few, however, had a lasting life, and founded communal institutions for the practice of Jewish rituals and traditions. For example, in Panama City, then part of Colombia, Jews from Curaçao founded a Hebrew Benevolent Society in 1852. After the earthquake on St. Thomas in 1867, various Jews who had moved there from Curaçao now migrated to Panama. In 1876 the Benevolent Society was renamed Congregation Kol Shearith Israel.[8]

From Panama, a few of the Curaçaoan families that formed a satellite community spread into Central American cities such as Costa Rica and San Salvador, though they continued to maintain regular contact with the "mother" group in Curaçao. Frances P. Karner has noticed a marriage pattern by which Sephardim who moved abroad would return to Curaçao and eventually marry local Jewish women. Thus the departures during the mid-nineteenth century, which no doubt were caused by economic declines in Curaçao, often proved to be temporary, since changing fortunes on the island brought some of them back.

Barranquilla

By the middle of the nineteenth century Barranquilla was becoming a progressive city. Elisee Reclus, in 1855, noted the presence of a considerable number of foreign merchants—English, American, German, Dutch—which made Barranquilla the main exchange port for commerce with the interior, and the major market in Nueva Granada. The Dutch merchants were mostly Sephardim from Curaçao and other Caribbean Islands, among them H. J. Senior, A. Wolff, Isaias M. Solas, Israel Senior, and various members of the Alvarez Correa, Roiz Mendez, Cortizos, De Sola, and Curiel families. Many had already established successful businesses.

The founding of the Banco de Barranquilla in 1872 was a direct result of the city's economic development and the increased business

of its customs, port, and railroads. The bank became Colombia's second-most-important financial institution after the Banco de Bogotá, and among its founders we find many Sephardic Jews of Curaçaoan origin, as well as a few Jews of German origin among others.[9]

The early Sephardim of Barranquilla attempted to preserve some of their traditions by meeting in each other's homes for prayers on the High Holy Days. By 1880 they were meeting more formally at the residence of Agustin Senior. However, by the beginning of the twentieth century the Jewish character of this "community" had been extinguished due to their total assimilation into the local population.

Perhaps the most outstanding personality among the Jews from Curaçao in Barranquilla was Ernesto Cortizos, the "father" of Colombian commercial aviation, who founded Scadta, later known as Avianca, the first commercial airline in South America. Many other Jews also held influential positions in the city's economic life.[10]

Costa Rica

There have always been very few Sephardim in Costa Rica, but the first Jews there were also from Curaçao. The situation changed rapidly, however. Thus a study indicates that in 1940 fully 700 of Costa Rica's 743 Jews were of Polish origin, and in 1978, more than 90 percent of its 1,586 Jews were of Polish origin, with the rest from other areas, including South America, and only a handful of Sephardic families. Nonetheless, an Ashkenazi informant on the early years of the twentieth century reported that Jewish religious life in Costa Rica was initiated by Sephardim: "We did not practice much religion. But we did celebrate Yom Kippur with the Maduro, the Sasso and the Robles [families]. We used to go to the home of Señor Maduro to pray. This we did for five or six years."[11]

The one or two dozen immigrant merchants who constituted the Curaçaoan satellite in Costa Rica were prominent in the economic structure and even attained political and civic offices. Moises Maduro, for instance, was appointed to public office before 1880, and years later Alfredo Sasso Robles became head of the Costa Rican Chamber of Commerce.[12]

Lima

We find a somewhat similar situation in the early community of Lima. Most of the Jews in Peru during the last half of the nineteenth century had come from Germany, while a few hailed from other West European countries and Russia. In 1870 they founded the Sociedad de Beneficencia Israelita.

Only three families belonged to the Curaçaoan satellite community, and all three arrived in Lima via the island of St. Thomas. Nevertheless, one of the most prominent members, and certainly a religious leader of the little group, was David Senior de Castro. A dentist by profession, De Castro arrived in Lima around 1871/72 in his late teens. In 1873 he became the treasurer of the society, and in 1887–89 its president. Moreover, given the lack of any religious functionary, Dr. Castro assumed the role of spiritual leader of the Sociedad de Beneficencia, performing wedding ceremonies and officiating as mohel at circumcisions. His religious leanings were evident from the fact that he arrived in Lima with a Torah scroll, which was later used at the religious services.[13]

Sephardim from Morocco in Belém

In addition to the Jews who migrated from Curaçao to the Latin American countries, other waves of Sephardim arrived there from overseas. They originated in two major regions: North Africa, especially Morocco, and the portions of the Ottoman Empire that today comprise Turkey, Greece, Syria, and Lebanon.

Individual Jews from Morocco first arrived in Latin America early in the nineteenth century, most probably as soon as they got word that the emerging nations there had adopted more liberal attitudes regarding non-Catholics.

At the beginning they came in small numbers, seeking to attain positions as merchants. Northeastern Brazil was the nearest point across the Atlantic, and the Moroccan Jews settled mainly in Belém, the capital of the state of Pará, where the Amazon meets the Atlantic Ocean. By 1824 there were enough Moroccan Sephardim in Belém to

found a synagogue, which they named Porta do Ceu (Hebrew: Shaar Hashamayim, "Gate of Heaven").

Migration from Morocco continued at a slow pace until the 1870s. These adventurous merchants preferred northeastern Brazil, and a few went up the Amazon, establishing themselves in the various new towns and cities in the state of Amazonas. Gradually, some made their way to other cities, especially Recife, in the state of Pernambuco, and Rio de Janeiro, the capital.

Thus, in the early 1860s the naturalist Henry W. Bates reported seeing some Moroccan Jews during his exploration of the Amazon River.

> Near Ega we visited a village; several small but navigable streams or inlets here fall into the Ouaray; the land appeared to be of the highest fertility; we crossed a neck of land on foot, from one inlet to another. . . . One of the settlers was a Gibraltar Jew, established there many years, and thoroughly reconciled to the ways of life of the semi-civilized inhabitants. We found him barefoot, with trousers turned up to the knees, busily employed with a number of Indians—men, women and children—shelling and drying cacao, which grows with immense profusion in the neighborhood. . . . This was the only Jew I met with on the upper river. There are several settled at Santarem, Cameta, Para, where on account of their dealings being fairer than those of the Portuguese traders, they do a good trade, and live on friendly terms with the Brazilians.[14]

Many of these merchants succeeded economically. Some went back to their home cities in Morocco to marry and then returned to Brazil, but others intermarried and slowly lost their Jewish identity. In Belém, however, there was a larger concentration of Moroccan Jews. By 1869, it was reported, they still continued to gather for prayers in a private room, where they had three Torah scrolls. They also made collections for charitable institutions in Jerusalem. The Jewish merchants in towns up the Amazon would join the Belém group for the High Holy Days.[15]

Why the Moroccans Emigrated

During the last three decades of the nineteenth century, more considerable numbers of Jews from Morocco made their way to Brazil, Venezuela, and Argentina. Most of them hailed from Tetuán, though a few had lived in the coastal cities of Tangier, Larache, and Casablan-

ca. This emigration was first stimulated by the Spanish-Moroccan war of 1859–60, when Spain set out to conquer Tetuán. The local Jews, who had suffered from pillage and massacres at the hands of their Muslim neighbors on the eve of the Spanish conquest, welcomed the Spaniards as saviors. The Spanish occupation, which lasted two years, was relatively good for the Jews. But with their departure on May 2, 1862, the Moroccan reaction led many of the city's Jews to emigrate.

