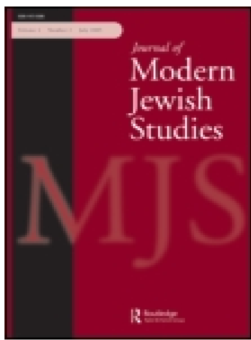

Journal of Modern Jewish Studies

ISSN: 1472-5886 (Print) 1472-5894 (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cmjs20

THE MIGRATIONS OF MOROCCAN JEWS TO MONTREAL: MEMORY, (ORAL) HISTORY AND HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Yolande Cohen

To cite this article: Yolande Cohen (2011) THE MIGRATIONS OF MOROCCAN JEWS TO MONTREAL: MEMORY, (ORAL) HISTORY AND HISTORICAL NARRATIVE, Journal of Modern Jewish Studies, 10:2, 245-262, DOI: 10.1080/14725886.2011.580984

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/14725886.2011.580984

Published online: 01 Aug 2011.

Submit your article to this journal

Article views: 253

View related articles

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?journalCode=cmjs20

Yolande Cohen

THE MIGRATIONS OF MOROCCAN JEWS TO MONTREAL: MEMORY, (ORAL) HISTORY AND HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Among the masses of migrant populations driven to leave their countries against the backdrop of European decolonialization, North African Jews occupy a special place. Within several competing versions of the history of Moroccan Jews, recent historiographical debates reveal the political and memorial importance that this history represents for its various participants. Because the boundaries of memory are unstable, this article aims at understanding the interactions between memory and history. It outlines, first, the historical and historiographical context and presents the results of two oral history surveys, one conducted in the 1980s (N = 27 in 1984–1986), the other more recently (N = 15 in 2009–2010), and which draw upon a collection of life stories of men and women who left Morocco and went to Montreal in the 1980s and 1990s. It presents their answers to the questions of the circumstances under which these migrations took place and their memories of them today. These stories could then be transcribed and transmitted within a narrative that embodies both its historical meaning and their memory of it. Within this coping system, which denies the trauma associated with their departure en masse from Morocco, the interviewees hope to be considered as full members of the Sephardi diaspora and as Quebec citizens.

Post-colonial migrations give us an insight into national and community reconstructions based on the particular positioning of migrants as they arrive in their new host country. Such is the case with North African migrations, which led Christians (who were for the most part, but not exclusively, repatriates and *Pieds-Noirs* from Algeria), Muslims and Jews to leave colonial and national areas to regroup in towns in mainland France, then later in Canada and elsewhere in the West. Since these transnational migrants at first maintain the particular characteristics of their country of origin, the phenomenon must be studied longitudinally, from their departure to their arrival. In this way it becomes possible to identify the processes at work and to analyze closely the various reconfigurations that these migrations bring about.

Among the masses of migrant populations driven to leave their countries against the backdrop of European decolonialization, North African Jews occupy a special place.[1] Several studies have examined the conditions under which these populations migrated.[2] Nonetheless, historians do not agree on the reasons that motivated Jews leaving North Africa (and Morocco in particular), and which led to the near-total disappearance of those two-millenia-old Jewish communities from Islamic countries. For some, this was a veritable displacement of peoples carried out by Israeli Zionist organizations in

Journal of Modern Jewish Studies Vol 10, No. 2 July 2011, pp. 245–262
ISSN 1472-5886 print/ISSN 1472-5894 online © 2011 Taylor & Francis
http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals DOI: 10.1080/14725886.2011.580984
Routledge Taylor & Francis Group

need of manpower to populate their new country.[3] For other scholars, it was an exodus, undeniably encouraged by international Zionist organizations, but with its roots in the desire of Jews themselves to escape the humiliations and atrocities committed against them in the name of the *dhimma*.[4] Still other historians see these migrations as part of a period of mass post-colonial, post-Holocaust migrations, radically transforming the complex relationships between the various ethnic and religious groups in these countries.

There are, then, several competing versions of the history of Moroccan Jews, stretching from ancient times to the present day. Onto them are projected the interpretations that spring from the particular present moment, a moment that resembles an exodus and that marks the end of this Jewish presence in Morocco. In fact, what these recent historiographical debates reveal is the political and memorial importance that this history represents for its various participants. Because the boundaries of memory are unstable, I shall try to apprehend the interactions between memory and history.

I shall outline first the historical and historiographical context of the present study, and then the results of two oral historical surveys, one conducted in the 1980s (N = 27 in 1984–1986), the other more recently (N = 15 in 2009–2010), and which draw upon a collection of life stories of men and women who left Morocco and went to Montreal in the 1980s and 1990s.

The questions asked remain significant for those who took part in the migrations, as they are for us, the questioners. Under what circumstances did these migrations take place? What memories do the participants have of them today, and how can they be transcribed and transmitted? How did participants first tell the story just after they arrived, and how do they tell it now that they have been in Montreal for 30 or 40 years? The way that our respondents retrospectively reconstruct the past and then project forwards into an uncertain future call urgently for decoding, it seems to us, since these two poles define their particular stance with respect to their history and to the society that receives them.

In some of the scenarios that I have been able to ascertain and map out[5] we shall see that there are distinct discrepancies between the narratives given by historians, on the one hand, and, on the other, our informants' reconstitutions/projections of their past and perceptions of their departures. I offer here the hypothesis that these two forms of narrative (the metanarrative of historians and the perceptions recounted by the story's actual participants) combine in the work of rebuilding identity based on membership of a transnational, Sephardic community, the centre of which is not only in Israel but also in the diaspora.

I. A difficult story to tell

The emigration of Moroccan Jews to Quebec is part of the large migratory movement which, in under 30 years (mainly between 1950 and 1980) saw the departure of almost the whole community, which numbered some 250,000 people in 1950.[6] Unlike Algerian Jews, who had been an official part of the French nation since 1830, Jews from Morocco came under a belated and less comprehensive protectorate. Jews from Algeria, however, also benefitted from the institutions of the Consistory in France from 1848 and, above

all, from the naturalization orders agreed by the French state, namely the famous Crémieux decrees that extended French nationality to the Jewish population. They further benefitted, once Algeria was independent, from the same repatriation and resettlement legislation as the Algerian French, and would thus emigrate *en masse* to France.