The majority of the Jews who left Tetuán went to Algeria, especially to the city of Oran, but a growing number went to other areas in Spanish Morocco, including Tangier, Ceuta, and Melilla, while others settled in Gibraltar, Spain, and Portugal. Latin America, and especially Brazil at this early stage, attracted the most adventuresome.[16]

Jewish emigration was more pronounced from the coastal communities of Morocco than from those in the interior. In Meknès and Fez, contact with European culture and commerce was limited, while in Tangier and Tetuán there was constant intercourse with Europe. This induced many, especially the young, to try their fortune in commerce abroad.[17]

There were, moreover, differences between the two larger coastal cities, Tangier and Tetuán, that explain why most of the Moroccan immigrants to Latin America were from Tetuán. The Jews of Tangier, as Michael Laskier described,

> were not as economically impoverished as their counterparts in Tetuán. Even among the poorer segments of the Tangier community, one could engage in commercial activities of this strategic commercial port. . . . In Tetuán, on the other hand, there were hardly any important industries or commercial activities, and local Jews were in fact leaving town.[18]

Poverty, and lack of jobs and opportunities, proved to be the most compelling motivation for seeking amelioration abroad.

The Alliance Israélite Universelle

The creation of Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU) schools in Tetuán (1862) and Tangier (1864) contributed enormously to the development of a new generation of Jews imbued with a spirit of progress.

The AIU schools played a central role in the modernization of the Jewish communities in the coastal cities, much more than in the interior, where the deeply rooted religious traditionalism of the Jews, and the opposition from rabbis and leaders, was much more intense. The AIU graduates spoke Spanish, French, and some English; they had been exposed to European mores, customs, and dress, and were motivated to reap the benefits of modern civilization.

The AIU schools also taught modern crafts and skills, hoping to change the occupational structure of the Jewish communities. However, for the period up to World War I no significant change took place in this area. Most young Moroccan Jews opted for either commerce or emigration as the best alternatives to escape poverty. Those who emigrated were "mainly from Tetuán, Larache and Elksar; some were from Tangier and fewer from Fez and Marrakesh. Many emigrants were in their teens."[19]

Even the graduates of the Alliance schools opted to emigrate due to the sparsity of economic opportunities in their hometowns. According to reports at the AIU, of the 417 graduates of the boys' school in Tetuán between 1862 and 1869, fully 182 emigrated. In other words, 43.6 percent of the school's graduates left the country. Of these, 104 opted for Algeria, 41 for Spain (including Ceuta, Melilla, and the Canary Islands), while 11 went to Brazil.[20] Those settling in Brazil stayed there several years, but many returned with fortunes to Tetuán or moved to other South American countries, due principally to the suffocating heat, yellow fever epidemics, insects, etc.[21] Figures for Tangier for the period 1875–1879 showed a trend of emigration to Algeria, Spain, Portugal and Brazil.[22]

Studies by Robert Ricard, Laskier, and Sara Leibovici indicate that in the 1880s and afterwards, the "emigration trends from the north, particularly from Tetuán, apparently gained additional momentum. . . . Whereas before 1880 more emigrants from Tetuán went to Algeria and Spain, the trend during the 1880's was more towards Latin America."[23] In his report on the AIU schools for 1884–85, David Cazés wrote:

> The school of Tetuán has only worked for export . . . 95 percent of the students emigrate. . . . Today Algeria is not enough for this activity, and they go to Spanish America. There is a large number in Caracas, in Colón, in Panama, in Para-

maribo, in Buenos Aires; some have established themselves in the United States, they are in New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, etc.[24]

The emigrants, as Spanish-speaking Jews, were naturally attracted by countries where their mother tongue, or a very similar one such as Portuguese, was spoken. Most of them were young, "between the ages of twelve and thirty," and were fleeing from the oppressive and sterile atmosphere of the *mellah*, "hoping to progress in new and free countries."[25]

Moroccan Settlements in Brazil

As a result of the rubber boom of the 1870s and afterward, Manaos, farther up the river from Belém, became an important commercial center. Fortunes were made, especially by British and American firms that exploited rubber, sugar, and cacao.

The prospects of rapid prosperity also attracted Jews to Manaos. While some were of Alsatian origin, most were Moroccan, often moving westward from Belém. Some went even farther up the Amazon into the Peruvian Amazonas region. In the 1880s, a substantial number of Jews settled in Iquitos, Peru, and in even smaller towns of the Peruvian forest region such as Yurimaguas, Caballococha, Santa Isabel, and Contamana.[26]

Many of the Sephardim represented Brazilian or European rubber companies. Others owned large stores in the cities and towns. Though their main motivations for living in the Amazon region, far from major cities, were obviously financial, they retained a modest Jewish identity. A correspondent for the *Jewish Chronicle* in London commented ironically in 1910 that the Jews of Iquitos ignored all the festivals except the Day of Atonement. Most did not observe Rosh Hashanah, "nor trouble to procure matzos for Pesach or any other requisites for religious observances."[27] However, they founded Jewish societies, and in Iquitos established a Jewish cemetery. Many of these Sephardic merchants became prominent citizens in their places of residence; some became mayors of their respective towns.[28]

A former teacher at the Alliance Israélite Universelle school in Morocco visited Iquitos in 1910, at the height of its prosperity. He

reported that over 200 graduates of the school were living there, and many of them owned stores. "In Tangier one speaks about Iquitos as a fabulous city, with gold flowing through its streets."

Many of the Moroccan young men, he said, were full of visions of fortunes to be made.

> They do business in everything imaginable . . . English cloth, French novelties, German hardware, American machinery. They travel up the river in canoes or steamboats. . . . It's a hard life. At times they have to spend long months in their canoes, eat only rice and bananas, fight against the caimans, and wait for the Indians to come and buy their merchandise.

With respect to Jewish life, the teacher observed, "they only celebrate Yom Kippur, a day in which most boats are in port and the river is empty." He also noted that some returned to Morocco to marry, or established themselves in France, Spain, or England. "In Lisbon (Portugal) there is a sizable community of former immigrants from Peru and Brazil."[29]

The fall in rubber prices between 1910 and 1912 ruined many of the merchants and left the Amazon region impoverished. Most of its Jews left the area for Latin America's larger cities or even to return to the Old World.

The Moroccan migration continued, however, flowing now to Rio and São Paulo in Brazil, to Caracas in Venezuela, and especially to Argentina. In Caracas the Moroccans constituted the earliest segment of present-day Venezuelan Jewry. In the first few decades they met in private homes for their religious and social needs, but in 1926—now with the addition of Sephardim from the Ottoman Empire—they founded the Sociedad Benéfica Israelita, which in 1930 was renamed Asociación Israelita de Venezuela. In 1944 they built their synagogue in the El Conde section of Caracas.

Argentina

Moroccan Jews began to feel the lure of Argentina in the late 1870s, after the passage of liberal immigration laws in 1876, and additional legislation in the 1880s made the country even more appealing to Jewish immigrants. The impact of the liberal ideas of the eighties

reduced the previously strong Catholic influence in Argentina's social and cultural institutions. After long-debated controversies between clericals and liberals, Congress passed a series of laws that stripped the church of many of its prerogatives. In 1884 the Ley de Educación Común made religious education no longer compulsory, relegating it to parental option, and limiting instruction to before or after class hours in all of the country's public schools. That same year the Civil Registration Law took away from the parishes the duty of registering births, marriages, and deaths. Finally, in 1888, civil marriage was made compulsory.[30]

On arriving in Buenos Aires, the Moroccan Jews found that there was already an existing Jewish society, the Congregación Israelita, founded in 1862 by immigrants from Central and Western Europe. Some of the Moroccans joined this congregation, even attaining positions on its board of directors. Most, however, settled in an area of Buenos Aires just south of the commercial district, where they organized their own societies. By 1891 the Congregación Israelita Latina had been founded, and by 1897 their burial society, Guemilut Hasadim, had acquired a lot for a cemetery just outside the city limits.[31]

From the 1890s until World War I the flow of Jews from Morocco to Argentina continued unabated. With the founding of the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA) and the launching of its agricultural colonies, another type of emigration of Moroccan Jews, more systematic but less numerous, was promoted by the AIU: that of teachers for the colonies' Jewish schools.

In April of 1895, four graduates of the École Normal of Paris left for Argentina.[32] In 1899, the Association des Anciens Élèves de l'Alliance à Tanger reported with elation that the subsidies for emigration to Latin America, usually limited to two people, had been considerably augmented. That year they were able to send twelve young candidates: five to Buenos Aires, two to Caracas, two to Belém, and one each to Maracaibo, Valparaiso, and Iquitos.

Similar efforts were made in Smyrna by an analogous association, which, at its own expense, sent young people who had been educated at the AIU school there and "who do not always find a remunerable job in their own town."[33] By the end of the century there were twenty schools in the JCA colonies, all directed by graduates of AIU schools

in European Turkey, Smyrna, and Morocco. The advantage they had over teachers trained in other countries was their knowledge of Ladino and Spanish, which enabled them to teach the curriculum required by the Argentine education authorities.

The leaders of the AIU actually stimulated emigration from the poverty-stricken communities of Morocco. In their eyes the *oeuvre d'émigration* was justified by both its material and its educational value. Moroccan Jewry, with enormous pockets of misery and deficient education, benefitted from the prosperity that many emigrants attained in Latin America. The AIU, therefore, sought to impart to its students the skills they needed for success abroad.

A movement to encourage some alumni to emigrate to Senegal and Sudan, then under French domination, had little success. Evidently the cultural patterns of Latin America, modeled after those of Spain and Portugal, were more attractive than those of Black Africa.[34] Encouragement, moreover, was forthcoming from those already in Argentina.

Isaac Benchimol, who had been teaching for a number of years at the JCA colony of Mauricio, wrote in 1901 that Jewish emigration to South America was proving to be beneficial to the Jewish population of Tetuán. Letters describing economic success or visits to the city of birth after success had been attained had an impact on those who had not yet moved. They "did away with poverty, lifted morale . . . and developed individual initiative." Benchimol urged the AIU to introduce the teaching of Spanish at its schools in the interior of Morocco, where Jews spoke Arabic. This would provide students with an additional tool in case they contemplated migrating to Latin America, for "Latin America needs hands."[35]

In 1905, according to the calculations of Samuel D. Levy, reporting from Mauricio, there were 3,000 Sephardim in Argentina, 750 of them in Buenos Aires. Almost all were Moroccan, "85 percent . . . Tetuánese, and the rest from Gibraltar, from Tangier on the Moroccan coast, and Turks."[36]

It took most of the Moroccans Jews only a few years to create good economic situations for themselves in Argentina. Far from trying to restrict the immigration of more of their fellow countrymen, they made every effort to bring their families, relatives, and friends over.

Relatives usually stayed with those who had first arrived until they became acquainted with conditions in the new country. After that they would go to a city or town in the interior and establish a branch of the main house in Buenos Aires. An eyewitness reported at the turn of the century that "some Moroccan merchants [are] established in Buenos Aires and [have] up to five, six, and even eight branches of their business in the main centers of the Republic."[37]

A census conducted by Rabbi Samuel Halphon in 1909 confirms this. In the town of Villaguay, Entre Ríos province, there were only twelve Jews: a Russian family of six, five young men from Tetuán, and a widow who was also from Tetuán. The five Tetuanese men were managers of branch stores of firms owned by compatriots in Buenos Aires. The owners had become rich selling fabrics, linens, and clothing and were now wholesalers.

In the town of Gualeguaychu, in the same province, Halphon noted the presence of three Russian Jewish families, one French family, and five single Moroccan Jews. A decade earlier there had been some other Moroccan Jews, but they had left for Buenos Aires. Others came later and in turn left, to be replaced by more recent arrivals from Morocco: "It's a chain without end."[38]

Halphon's study also shows that Moroccans were the first Jewish settlers in many cities of the interior; some established themselves as early as the 1880s, though the majority arrived later.[39] Moroccan Jews began settling in the city of Santa Fé in the 1880s. Although they remained a small community (eleven families, totaling seventy-nine people, in 1909), they had acquired a cemetery by 1895.