For the Jews of Tunisia and Morocco, the regimes of the French protectorate—established in those countries in 1882 and 1912 respectively—would lead to radically different situations. Transformed by the different kinds of French occupation of Moroccan territory (and, before that, by the Spanish and Portuguese occupation of certain Moroccan enclaves), the age-old relationships of coexistence or cohabitation between Jews and Muslims, regulated by the *dhimma*, were eradicated. The French protectorate and, following its lead, metropolitan Jewish organizations such as the Alliance Israélite Universelle would grant a certain degree of emancipation to Jews from Morocco, emancipation which nonetheless had its limits. After this point, from the 1920s until the 1950s, complex triangular relationships would involve Jewish communities in the new institutions of the French protectorate and in those of the *Makhzen* (the Moroccan elite then in power in the region and clustered around the king).

The departures: a story of post-colonial emigration?

These populations, then, found themselves caught at a veritable dead end: the most educated of them, having adopted French language and culture as a means of emancipation from their situation, rejected certain typically Moroccan Jewish traditions and severed some of their ties with the Moroccan Muslim world, only to realize in the end that they had no place in the French nation either. For the rest, especially in rural and remote regions, the preservation of traditions in the 1940s was maintained, but only a little longer before it, too, was weakening. As well as the dislocations of the traditional community foundations caused by the French colonization, these communities were also to confront Vichy antisemitism. The Vichy regime's establishment of discriminatory laws, even if they were not fully enforced, would lead to a long-lasting stigmatization of Jews in Morocco (for instance, the drawing-up of lists of names, *numerus clausus* quotas in schools, curfews, and so on). Not far from Europe, from its devastating antisemitism and the Holocaust, the Jews in Morocco were fully aware of their extreme vulnerability.

The creation of the State of Israel in 1948, the independence of the North African countries in the 1950s and the crises in the Middle East in the 1960s and 1970s all became defining moments in the collapse of these Jewish communities, panic-stricken in the face of such events. The disintegration of the traditional links that had existed between Jews and Muslims in Morocco would give rise to migrations faster and further afield: first of all internal, from villages and market towns to the cities; then external, from the cities to other countries. The initial migrations of rural Jews to major cities like Casablanca, Meknes or Rabat bear witness to the profound transformations undergone by these communities from the end of the nineteenth century, and equally reveal the economic and social impact of French colonization. Once this initial uprooting had taken place, it enabled subsequent migrations to several regions of the world, Israel, Europe, Latin America and North America. France, which would have been the destination favoured by many, was now for all practical purposes closed to them. French naturalization would happen on a case-by-case basis, by individual request and for services rendered to the nation, all of which deterred the majority of

Moroccan Jews from immigration to France. More than this, overwhelmed by the flood of requests since Moroccan independence in 1956, the French administration was to do everything in its power to curb the naturalization of Jews from Morocco since it was thought too costly and not worthwhile politically: France's administration had to deal first with Algerian repatriation, which was occurring in substantial numbers and against a general background of hostility to *Pieds-Noirs*. Excluded from the post-colonial arrangement between France and its former citizens from North Africa, Moroccan Jews would, in their "choice" of destination, be receptive to the assistance provided by the large Zionist organizations (leading the vast majority of them to Israel) and Jewish organizations (which were, in the event, American and Canadian, for example, Jewish Immigrant Aid Services, JIAS).

Against this background, and seeking host countries throughout the 1960s, several thousand Moroccan Jews emigrated to Quebec, choosing this province since it offered the advantages of being North America, French-speaking, and welcoming to immigrants. In fact, they did not know Quebec at all, seldom having heard it discussed: they thus emigrated to "French America" in the belief in the American myth and in its promises of liberty.[7]

Where to go? Contrasting interpretations

We have seen that we must distinguish the migrations of Jews from Algeria (who had French nationality) from those of Jews from Tunisia and Morocco, whose departures, depending on specific situations and periods, have more in common with an exodus than with a voluntary, organized and concerted departure.

The "choice" of destination country and the periods of migrations are revealing: France is the "natural" destination for the great majority of Algerians, just before, but mostly after, the Algerian War; but for the majority of Moroccans, Israel is the "alternative" choice, at its foundation and in several further waves throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Finally, several thousand Moroccans and Tunisians go to France and Canada in a final wave of immigration at the end of the 1960s.

We can see that such a history, loaded with varied meanings and thus susceptible to manipulation, requires a quite different analysis depending on the country of origin (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia), the destination country (primarily Israel, France and Canada), and the periods in which the migrations took place, even though they are often all examined within the framework of post-colonial migration. Depending on the case, the migration in question is seen either as a repatriation (for the Algerians), an expulsion/exclusion (for the Moroccans), a voluntary migration (for the Tunisians), an exile, and so forth.

The periods within which these migrations take place are also times of major upheavals: certain governments and international Jewish organizations wish to populate their countries (Israel and Canada), others have obligations towards their own citizens after decolonization (France towards Algeria), and still more are trying to make the best of the situation. At the level of individuals, people are, among other things, seeking greater stability, or following economic as well as religious imperatives.

For complex reasons still to be illuminated, 80% of Moroccan Jews would settle in Israel, the remaining 20% shared between various other countries, including France and Canada. The great wave of emigration of Moroccan Jews to Israel, which saw nearly

4000 people leave every month between 1961 and 1969, making a total of nearly 90,000 people over the whole period, is the case that has attracted the attention of researchers. These mass departures have provoked numerous interpretations. Some studies foreground the essential role of American Zionist groups (for example, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, or "The Joint"), Moroccan Jewish groups (for example, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, HIAS) and the Israeli and Moroccan governments (the latter of which was compensated by the Joint with between $100 and $250 for every person authorized to leave): all of them had a part in organizing these Jews' departure from Morocco, their passage to Israel and their settlement there.[8] As much as their numbers, the timing of their arrival *en masse* and the conditions of their migration and settlement contributed to making them a very considerable national group, identified and discriminated against in many ways.

Thus, in Israel, recent historiography sets out to write the history of these *Mizrahim*, and to include the 200,000 or so Jews from Morocco. It aims to establish the parameters of a multidimensional history, thereby provoking bitter controversy, in particular over the interpretation of these migrations. From André Lévy's "symbolic centrality of Israel" to the forced migrations suggested by Sami Chetrit for the Moroccans and by Yehouda Shenhav for Iraqi Jews, such questions have now been opened up.[9]

Indeed, one realizes that the history of these migrations elicits re-readings of national histories by historians in each of the countries where they settled. The conditions surrounding these re-readings and their consequences, both for these populations and on the countries that received them, are recurring themes in these historical reconstructions.

Now, this history, which has spread across informal networks in Morocco as elsewhere, has had a certain impact on the aftermath of the migrations. The image of Israel has emerged, if not completely tarnished, then at least somewhat dented in the eyes of the willing candidates for immigration who could, and did, choose to go elsewhere. Here we see the complex interplay between, on the one hand, a history still under construction, experienced in real time by the individuals who are living through these events (and trying to adapt to them), and, on the other, the history related by historians interpreting it differently, depending on several factors: their position in the diaspora or in Israel, their ideological orientations, their sources, and so on. These migrations are thus part of a field of study that is experiencing radical renewal, and comparative work will undoubtedly help to illuminate it further. In any event, the people arriving in Montreal (around 15,000 people) represent, in population terms, a small part of those Moroccan Jewish communities that emigrated during the last great migratory wave of the 1970s.

Arrival in Montreal

Among the new Jewish immigrants settling in Quebec after 1960, Jews of Moroccan origin make up the largest "national" group.[10] Totalling 7995 people arriving between 1960 and 1991 (according to the 1991 census), their number is around double that of Jews coming from Poland (4250), and a good deal more than the Jews coming from all other countries (France, Israel, etc.). This wave of Jewish immigrants from Morocco would thus help to transform the composition of the substantial Canadian Jewish community, particularly in Montreal where it enjoys long-standing and stable

roots.[11] The arrival of Jews from Morocco in large numbers in less than 20 years would alter the balance between the various ethnic or national groups of the Montreal Jewish community, made up of some 90,000 people.

Very few studies dwell on the conditions of their departure. Their arrival and their impact upon the established Jewish community have received most attention, as well as the new relationships of these two distinct segments of the Jewish community with Quebecois society. The study of Jews coming from Morocco thus plays out in the context of work focused on so-called cultural communities and on Canadian policies of multiculturalism.[12] Thus, the economic and social integration of Sephardic Jews in Quebec seems to occur smoothly, facilitated by the existence of strong community structures,[13] and even enabling the emergence of an affluent social stratum found in smart French-speaking districts.[14] Nevertheless, the analyses of Sephardic culture testify to a more nuanced picture. The attachment of North African Jews to Judeo-Arabic traditions remains a determinant,[15] the division of gender roles between men and women has scarcely changed from its traditional form, while Sephardic identity appears as a cross between Islamic fatalism and the weight of specifically Jewish history.

It is these paradoxes that led me to investigate more fully the awareness that these migrants have of their own history, and in particular that of their migration. The links they have with their past, severed so radically given the conditions of their departures and arrivals, must be reconstituted by close analysis and attention to their stories. Unlike the emigration of the majority to Israel, those who decide to leave for Montreal do so somewhat later, at the end of the 1960s and throughout the 1970s, and with the sense that they are able to choose their destination. Migrants' perceptions of their departures are a paradoxical issue: in the unsaid (or withheld) and the unthought (the traumatic?) there are also elements for analysis. I undertook to collect some of these stories at different points in their arrival. What perceptions do they have of their migrations? How do they understand these events? What place does the departure hold in their memory?

II. The oral history survey: migration to the French-speaking cultural zone

Our first survey enabled us to collect the stories of 27 people in semi-structured interviews conducted in French or in Judeo-Arabic.[16] The stories are organized by means of questions that begin with life in Morocco. The recordings show a common preoccupation on the part of the interviewees and interviewer (Marie Berdugo Cohen) to record descriptions of daily life (meals, cuisine, procedures for festivals). Leaving Morocco is mentioned only at the very end of the recordings. Nevetherless, neither the JIAS nor the journey, nor the first moments of their arrival, are clearly identified episodes. We find here a certain tendency towards "oral archaeology" of still-vivid family memories, essentializing life in Morocco. Astonishingly, the interviews contain very few words about the conditions of departure and arrival, despite this being central to the questions in the survey. Either the interviewer, or the interviewees, were unable to find material for explanation or discussion during the interviews. We consequently wondered if our interlocutors had preferred to "forget" these events, preoccupied as they were with rebuilding a new life in Montreal.

Stories from three generations of men and women: amnesia and nostalgia

Marie Berdugo (who emigrated from Meknes to Montreal in 1974) considers the Six-Day War to be the catalyst of the departures; but this war does not seem to have really been perceived as such by the interviewees. These were predominantly middle- and lower middle-class, from urban areas, the French-speaking ones being more educated in terms of schooling than those who spoke Judeo-Arabic. Many explain their departure as the logical consequence of an initial family migration: a sister, brother, or other relative left for Canada and spoke well of it. These forerunners act as reference-givers, though not obligatorily so. Little is said about the events or the political history of Morocco before and after independence and independence is not directly mentioned as an episode. The question of official papers (either French or Canadian) is not tackled. With this amnesia about the past (today we would speak more of trauma), and a departure so compelling that its occurrence is never questioned, the memory that has remained of it seemed so slight as to be worrying. We had, then, to forgo looking at this question and simply published the nine interviews which we considered the most important for what they said about the state of mind of three generations of men and women, in our book, *Juifs marocains à Montréal*.[17]