Moroccan Jews also established themselves in rural towns along the railroad line west of Santa Fé, from La Sabana to Calchaqui. Halphon counted sixty-two families and ninety-six single persons for a total of 358 Moroccan Jews in these country towns. They ran general stores selling fabrics, haberdashery, shoes, and the like. Their knowledge of Spanish contributed to their commercial success, but, Halphon noted, while almost all were graduates of AIU schools, they lived in close contact with their Argentine countrymen and ended up abandoning many religious practices. For circumcisions and Passover needs, however, they resorted to the Jewish community of Santa Fé. They also buried their dead there.

In the final decades of the nineteenth century, Moroccan Jews settled in the towns of Villa María and Rio Cuarto, both in Córdoba province, and in Villa Mercedes and San Luis, both in San Luis province, as well as farther west in Mendoza.[40]

From the sources cited, as well as from documentation available in the archives of the Congregación Israelita Latina and Ets Ajaim in Rosário (also Moroccan), we infer that Moroccans moved into the interior of Argentina in larger proportions than did other Jewish immigrants.

In the interbellum period there was constant immigration of Jews from Tetuán and other areas of Morocco, though in more limited numbers than Eastern European Jews. An indication that the absolute numbers of Jews arriving from Morocco was dwindling is given by the 1936 Buenos Aires census. It showed just 420 persons born in Morocco, Spain, Tangier, Algeria, Gibraltar, Portugal, and Tunis who declared themselves to be Jewish. All the rest of the Moroccan community, numbering in the thousands, had been born in Argentina, some to Argentine parents. That the immigration of families with small children was almost nil is indicated by the fact that only five of the foreign-born Moroccan Jews were under the age of fifteen.[41]

For a few Moroccan Jews, emigration to Argentina was only temporary. They returned home after achieving economic stability, in some cases within ten years but sometimes as much as thirty. Many of the returnees had become Argentine citizens because an Argentine passport provided some protection in unstable Morocco. Thus, in 1927, seventy-nine of the ninety-five Argentines under the protection of the Argentine consul general in Rabat (i.e., 83 percent) were naturalized citizens who had been born in Morocco.[42] Indeed, even Jacob Bibas, the Argentine vice-consul in Spanish Morocco in 1935, had been born in Tangier and then lived in Rosário, province of Santa Fé, where he was active in local Jewish organizations.[43]

Jews from the Ottoman Empire

In addition to the Moroccan emigration, a second Sephardic migration developed from the Ottoman Empire toward the end of the nineteenth century. The financial debacle of the empire left a strong imprint on all

elements of its population, Jews included. Many communities, lacking mineral wealth and industrial development, suffered grave impoverishment and were constantly threatened with overpopulation. Christians and Muslims were the first to leave, followed by the Jews. The emigrants from Beirut, Aleppo, Damascus, Istanbul, and Smyrna went to Egypt, Western Europe, and the United States, but also to several of the Latin American republics.[44]

Jews began to emigrate from the Ottoman Empire at the end of the nineteenth century. Egypt was the initial destination; from there a small number moved to Palestine, but most opted for the New World. Economic factors were the main impulse. The small communities in southeastern Turkey, as well as the large centers of Damascus and Aleppo in Syria, suffered from the diversion of international commerce to the newly opened Suez Canal and the subsequent demise of the caravan trade through their own regions.[45] Jews from Aleppo and Damascus in particular, who had previously represented English companies trading in cotton and woolen cloth, went to Manchester, starting in the nineteenth century, and remained there as merchants dealing in these commodities. The Syrian Jews in Manchester stayed in touch with the numerous new communities of compatriots mushrooming in America, especially in New York (Brooklyn) and Buenos Aires.[46]

During the first decades of the twentieth century, Jews left Ottoman territories in larger numbers. Two factors weighed heavily with them: letters from earlier emigrants enthusiastically describing life in the various Latin American countries, including their liberal laws and economic possibilities, and the 1908 revolution of the Young Turks. Aimed at securing constitutional government, the revolution paradoxically worked hardship on Jews and Christians by introducing compulsory military service.

Until that time, Jews and Christians had paid a special exemption tax to avoid conscription. Because serving in the army added to the difficulty of supporting a family and interfered with strict religious observance, escaping the draft became a force propelling Jews out of the empire.[47] Nevertheless, many Jews did serve during the Balkan wars and World War I. Though some served with distinction and many died, many more deserted after the collapse of the empire and sought to migrate.

The hardships wrought by the wars and the resulting political changes were also a major factor in emigration decisions. Some Jewish communities were more directly affected than others. The city of Adrianople, on the border of Turkey, Greece, and Bulgaria, suffered especially from the fighting. The resulting political instability there and the rule of the Greeks in many other cities of western Turkey—Smyrna in particular—led to the flight of thousands of Jews, many of whom migrated to Latin America, especially Argentina.[48]

Most Ottoman Jewish immigrants to Latin America settled in Buenos Aires. People originating in the same city tended to stay together, forming nuclei resembling their home communities. At the turn of the century, Ladino-speaking Jews from Smyrna, Constantinople, and other areas settled along the streets 25 de Mayo and Reconquista, not far from the port. By 1904 they were numerous enough to found their first charitable society, the Hermandad. That same year, a recently arrived Jew from Aleppo wrote to his family that he had found many acquaintances from his hometown. They took rooms in the Once district, still a center of Aleppine Jewish life. Damascene Jews arriving in Buenos Aires during the same period settled in the area of Boca and Barracas, a populous zone of predominantly Italian (especially Genoese) immigrants.

Old World ties thus proved important in determining patterns of settlement among Sephardic Jews, as they were for other immigrant groups.[49] Argentina, and in particular Buenos Aires, was always considered to be a major possibility when a Jew was choosing a destination. Ezra Garazi, who settled in New York in 1911, confirmed this when he reminisced, "I chose New York because it was reported that to peddle in Argentina one had to carry a heavier satchel than in New York."[50]

The first young men to arrive from Ottoman territories clearly intended to return home once they had earned enough money to live comfortably. The desire to reintegrate themselves into the closely knit family and community life of their early years weighed heavily on them. They were not *golondrinas*—southern European (mostly Italian) seasonal farm workers who came to Argentina each year to harvest the crops and then returned to their homes in Europe.[51] Turkish and Syrian Jews had other ways of making a living in mind—as businessmen.

For most, however, the process of capital accumulation took years because they started at the bottom, peddling in the streets of Buenos Aires or the interior towns. With heavy loads of cloth and other types of merchandise they made their rounds all day long. A few could not endure the effort, and their longing for family and friends impelled them to sail home.[52] But the majority stayed. Nissim Teubal, who left Aleppo in 1906 at the age of fifteen to join his brother Ezra in Buenos Aires, wrote in his memoirs:

> In the vicinity of Buenos Aires, I made a kind of covenant with myself. When I have earned my first 300 pounds, I said to myself, I shall return to Aleppo, and in Aleppo I will be considered a Croesus. . . . But when Buenos Aires came into sight, I increased the sum. Three hundred pounds was too little. I would wait until I had five hundred. The sum continued growing. I needed more and more. Mad with enthusiasm and ambition, I said to myself that I would not return to Aleppo other than with a real fortune.[53]

But Nissim and his brother never returned to Aleppo. In 1910 they brought their parents, brothers, and sisters to Buenos Aires. So it was with most of the Ottoman Jews. The revolt of the Young Turks, the Balkan wars, and finally World War I, with the disruption of transatlantic travel and the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, produced a radical change in the mentality of the Jewish emigrants. They now left for the Americas intending to make their permanent homes there. Those who went to Argentina had ample knowledge of conditions in the country. Many already had relatives and friends there; they were assured of jobs until they could start their own businesses.

Patterns of Organizational and Social Life

The Old World ties of Buenos Aires Sephardim still constituted a paramount factor in determining their patterns of settlement, and they continued to live in clusters based on cities or areas of origin. When they moved, they did so in chain migrations: Turkish Jews moved from Centro near the port to Villa Crespo; Damascene Jews moved in clusters from Boca-Barracas to Flores and Belgrano; Aleppine Jews settled in Ciudadela.[54]

By organizing separate mutual-aid societies, the Damascene, Aleppine, Turkish, and Moroccan Jews accentuated their separateness. The Turkish Jews organized a *kehillah*, or community, in March 1919, which centralized all their educational, religious, and welfare activities. Two years later, they expanded their charitable activities to provide the poor with the essentials for the Jewish holidays and medical services.

Typically, burial societies were independent of synagogues and schools, though the members and even officials of these institutions overlapped. The burial societies had a mutual-aid character, providing widows and orphans with a fixed stipend on the death of the head of family. In addition, friendship circles were created in many neighborhoods to provide for poor members in need.[55]

Although the distance between Ashkenazic and Sephardic immigrants in Buenos Aires is easily explained by their differing backgrounds, languages, traditions, and attitudes, the factors that caused the various Sephardic groups to remain apart from one another are more subtle. There were, for one thing, language differences. Traditions also differed. The two Syrian communities were estranged before coming to Argentina.[56]

Attachment to religion varied from one community to the other, Syrians being the most fervent believers, the Moroccans the most liberal. Further, each group settled in a different neighborhood, and most of their members worked nearby; their societies, quite understandably, were based in these neighborhoods, thus limiting the possibilities for socializing with members of other Sephardic groups. Finally, their strong emotional ties to their native communities prevented them from considering the benefits of stronger all-Sephardic societies.[57]

The Sephardic societies bear some resemblance to the landsmanshaften founded by Ashkenazim on the basis of common origin in the same town or area. However, the differences outweigh the similarities. The landsmanshaftn, which arose by the dozen in Buenos Aires during the World War I period and the 1920s, built a social atmosphere for immigrants from a specific area of origin in Poland, Galicia, Romania, or Bessarabia. But their main object was to facilitate the economic absorption of the immigrants. Members could borrow from the landsmanshaft, and because of its mutual-aid feature, their families had support in case of sickness, death, or unemployment. These

funds, as well as others established in many Jewish neighborhoods, paved the way for the formation of hundreds of credit cooperatives, which began during the 1920s and survived for four decades. Whereas the Ashkenazic landsmanshaftn had a secular orientation, aiding members to establish themselves firmly, the Sephardic organizations were charitable in their approach.[58]

Other Latin American Countries

A similar pattern is evident in other major Latin American centers, such as Mexico City, Rio, and São Paulo. In these cities separate synagogues and schools were founded by the various immigrant Ottoman Jews. Mexican Jewry before World War I remained very small, but was made up of Jews from all parts of Europe and the Ottoman Empire. In 1912, under the initiative of a Greek Jew, Aaron Capon, a group of Jews of diverse origins founded Monte Sinai. By the end of World War I, however, this society came to be known as the general Sephardic synagogue, with a membership that included Balkan, Syrian, Turkish, and North African Jews. When the United States established immigration quotas in the 1920s, Jews who could not obtain visas opted to settle in Mexico or Cuba first with the goal of eventually moving north. Most remained in Mexico and Cuba, especially once they had succeeded economically. The Sephardim in Mexico were now numerous enough to have their own separate institutions. Thus the Aleppine group founded Sedaka Umarpe around 1931, and Ladino-speaking Jews from Turkey and Greece founded La Unión Sefaradí in 1924. Then Monte Sinai gradually became the congregation of the Jews from Damascus.

The Sephardim of Cuba founded Shebet Ajim in 1914. It remained their main community until the Castro revolution. After that about 90 percent of the Jews left, most to southern Florida, where they founded two "Cuban" congregations, one Sephardi and one Ashkenazi.

In smaller communities integration of all Jews was a necessity. Thus in Lima, when the first Sephardim from overseas arrived during the first two decades of the twentieth century, they quite naturally joined the Sociedad de Beneficencia Israelita, since it was already organized for religious services and owned a cemetery, Moreover,

there was a common language, since the descendants of the original German immigrants spoke Spanish, while most Sephardim spoke Spanish or Ladino. In addition, Dr. David Senior de Castro, a Sephardi, was the "spiritual leader." By 1925 there were enough Sephardim in Lima to found the Sociedad de Beneficencia Israelita Sefardita, comprising Jews of varied Sephardic origins.[59]

Likewise, in Caracas, after some decades of growth, the Sephardic population was able to found the Asociación Israelita de Venezuela in 1930. The majority of its members were of Moroccan origin, but Jews from the Ottoman Empire joined as well.

Other medium-sized Jewish communities organized in similar ways. Both in Montevideo, Uruguay, and Santiago, Chile, Jews first organized by place of origin. Early in their development, separate communities of East European, Hungarian, German, and Sephardic Jews came into being. In both cities, the Sephardic community encompassed descendants of immigrants from all the Sephardic regions of the Old World.

In Chile, however, there was an interesting deviation from the general pattern. The first Sephardim did not go to Santiago, the capital and largest city, nor even to Valparaiso, its main port, but to Temuco, a developing town in the south of Chile. And almost all came from one city in Europe, Monastir (Bitoli), in Macedonia.

The exodus from Monastir began after the great fire of 1863 destroyed over 1,000 Jewish homes. Most of the city's Jews went to other parts of Yugoslavia, but some ventured to the United States or to Argentina, especially after railroad service between Monastir and Salonika was inaugurated in 1890, thus facilitating access to a port city.