Analysis of this corpus enabled us to distinguish three types in the representations of departures given by interviewees.[18] The oldest of them almost all spoke to us of their lives in Morocco in Judeo-Arabic or Judeo-Spanish. After leaving their country they retain memories of it tinged with nostalgia.[19]

There were the baby-boomers (35–65 years of age) who took the older ones along with them, or who were able to bring to fruition their parents' plans to leave (often the case with family migrations). These migrants wished to settle in Canada, spoke to us in French and seem not to have any regrets about having left. Their representation of the departure is associated more with a kind of liberation, especially for the young women. We qualified these representations as imitative, for these people sought to identify themselves as quickly as possible with the host society, whose language and culture they claimed they shared. The youngest ones, who followed their parents, have only a few precise memories of their family life in Morocco. They do not subscribe to their parents' Judeo-Moroccan identity and have only a vague recollection of the events that led them to leave. This next generation, the youngest of all, on this point declares a basic sense of belonging to Jewish religion and identity, hesitating to call themselves Moroccan or Sephardic.

For the interviewees who do touch on the departures, emigration appears as a response to a worry connected to international politics (the Six-Day War), to their family situation, or a reaction to the fear generated by changing intercommunity relations in the wake of the country's independence (in the last case, fear of a marriage outside the community, in 1958). It also appears that the migration process is a family affair: all leave in order to join members of the family who had left earlier.

The community leaders' welcome of these stories when published in 1987 was very reserved.[20] We consequently wondered if the depictions of the Moroccan Jewish migrations offered by these accounts were shocking because of their down-to-earth realism and the unflattering image it projected (in sharp contrast to the myth of an idealized relationship between Jews and Arabs in Morocco, and a smooth transition from Morocco to Canada transmitted by many community leaders). In any event, it appeared

to be too soon to speak about them in public. These were in no way mythical reconstructions of the migrations, but basic and often naïve personal accounts of the ways in which they had been experienced by the people to whom we had given voice.

Our survey, based on individual impressions and stories about migrations, also left us with great uncertainties: the issues, both personal and collective, within the history of this emigration appeared more enigmatic at the survey's end than at its beginning. So it was with a certain scepticism that we had to reformulate the questions that had preoccupied us since the 1980s within the framework of a longitudinal, comparative and multidisciplinary study, the aim of which is to collect what it describes as "Life Stories of Montrealers Displaced by War, Genocide and Other Human Rights Violations" (Community University Research Alliance (CURA) Program, Concordia University, Montreal, 2007 onwards).

The survey of displaced people: trauma and denial

Would we, more than 40 years after their immigration in the 1960s and 1970s encounter problems of memory? Would the events experienced by the interviewees be recounted with a sharper, or at least a more considered awareness than before? The preliminary results of the new survey, of people from different countries of the Maghreb-Mashriq, in any case enabled us to target more clearly the question of their departure. Among the people interviewed, we shall retain (for clarity of exposition) the accounts of six of them: three men and three women born in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s in Morocco, and who left there at different times in their lives.[21] This project, which bears explicitly on their displacements in the wake of traumatic events, provoked strong resistance on their part. We have collected their responses to the questions that seemed the most relevant in the context of this article.

Periodizing the departures from Morocco

In the interviews analyzed, migrations to Israel around 1948 and to France and Canada in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s are recalled. For migrations to Israel in the years following the Second World War (before or after the declaration of the State of Israel in 1948), memories can be very distinct. LO recalls his parents' departure to Israel in 1946 (with their three children). According to him, for his father, an electrician with "a wandering soul," going to Israel was "a dream of liberation," he "wanted to feel Jewish in the midst of other Jews." LO connects this departure to a "question of identity." AC and his sisters, children of a large family (of 10 children) that was also rather affluent and considered "modern," recall their older brother's departure to Israel in 1948. He brought his family (his wife and eight children) as well as his two youngest orphan sisters. AC and his sister AA note that their father, a very religious man, had already planned to leave in the 1920s, but that without British government authorization he was unable to realize the plan himself (and died in the 1940s). His children then assumed the parental plan, since all of them wanted to leave for Israel as soon as they could. In 1948 all the male siblings began the migration, including AC with his wife (though he did not, in the end, get there; his family remained for a few years in transit in Marseille, France, before returning to Morocco in 1952). JC recalls his departure with his father and brother for Montreal, Canada, in January 1957. The departure had been

planned by his father since 1955; following a small advertisement placed in a professional magazine, the father approached the British Consulate, where he obtained a visa. It was at first the men of the family who left, while the women (mother and daughters), entrusted with selling off their assets first, joined them afterwards. GCS left to join her husband, who was studying medicine, in Paris in 1961. She recalls her parents leaving for France and then for Canada in 1964. After returning to Morocco two years later (a return chosen by her husband so that he could finish his residency and see his parents), GCS left again when her son was born, going with her husband to Paris. Then in the 1970s the family went to Canada and then the United States, and after her divorce GCS returned to Canada (to Montreal, where her parents were living). In 1974, AC, his wife and some of their children left Morocco (they had gone back in 1952 after several years in France) to settle in Canada (where one of his wife's sisters had emigrated with her family in 1968).

Migration routes in several countries. The migration routes of the interviewees are complex: different destinations (Israel, France, Canada, United States) sometimes within a single trajectory; extended stops *en route* (notably in Marseille); potential temporary trips back to Morocco before the definitive departure. The families are often scattered owing to staggered departures and varied destinations; sometimes they reunite at a given moment. For instance, in the C family, of the ten children, some left for Israel and came back to Morocco, others went to France, some stayed longer in Morocco; others went back after an abortive migration to Israel (the route halted for several years in Marseille), and in the end went to Canada. LO recalls the route taken by his parents from Morocco to Israel in 1946 (after a stop of six months in Marseille). They returned to France in the 1950s after a difficult time in Israel as eastern Jews, and in 1965 they went back to Israel with their youngest children (because, according to LO, the father was afraid of his daughters marrying non-Jews). After that they went back to France, and finally LO brought them all to Canada, where he had settled in 1968.