The connection between Monastir and Temuco began in 1900, when Alberto Levy left Monastir and, after attempting to settle elsewhere in Europe, went to Argentina. From there he crossed the Andes to Santiago and found employment as a tailor in Temuco, a frontier town recently conquered from the Araucanian Indians. He wrote home of his success, and on the strength of his reports emigrating families from Monastir made Temuco their destination.

Thus, the newcomers had a strong common heritage in addition to close commercial and family links. In 1916 they formed their first organization, which they called Centro Macedónico. When news of

the Balfour Declaration reached this remote community, their enthusiasm and Jewish pride were enhanced. In 1919 they officially changed their name to Centro Macedónico Israelita. In 1928 they became the Comunidad Israelita de Temuco, clearly asserting their Jewish identity.[60]

Starting in the 1920s and gradually in later decades, most of the Sephardim of Temuco moved to Santiago and Valparaiso, where they joined others who had migrated from Smyrna, Istanbul, and Salonika, as well as Monastir and other areas in the Sephardic world.

Later Newcomers

Jewish migrations to Latin America dwindled during the 1930s and afterward, for the world economic crisis and growing nationalist sentiments led to the closing of the doors of immigration throughout the Western Hemisphere. Nevertheless, small numbers of Jews managed to find a haven in Latin America during the Holocaust years. Few Sephardim arrived during this period or the ensuing decades, however, the only exception occurring in the aftermath of the Sinai Campaign of 1956 and the drastic political developments in Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia around the same time.

At the time of Israel's War of Independence in 1948, there were about 80,000 Jews in Egypt, mostly in Cairo and Alexandria. Between May 1948 and January 1950, over 20,000 of them left, mainly going to Israel. Some, however, went to France, Italy, Switzerland, or Latin America.[61] The situation of Egyptian Jewry had totally deteriorated by November 1956. Once again, most made their way to Israel, but others opted for countries in the Diaspora. By 1960, there were only 8,000 to 10,000 Jews left in Egypt, and by 1967, only 2,500. Again, most moved to Israel, but a substantial number were helped by HIAS to resettle in the United States, Australia, Canada, and Latin America.

Between 1956 and 1963, however, 4,202 Egyptian Jews migrated to Latin America. The vast majority went to Brazil, mostly settling in Rio and São Paulo, but also in the secondary communities of Porto Alegre, Curitiba, Belo Horizonte, and Petropolis. A few went to Montevideo, Santiago (Chile), Caracas, and Buenos Aires. The chief rabbi

of Alexandria, Aaron Angel, arrived in Buenos Aires in 1958, where he became the spiritual leader of the Balkan Sephardic community.[62]

Brazil also absorbed a relatively large number of Jewish families from North Africa during these years. This was due to the liberal immigration policy, favorable to admitting refugees, that was adopted by President Juscelino Kubitschek and continued by subsequent administrations. Thus for the period 1955–57, about 1,000 Jewish families from Morocco were allowed to enter in groups of fifty and to settle away from the large cities. In later years additional Moroccan Jews settled in Brazil.[63]

Sephardim and Ashkenazim: Subgroup Identities in Decline

We have already stressed that the cosmopolitan character of Jewish migration to Latin America facilitated the creation of separate institutions by the different groups along lines of place of provenance. This was more accentuated in the larger communities. But with the passing of more than half a century, the differences have become less significant, and an overall identification as Jews and with Judaism in the most inclusive sense has become more prevalent. This decline in subgroup identities can be seen throughout the continent, and in all aspects of Jewish life, including religious practices, Zionist activities, and Jewish education and culture.

The Sephardic immigrants, by and large, preserved stronger links with religious practices than the Ashkenazim. Quite naturally, there were differences among the various Sephardic communities of origin. The Syrian Jewish communities in Latin America had the strongest attachment to religious values. Their respective religious schools emphasized the teaching of Jewish observances and customs. In Buenos Aires, where the largest concentration of Syrians had settled, a strong rabbinic presence was established as early as 1912 with the arrival of Hacham Shaul Setton to lead the local Aleppine community. A recognized authority on Jewish law, Setton was respected in his home community of Aleppo and had the support of the chief rabbis of Palestine for his responsa.

The Ladino-speaking Jews from the Balkans, though Orthodox as well, were not as staunchly observant as the Syrians. Their knowledge

of the Spanish language, and its great affinity with Portuguese, made their adaptation to Latin American mores much easier. The Moroccan Jews underwent the most rapid assimilation in Latin America.[64]

The second and third generations of Sephardic Jews were less observant. In addition, while Sephardic synagogues might retain traditional rituals, Sephardic Jews now often married Ashkenazim or even non-Jews. As a result, membership in a Sephardic or Ashkenazic synagogue did not necessarily indicate one's ethnic identity. Moreover with the proliferation of Conservative and Reform congregations, the Ashkenazi and Sephardi subgroup identities were diluted even more.

The Jewish press played an enormous role among Ashkenazic immigrants to Latin America, but had less influence among Sephardim. A number of Yiddish-language daily newspapers, as well as dozens of weeklies and monthlies, advocated every social, political, or cultural viewpoint, inundating the neighborhoods where East European Jews lived.

The local Yiddish press had more readers than there were members of Ashkenazic mutual-aid societies. Tens of thousands of immigrants throughout the continent used the Yiddish papers to search for job opportunities, social news, advice on how to survive in their new countries, guidance in understanding and adjusting to the wider community, information on local politics, economics, and social conditions, and news about Old World Jewish communities. The Yiddish press was a helpful tool in the search for "missing" husbands and fathers who had migrated to Latin America and had, for one reason or another, severed contact with their families in Europe.

Moreover, Yiddish newspapers launched crusades for or against specific issues. In Argentine there were diatribes concerning the local Yiddish theater and the involvement in it of Jewish white-slave dealers; the *kehillah* form of community organization versus an *alianza*, or federation; and such issues as whether to support or boycott Jewish colonization in Birobidzhan or in Palestine.

Before the Nazi era Sephardim did not participate in these controversies. Their concerns centered on earning a living and abiding as much as possible within traditional religious and cultural values, with little or no involvement in politics. In general terms, they were

lukewarm to Zionism but very solicitous about helping their Jewish compatriots.

In the absence of specifically Sephardic newspapers, the Sephardim read the general press. Only in 1917 was a Sephardic newspaper, *Israel*, founded. It carried articles and notes about Sephardim, mainly about the Moroccan Jews of Buenos Aires. Correspondents in the interior of Argentina and neighboring countries contributed additional information.