In two family histories, we find how important the role of eldest son was in the emigration of families. For instance, in the C family, once his parents had died the eldest brother took charge of his two youngest sisters' emigration to Israel. This elder brother had rented a house in Marseille for the family members to use on their way to Israel, where he was taking them. In another case, LO, the eldest son of a family of nine children, became concerned about the education of his younger brothers, whom he finally brought to Canada. He then gathered his whole family across the Atlantic.

Elective but constrained migrations. How did the Moroccan Jews interviewed interpret their departure(s) from Morocco or that/those of their family members? Was it a case of displacements, of forced departures, or freely chosen migrations? We might first note a great reluctance on their part to consider their departures as "displacements" (the term used in the project), and even more resistance at seeing them as the result of a trauma. The majority of them say they left Morocco voluntarily, paying their own way via France or directly to Canada, with or without the help of Jewish organisations. To be sure, their departure had been long premeditated, though in the end it was organized hastily and fearfully. But it cannot, according to them, be compared to population displacements

and does not make them displaced people or refugees. Nevertheless, the questions remain, for them and for the historians seeking to understand them.

Reasons for leaving. What are the factors recalled by interviewees to explain their departure(s) from Morocco, or that/those of their family members? The departures in the years following the end of the Second World War are linked by the interviewees to Zionism motivating some Jews from Morocco (LO, AC and AA). LO recalls "existing channels" which enabled his parents to leave in 1946. In the C family, while the elder brother's departure was influenced by Zionism, it was not apparently financed by an organization, and is considered to have been an autonomous departure. In his interview, JC notes that it was relatively poor Jews from the *mellah*, Jewish quarters in Arab cities, who were petitioned by Zionist organizations to go to Israel with the promise of a better future. His uncle and aunts were petitioned in this way and left, unlike his father, who "left the *mellah*" having been to Paris to train as a barber. He settled in the new city and opened a barbershop on a central commercial street. JC explains this exit from the *mellah* in terms of a change of social class. GCS remembers that the first great emigration movement to Israel in 1948 involved the poorest and least educated. This idea of departure to Israel seems to have played on remembering and transmitting the "will to leave".[22]

In the C family, the children heard their parents mention this departure, much desired but unrealizable because of "papers" (visas refused by the British authorities). This discussion of a desired departure seems to have marked them, and the father's disappointment is recalled several times (AC, AA and MB). On the other hand, what their mother thought about it is little discussed (and little questioned): AC says that his mother "followed". The question of the role of mothers in family emigration projects still remains relatively little known. We know that in certain families women played an important role concerning the decision to leave and the choice of migratory destinations (in this way, AC joined his wife's sister, whose family had settled in Montreal several years before him), but this dimension needs more detailed research.[22]

Relations between French, Arabs and Jews during the colonization of Morocco are another reason offered by the interviewees to explain their departure. They feel uncomfortable in this complex triangular configuration. Their responses are quite varied when asked to recall daily life in Morocco. The friendliness between Jews and Arabs is often recalled, particularly in work relationships. AC notes that the Frenchman was "the ruler", which might explain, he says, the *rapprochement* between Jews and Arabs. GCS notes that only the men were involved in this type of relationship, women usually being kept away from Arabs since families dreaded their daughters marrying Muslims (marriages to Catholics were more tolerated). Notably, GCS's parents' reason for leaving was that an Arab was pursuing their daughter. Several interviewees recall the protection of Jews offered by the king of Morocco, Mohammed V, a policy continued by his son, Hassan II. This feeling of being subjects protected by the king might explain the sense of gratitude to Morocco that is apparent in the interviews. The history of this protection is transmitted, down the generations (GCS was told by her grandmothers that the king protected Jews).

French antisemitism is often underlined, in Morocco but also in France (GCS). AC remembers the *numerus clausus* quotas in French teaching establishments in Morocco under the Vichy government. JC notes that, during the Second World War, the apartment building in which he lived with his family (and in which other Jewish families also

lived) had been marked with a cross, in preparation for a roundup, he was told. He remembers also that at school (in the European quarter), he sat at the back of the class because he was Jewish. JC notes that he never had particular problems with Arabs, unlike his brother. Indeed, it was because of his brother's fight with an Arab that his father, who had already tried every way of emigrating to Canada and whose barbershop business was declining, decided to leave, six months after Moroccan independence in 1956.

Class also seems to have played a part in relations with other groups (French and Arabs), as well as within the Jewish community itself. LO recalls his father's bad memories of Morocco, notably the fact of being relegated by wealthier Jews to the back of the synagogue because he was poor. LO says his father also remembered being mistreated by Arabs and was quite comfortable with the French presence.

The interviewees recall "little things" and "little moments" involving relations with the French and Arabs over the long term. In addition, the comparison is often drawn with what happened to other Jews in Europe, which leads the interviewees to play down what happened to them (stone throwing; raids into the *mellah*). Indeed, the recollection of cruelties suffered, usually minor everyday humiliations and only rarely major public events—at least in Morocco where these things have ended up consigned to hazy memory—appears here and there, in the course of a conversation or a school memory, for example. In this way we find the recollection of an attack in Meknes on Yom Kippur, in the years immediately after the war, which resembled an antisemitic attack on the Jews of the *mellah* (who were forced to retreat onto their terraces to protect themselves from projectiles), as much as it did a surprise raid by a band of thugs trying to frighten them. The memory of these events is vague at 60 years' distance, but the event is there, marking a stage in the disconnection that they must have had to make in their relationships with their neighbours. French non-intervention at the moments of tension between Jews and Arabs is also recalled. AC implies that this attitude was intentional in order to "divide and rule".

The interviewees recall the changing relations between communities when Morocco became independent in 1956. GCS says that the Jews "were afraid of being caught between the two" (French and Arabs), and that "they were in the middle" at the time of the country's independence. She adds, "We never spoke about politics," and recalls an "invisible repression". GCS notes the fact that her father, who had an electrical goods business, saw his customer numbers drop after independence, since his clientele was largely composed of French people. Political changes could lead to economic changes, which in turn precipitated the decision to leave. JC notes that, in the wake of Moroccan independence, the future of Jews looked bleak, especially for those who had little money. The Moroccan struggle for independence deeply affected JC, who was very shocked by bombings in Casablanca. These events troubled his "relaxed" life and spurred him to leave. A rumour reinforced his desire to go: in 1957, it was said that Jews were going to be enrolled in the Moroccan army, and JC was afraid of being sent to fight against Israel (some contingents of the Moroccan army were sent as reinforcements for the Arab countries).

Finally, international Arab-Israeli tensions are also mentioned. The Middle East conflict, spreading over several decades, played a significant role in the changing social relations between the Jewish and Arab communities in Morocco. LO remembers that in the mid-1950s, then aged 13, he had gone to see his uncle in Morocco and was

walking through Jamaa el Fna square in Marrakesh. His uncle came looking for him in a panic, for fear that something might happen to his nephew. LO connects this fear to events in the Middle East (perhaps the Arab-Israeli conflict during the Suez Crisis of 1956). AC mentions the Six-Day War of 1967: "the Six-Day War just happened overnight". He says that it disturbed his workplace relations, "but over a few months things improved". AC and his family would leave seven years later, but his wife remembers that moment affecting his decision to leave. After independence, AC recalls that Arabs suspected Jews of supporting, even of financing Israel, which created certain tensions and an "oppressive atmosphere" between them.

Another factor often mentioned is the future of children for whom parents saw few prospects in Morocco. Even if some enjoyed economic success (AC), the decision to leave took priority. Some children, indeed, left to study in Paris (a daughter in the C family; GCS's husband) before their parents left. We might notice that within families there was a concern to educate daughters who might leave the family home (and indeed the country) for this reason.

The experience of departure. For the majority of the interviewees, the departures mentioned took place in secrecy. GCS remembers that her father had sold half of his building before leaving and was unable to transfer the money out of the country. He had his money conveyed by a middleman, a French colonel (a friend of friends). She also remembers, on her second journey from Morocco to France, hiding money in her baby's diaper in order to cross the border. AC recalls an "unofficial" move. "We left the house tidy and went off as if we were going on holiday," he says. He had their things sent to Casablanca in European containers, which brought certain risks with it. He also remembers crossing the border, and a remark made about his son having his school bag, which, to the Moroccan customs officers, seemed suspect for a boy going on holiday.

In the C family, the scattering of the family created tensions between brothers and sisters, as some left for Israel where life was difficult, while others in the end did not follow them. One of his older brothers went but did not stay. Those who remained in Israel experienced his own return to Morocco as a tragedy by (AC recalls "mourning"). AA remembers her elder brother's disappointment at his brothers and sisters not following the "path that he had prepared". But opinions diverge: AC says that his brothers dissuaded him from going to Israel, apparently telling him, "Don't come, nothing but bombs, nowhere to live," while AA says that it was the brothers remaining in Morocco who dissuaded him from going. AA recalls that being "far from each other" was very difficult for her to bear. She feels that she was "sent like a package" to Israel without being able to express her opinion. At the same time, her youngest sister, MB, did not have as bad an experience of the departure, even if the separation from Morocco that followed shortly after the death of her parents was as difficult for her to bear.

The interpretations of these departures reveal tangled levels within the experience of the interviewees: individual, familial, social, national, international. Depending on gender, age, place amongst siblings, social class and religious convictions, their interpretation of their trajectory differs. The family history that has been handed down, that is, the family's experience of migration or the representation of migration within it, also seems to have played an important role in the departures. The chronology of the departures must be analyzed over the long term, since the desire to leave is very

often inscribed within a family history. We can see in these interviews that the decision to emigrate is very often a family one (as with the majority of migrant groups). The presence of family members or friends appears essential in the choice of destination and in the process of establishing themselves in a new country. The phenomenon of "chain migration" can also be seen: certain family members are sometimes the pioneers; sometimes it is pioneer children who cause their parents to leave; we also find cases of brothers and sisters who bring their parents and other siblings.

So is this voluntary or forced emigration? In the light of these accounts, the different interpretations do not seem opposed. Individual and family choices are filled with national and international history, but the desire to leave and the spontaneity of departure echo the constraints that very often spring from distant conflicts. Emigration cannot be understood distinctly from immigration. The analysis of immigration factors must include questions of emigration, which enables us then to explore in greater detail the question of migratory chains and that of the promise made for chosen destinations. In this tangle of causes, speaking French played an essential role in the processes that led our interviewees to choose settle in Quebec, if indeed they were able to.

Conclusion

The analysis of these interviews and of the historical and historiographical context of the emigration of Jews from Morocco enables us better to understand the different representations we have of their departure from the end of the Second World War and their arrival in Canada in the 1960s and 1970s. This approach via individual trajectories or life stories enables a detailed analysis and highlights the complexity of the problems. Studying individual trajectories enables us better to contextualize the interpretations made by historians and by community leaders, which are usually the product of a macro-level analysis, and sometimes affected by strong ideological and political preoccupations.

These opposing discourses, each seeking, in its way, to become the official version of this history, can be summed up as two principal versions/visions of the departure of Jews from Morocco. Let us recall their broad parameters.

Voluntary departure. This representation of the migration of Jews from Morocco to Montreal has long been dominant. It constitutes one (somewhat optimistic) tendency laden with transmitted memories and with an idea communicated widely by community leaders and by those Arab neighbours who remained. It is the idea that, down the centuries, coexistence between Jews and Muslims in Morocco has been marked by relatively happy cohabitation and even cordiality. This long period of cohabitation, it is said, came to a gradual end following outside events that precipitated the departure of Jews for Israel, their promised land, a move that nothing and nobody could have resisted. "They left to rejoin their people, over there, in their country . . . in Israel," say Muslim neighbours of the Meknes Jews who left.[23] Many Jews regret that their departure marked the end of the cordial links that connected Muslims and Jews, even as they also testify to the increasing fear they felt during the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Nevertheless, they do take time before they leave, with the outcome of the Yom Kippur War and the 1973 oil crisis provoking some among them to implement their emigration plans. One of our female interviewees even refused to talk more about it, so gripped was she by this fear a full 40 years later. They are nostalgic for the Muslim-Jewish cordiality, and would have liked these links to be maintained, but they also know, having left, that this is no longer possible—even if the feeling that they can still return remains alive.