The pro-Zionist leanings of *Israel* were atypical of Sephardim in Buenos Aires until 1930, when a new journal, *La Luz*, was initiated, raising the level of Sephardic journalism in Buenos Aires and throughout Latin America.[65] Finally, in 1984, the Federación Sefaradí Latinoamérica (Fesela), an umbrella organization of Latin American Sephardic institutions, founded in 1972, began publishing *Sefárdica*, a periodical that aims to promote research in Sephardic culture and make it available to the learned public.[66]

By 1991 the Latin American Yiddish press had lost its former luster. All Jewish communal publications are now either in Spanish or Portuguese, thus erasing a major element of subgroup cultural separateness.

It took much longer for the Sephardim in Latin America to warm up to Zionism than for their Ashkenazi neighbors. In several communities there was a short-lived sprouting of national feeling after the Balfour Declaration in 1917. It was evident among various Sephardic groups in Buenos Aires, but also in Temuco, as noted earlier, and in Santiago, Chile, and Montevideo, Uruguay, where only a small number of Sephardim lived at the time.[67] Though the local Zionist organizations, especially the Zionist Federation in Argentina, urged Sephardim to participate in the promotion of Zionist aims, their involvement in local or regional Zionist congresses or meetings was very low. The main obstacle in the early decades was one of language, since most Zionist activists spoke Yiddish.[68] In addition, many Sephardim were simply not interested, since they were convinced that Zionism was an endeavor promoted by East European Jews and geared solely to their needs. Others, especially the Syrian Jews, were opposed to political Zionism on religious grounds. Moreover, the factionalism created by the Zionist

political parties was foreign to the Sephardim, who had difficulty understanding their existence in the Diaspora.[69]

The World Zionist Organization, nevertheless, sent a special delegate, Dr. Ariel Bensión, a Sephardi himself, to visit the Sephardic communities of Latin America in 1926. Bensión succeeded in establishing Sephardic Zionist committees, denominated Bené Kedem, in many of the larger communities and some of the secondary ones. These were independent of the regular Zionist organizations led by the Ashkenazim. The success, however, was only temporary.[70]

In Argentina, some fruits would be seen by 1929, when Sephardim made generous contributions to the special campaign launched as a result of the riots in Palestine. In the 1930s, with the rise of Nazism, and especially during the Holocaust and the subsequent creation of the State of Israel, more Sephardim adopted the Zionist cause. In many communities Sephardim had special activities geared to their own members, but as time passed, an amalgamation of efforts took place. During the last few decades many Sephardic leaders have attained positions of top leadership in the Zionist organizations of the various countries.[71]

In the field of Jewish education in the early decades, the different Jewish subgroups promoted their own schools in order to instruct their young in accordance with their particular traditions. Among Ashkenazi Jews there were schools that transmitted a definite political ideology, sometimes Zionist, at times totally anti-Zionist. The language of instruction was Yiddish. Sephardic schools emphasized Hebrew early on. Some Syrian schools even taught Arabic.

In general terms, the Sephardic schools have tended to be more oriented to religion, more inward looking, and more conservative.[72] In many instances, both Ashkenazi and Sephardi schools now have mixed enrollments, especially in communities too small to support more than one school. Moreover, since Yiddish has been replaced by Hebrew in the Ashkenazi schools, major subgroup identities have become much less protected. The protection of the wider group identity of Judaism is a sufficient challenge.

Finally, a major aspect of Jewish life in Latin America is the sports club. Huge institutions congregate tens of thousands of members in almost all sizable communities. In some, there are separate Sephardic

clubs, but in this sphere too, as a general rule, the barriers between Ashkenazi and Sephardi have all but disappeared.

Neosefardismo!

In 1984, after many years of major negotiations, the Ashkenazi and Sephardi communities in Caracas agreed to combine efforts for the benefit of the whole Jewish populace, and in particular to strengthen Jewish education in the city. The words of one of the leaders at the signing ceremony apply not only Venezuela but to the whole Latin American continent:

> There is practically no Jewish family in Venezuela from either of the two kehillot that has not received a member of the other in its midst, attaining in this way the joining of all the branches in a progressively stronger trunk.[73]

Many changes have taken place. In the early decades of the century, Sephardic institutions discriminated not only against Ashkenazim, but also against Sephardim of different origins. Even in faraway Temuco, in southern Chile, the Centro Macedonico Israelita established higher "joining" fees for Ashkenazim, and only granted them "passive" membership, without the right to speak or vote at meeting.[74] Seven decades later, the vestiges of separateness find expression only in terms of nostalgia by the old-timers or in order to preserve a rich heritage on the verge of disappearance.

No Latin American Jew wants to return to the "old country," whether Russia, Poland, Syria, Turkey, or Morocco. Raised as citizens of their countries of birth, with strong links to the national culture, history, and destiny of these countries, the Jews of Latin America express themselves in Spanish and Portuguese, totally at home in their respective milieus. They speak about local authors and matters of regional concern, and, at the same time, contribute, as professionals or businessmen, to the economic and intellectual development of their countries.

In many respects, the Jews of Latin America, whether of Sephardic, Ashkenazic, or mixed descent, are *Latin American* Jews. Itic Croitoru Rotbaum has called them *Neosefardita* because their present origin is in

the land of New Spain, or New Iberia, or *Neosefarad*. From this point of view, we might conclude that the strength of the Iberian culture and languages in Latin America has given the Sephardic tradition a somewhat more lasting strength in an area of the world where Sephardim represented 15 to 20 percent of the whole Jewish population.[75]

Notes

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3. Isidoro Aizenberg, *La Comunidad Judía de Coro, 1824–1900: Una Historia* (Caracas, 1983), pp. 33–92.

4. Ibid., pp. 99–105.

5. Frances P. Karner, *The Sephardics of Curaçao* (Assen, 1969), pp. 29 f.

6. Aizenberg, "Efforts to Establish a Jewish Cemetery," pp. 226–230.

7. Emmanuel and Emmanuel, *History of the Jews in the Netherlands Antilles*, pp. 167–168.

8. Karner, *Sephardics of Curaçao*, pp. 14, 30.

9. Eliseo Reclus, *Viaje a la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta* (Bogota, 1947), p. 38, as quoted in Itic Croitoru Rotbaum, *De Sefarad al Neosefardismo* (Bogota, 1967), pp. 168 f.

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11. Jacobo Schifter Sikora, Lowell Gudmundson, and Mario Solera Castro, *El Judío en Costa Rica* (San Jose, 1979), p. 251.

12. Lowell Gudmundson, "Costa Rican Jewry: An Economic and Political Outline," in *The Jewish Presence in Latin America*, ed. Judith Laikin Elkin and Gilbert W. Merckx (Boston, 1987), p. 220, n. 3.