This feeling was nourished by a kind of consensus which often recurs in conversations heard here and there and which was reinforced by the official stances of Moroccan Jewish community leaders. Overly stringent criticism of the neighbours with whom one lived for so long was resisted; at the same time, the leaders of the Conseil des Communautés Israélites du Maroc (Council of the Israeli Communities of Morocco) and leaders of the main institutions representing Moroccan Jews abroad (Fédération Mondiale des Juifs du Maroc [the Worldwide Federation of Jews in Morocco]) promoted interfaith and intercommunity dialogue in the 1980s, through the "Identities and Dialogue" movement. This position presented the image of relations between Jews and Muslims in Morocco as relatively harmonious, and allowed the idea of a permanent Jewish presence in Morocco to be maintained (fewer than 2000 Jews live in Morocco today).

These authorities often invoke the possibility of returning to Morocco—on holiday, on business or simply to see friends or family members—to demonstrate the importance of links between the Sharifian kingdom and its former subjects. Many have since contested this position, vigorously espoused by community leaders, in Montreal and in Morocco during the first years of immigration (between 1968 and 1980). It is yielding to a kind of perplexed scrutiny that attempts to make sense of this history, and is now giving way to another account which is, it appears, being superimposed, like a new stratum, over these broken memories.

Forced exile. A second, more recent, position emerged at the end of 1990s and beginning of the 2000s, and coincides with the reiteration of a discourse of post-colonial liberation by second generation migrants. University research published in Israel and in France in this period fosters a more specific vision of Jewish departures, especially in Israel.[24] One side effect is that this research also helps to bring to light another interpretation of the history of Jews in Morocco, one that dwells on the Moroccan Jews' subordination to Muslims under the regime of the *dhimma*, and to French colonialists under a regime in which the Crémieux decrees did not apply to them. Being reminded of the humiliations suffered by the Jews would justify the reasons for their exile in huge numbers, and as soon as they had the means to leave. Some historians (especially Trigano) and leaders of American Jewish organizations depend on this interpretation of Moroccan Jewish history in order to associate themselves with the demands for the restoration of assets that were confiscated when they hastily left Morocco. Displaced by the accidents of post-colonial history, according to this interpretation the Jews attempted to escape the laws of the *dhimma* and also those of Vichy, the new intolerances and the rekindled antisemitism during the conflicts in Israel.

Between these two positions, clearly polarized for community and political reasons, it is difficult to carve a third way towards a necessarily more nuanced and complex historical narrative. The existence of these antagonistic and necessarily limited visions prevents the setting out of an historical perspective attentive to people and events.[25]

Whatever the reasons and justifications given for these departures after the fact, they took place and led Moroccan Jews to join the Jewish communities of the diaspora. We aim to elucidate this particular history in this research, accumulating both the memory and the narratives of the people who lived it within a diligent historical framework.

If we have seen that between these poles a variety of other positions exist, it is still difficult to abandon these versions, which remain dominant and which have important repercussions on ways of conceptualizing the history of Jewish-Muslim relations in Morocco, as well as on the ways in which Moroccan Jews can reappropriate their history and define the terms of their 'integration' into their new host countries.

One way of doing so could be seen in the insistence of the Quebec Jews of Moroccan origin upon calling themselves Sephardim. It shows their desire to establish their new identity within a reiteration of their ancient Sephardic origins, while recognizing themselves throughout the diaspora as a new transnational entity. This new identity thus reveals a constant back-and-forth movement between the migrants' (nostalgic) past and their (inexpressible) present, between "there" (the old world) and "here" (the new world), between "them" and "us", between Israel and diaspora. We see how these accounts construct a mythical "elsewhere" in the past, whose links to the present enable community bonding in order to face up to suffering, as well as allowing the difficult task of finding meaning in something which does not yet seem to have one for them.

Notes

1. In 1948 the Jewish population of North Africa comprised around 550,000 people. In the 1980s, this figure had dropped to only 30,000 people; nearly 20,000 North African Jews emigrated to Canada, 230,000 (120,000 of Algerian origin, 65,000 from Tunisia, and 55,000 from Morocco) settled in France and 300,000 in Israel. Jacques Taïeb, "Immigrés d'Afrique du Nord: Combien? Quand? Pourquoi?" in Colette Zytniki ed., *Terre d'exil, terre d'asile. Migrations juives en France aux XIX e et XX e siècles*, Paris: Editions de l'Éclat, 2010. 149–154.
2. See these now classic works: Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands*; Abitbol, *The Jews of North Africa*; Laskier, *North African Jewry*; Kenbib. *Juifs et Musulmans au Maroc.* See also the more recent studies edited by Shmuel Trigano, *La fin du judaïsme en terres d'Islam*.
3. Chetrit.
4. Bin-Nun, "Psychosis" 25–67.
5. This history is also my own. Having left Morocco in 1968 at the age of eighteen to study in Paris, I then followed my family (parents, three brothers and a sister) to Montreal in 1976, two years after they themselves had left Meknes for Montreal, in 1974. I initially told this story at the lecture I gave at the Institut Émilie du Châtelet in Paris, March 6, 2010 http://genrehistoire.revues.org/index1021.html, see also http://www.institutemilieduchatelet.org/Conferences/conference-Cohen.html). I give this reference here only to situate my interpretations of this migration within my own subjective point of view.
6. Since Antiquity there have been numerous migrations of Jews into the Mediterranean basin, and one might also gesture at the complexity of the subject by noting that the Jewish presence in North Africa was buttressed by the arrival of Jews driven from the

Iberian peninsula by the Inquisition. Taken in this broad historical perspective, the arrival of Jews in Islamic countries allowed them to avoid Christian anti-Judaism.