13. Gunter Bohm, *Judíos en el Perú durante el Siglo XIX* (Santiago, 1985), pp. 86, 123 f., 142 f.; and Trahtemberg Siederer, *La Inmigración Judía al Perú, 1848–1948* (Lima, 1987), pp. 85, 114 f.

14. Henry W. Bates, *The Naturalist on the River Amazon* (1864), vol. 2, p. 175, as quoted in *Jewish Chronicle*, Feb. 26, 1864, p. 2.

15. *Jewish Chronicle*, Sept. 3, 1869, p. 11.

16. Sarah Leibovici, "Tétouan: une communauté écclatée," *Nouveaux Cahiers* 59 (Winter 1979–80): 13 f.; Isaac Benchimol, "La langue espagnole au Maroc," *Revue des Ecoles de l'Alliance Israélite* 2 (July–September 1901): 127.

17. Michael Laskier, *The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Jewish Communities of Morocco, 1862–1962* (New York, 1983), p. 86.

18. Ibid., p. 64.

19. Ibid., p. 133.

20. Ibid., p. 134; see also Leibovici, "Tétouan," p. 16.

21. Robert Ricard, "Notes sur l'emigration des Israélites marocaines en Amérique espagnole et au Brésil," *Revue Africaine* 88, nos. 1–2 (1944): 84 f.

22. Laskier, *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, p. 135.

23. Ibid., pp. 135 f.

24. David Cazés, "Rapport sur les écoles de l'alliance de Tanger et de Tetuán," *Bulletin de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle*, 1884–85, p. 52.

25. *Association des anciens élèves de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle, Bulletin Annuel* (Tangier) 8 (1900): 13–17; Ricard, "Notes sur l'emigration des Israélites marocaines," p. 84. For Larache, see Eugene Aubin, *Le Maroc d'aujourd'hui*, 6th ed. (Paris, 1910), p. 91, where he asserts: "Parmi le juifs, quelques negociants et beaucoup d'artisans; un movement d'émigration vera l'Amérique du Sud commence à se dessiner dans la communauté qui est pauvre et peu organisée." For further details, see Victor A. Mirelman, "Sephardic Immigration to Argentina Prior to the Nazi Period," in Elkin and Merkx, *Jewish Presence in Latin America*, pp. 13–24.

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27. *Jewish Chronicle*, Oct. 21, 1910, p. 9.

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45. Hayyim J. Cohen, *The Jews of the Middle East, 1860–1972* (Jerusalem, 1973), pp. 76, 99 f.

46. Joseph A. D. Sutton, *Magic Carpet: Aleppo-in-Flatbush* (New York, 1979), p. 5

47. Pool, "Levantine Jews in the United States," p. 209; Zenner, "Syrian Jewish Identification," pp. 53 f.; Hitti, *Syrians in America*, p. 51. During World War I many Jews served in the Turkish army.

48. Cohen, *Jews of the Middle East*, pp. 76, 97.

49. Mirelman, "Sephardic Immigration," pp. 25–27.

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51. Robert Foerster, *The Italian Migration of Our Times* (Cambridge, Mass., 1924), pp. 261 f.

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53. Ibid., p. 75.

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55. Mirelman, "Sephardic Immigration," pp. 29 f.; Margalit Bejarano, "El cementerio y la unidad comunitaria en la historia de los Sefaradim de Buenos Aires," *Michael* 8 (1983): 24–31.

56. Zenner, "Syrian Jewish Immigration," p. 17; Cohen, *Jews of the Middle East*, passim.

57. In 1905 the Moroccans were the only group with a cemetery of their own. However, they would not admit other Jews. Their burial society decided that "all members who are not descendants of South European [i.e., Spanish and especially Gibraltan] or North African parents shall enjoy all rights . . . except that of burial." Hesed Veemet, *Minutes*, 31 July 1905.

58. On Landsmanshaftn in Argentina, see L. Zitnitsky, "Landsmanshaften in Argentine," *Argentiner IWO Shriftn* 3 (1945): 155–161; Pinie Katz, *Yiddn in Argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1946), *Poilishe Yiddn in Dorem Amerika* (Buenos Aires, 1941); *Gilitziener Yiddn, Yoblbuch, 1925–1965* (Buenos Aires, 1966).

59. Trahtemberg Siederer, *La Inmigracion Judía al Perú*, pp. 111 f.

60. Moshe Nes-El (Arueste), *Historia de la Comunidad Israelita Sefaradí de Chile* (Santiago, 1984), pp. 43–54; Uri Oren, *A Town Called Monastir* (Tel Aviv, 1971), passim.

61. Michael Laskier, "Yahadut Mitzraim biTkufat Mishtaro shel Nasser (1956–1970)," *Mikedem Umiyam* (Haifa), 3 (1990): 216.

62. Ibid., pp. 226–231.

63. *American Jewish Yearbook* 59 (1958): 408 f.; 62 (1961): 218; and 64 (1963): 283.

64. Mirelman, *Jewish Buenos Aires*, p. 99. Cf. Shaul Setton Dabbah, *Dibber Shaul* (Jerusalem 1920).

65. Victor A. Mirelman, "Early Zionist Activities among Sephardim in Argentina," *American Jewish Archives* 34, no. 2 (November 1982): 190–205.

66. *Sefárdica* 1, no. 1 (March 1984).

67. Mirelman, "Early Zionist Activities," pp. 193 f.; Nes-El, *Historia de la Comunidad Israelita*, pp. 143–145; Haim Avni and Rosa Perla Raicher, eds., *Memorias del Uruguay: holocausto y lucha por fundación del Estado de Israel* (Jerusalem, 1986), pp. 38, 87.

68. Mirelman, "Early Zionist Activities," p. 199; Nes-El, *Historia de la Comunidad Israelita*, p. 145.

69. David Elnecave, "Los Sefaradim en el Mundo y en la Argentina." *Sefárdica* 1, no. 1 (March 1984): 105.

70. Nes-El, *Historia de la Comunidad Israelita*, pp. 147 f.; Mirelman, "Early Zionist Activities," pp. 199–201.

71. Avni and Raicher, *Memorias del Uruguay*, pp. 49 f.

72. Daniel C. Levy, "Jewish Education in Latin America," in Elkin and Merkx, *Jewish Presence in Latin America*, p. 182.

73. "Testimonios para la historia," *Escudo (Maguen)*, Caracas, 53 (October–December 1984): 13.

74. Nes-El, *Historia de la Comunidad Israelita*, p. 280.

75. Croitoru Rotbaum, *De Sefarad al Neosefardismo*, pp. 191–194.