7. Hence the subtitle of an article we published in the *Annuaire de l'émigration*," Élites et organisation communautaire chez les juifs marocains à Montréal: du soleil à la liberté", avec Joseph Lévy, 320–327.
8. Yigal Bin-Nun, "La négociation de l'évacuation en masse des Juifs du Maroc.," *La fin du Judaïsme en terres d'Islam*, ed. S. Trigano (Paris: Denoël, 2009), 303–358.
9. Lévy and Weingrod (Eds.); Shenhav, 1–30; Chetrit, *op.cit.*
10. The various demographical studies focussed on the Jewish population distinguish Sephardim and Ashkenazim. If we look at the figures by birthplace, we notice that Moroccan Jews make up the most substantial Sephardic group immigrating to Quebec between 1960 and 1980: 220 people entering before 1980, 2475 between 1960 and 1969 (66% of all Sephardim), 2525 between 1970 and 1979 (69.9%), 1375 between 1980 and 1989 (53%) and 620 between 1990 and 2001 (43.2%). The other countries from which Sephardic Jews emigrated, going by birthplace, are: Egypt, Algeria-Tunisia-Libya, Iraq, Turkey, Lebanon. Shahar and Perez, 22.
11. The phenomenon would also reinforce a distinction between the newcomers, primarily Sephardim, and the Ashkenazim, earlier immigrant settlers.
12. Brym, Shaffir and Weinfeld, *The Jews in Canada*.
13. Brière.
14. Légaré 312.
15. Dinelle and Barrette-Dalphond.
16. These recordings, around thirty cassettes of three or four hours each, are available for consultation in the Archives of the Canadian Jewish Congress in Montreal. The interviews took place between 1980 and 1985, in Montreal at the homes of the interviewees.
17. Marie Berdugo-Cohen, Yolande Cohen and Joseph Lévy.
18. The majority of those whose accounts we collected arrived in Montreal between 1967 and 1973; some arrived after 1958 and describe their first steps in a city with very little Sephardic presence.
19. André Elbaz, examining the imaginative world of the older generation, has shown that they suffered a trauma which they attempt to conceal by reconstructing and mythifying the present. Elbaz, "Ma mémoire sépharade."
20. The review of it written by historian Pierre Anctil in the daily, *Le Devoir*, was full of praise, but there was no public discussion or debate within the community. The book, one of the first to come out on the subject of the Moroccan Jews in Montreal, was launched at the Saidye Bronfman Centre for the Arts, attended by Sephardic community leaders. The rather unenthusiastic presentation on the book made by community leaders met with a long silence; *La Voix Sépharade*, the monthly publication of the Communauté sépharade du Québec [The Sephardic community of Quebec], did not review it.
21. AC (a man born in 1926), his sisters AA and MB (born in 1930 and 1934 respectively); GCS (a woman born in 1940); LO (a man born in 1942); JC (a man born in 1937).
22. Arlette Berdugo's thesis mentions decisions taken by women whom she interviewed, particularly those who remained in Morocco, who recount that the women who did leave chose their family's destination. See Berdugo, *Juives et Juifs dans le Maroc contemporain*, with afterword by Yolande Cohen.

23. Trevisan Semi, "How Muslims Remember the Departures of the Jews." See also Trevisan Semi, "Double Trauma and Manifold Narratives", 107–125.
24. Tsur, *A Torn Community*.
25. Historians such as Michel Abitbol (in *Juifs et Arabes au XXe siècle* (Paris: Perrin, 2007), and in the re-edition of his work *Les Juifs d'Afrique du Nord sous Vichy* (Paris: Riveneuve, 2008)), writers like Marcel Benabou and artists such as Gad Elmaleh, among others, have been sensitive to this question. I have too, in another way, on my CD-ROM, *Juifs marocains: traditions et modernité*, in collaboration with Joseph Lévy and in my other works on this question.

References

Abitbol, Michel. *The Jews of North Africa during the Second World War*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989.

———. *Juifs et Arabes au XXe siècle*. Paris: Perrin, 2007.

———. *Les Juifs d'Afrique du Nord sous Vichy*. Paris: Riveneuve, 2008.

Berdugo, Arlette. *Juives et Juifs dans le Maroc contemporain*. Paris: Geuthner, 2002.

Berdugo-Cohen, Marie, Yolande Cohen, and Joseph Lévy. *Juifs marocains à Montréal: témoignages d'une immigration moderne*. Montréal: VLB, 1987.

Bin-Nun, Yigal. "Psychosis or an Ability to Foresee the Future? The Contribution of the World Jewish Organizations to the Establishment of Rights for Jews in Independent Morocco, 1955–1961." *Revue Européenne d'Etudes Hébraïques* 10.2004 25–67.

Brière, Céline. *Les Juifs Sépharades à Montréal. Traces passagères et marqueurs spatiaux d'une minorité dans une métropole nord-américaine*. Diss: Université d'Angers, 1990.

Brym, Robert J., William Shaffir, and Morton Weinfeld. *The Jews in Canada*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Chétrit, Sami S. *The Mizrahi Struggle in Israel: 1948–2003* [Hebrew]. Tel-Aviv: Am-Oved, 2004.

Cohen, Yolande. "Juifs marocains: traditions et modernité." CD-ROM in collaboration with Joseph Lévy. Montreal: DoxaMedia, 2000.

———. "De Meknès à Montréal." *Genre & Histoire*, 6 (printemps 2010). <http://genrehistoire.revues.org/index1021.html>.

Cohen, Yolande, and Yann Scioldo-Zurcher. "Mariages exogames et migrations des Juifs marocains à Montréal et à Paris." *Proceedings of the conference Migrations, identité et modernité au Maghreb*, Essaouira, 17–20 March, 2010. Lyons: Presses de L' ENS, forthcoming.

Cohen, Yolande, and Joseph Lévy. "Élites et organisation communautaire chez les juifs marocains à Montréal: Du soleil à la liberté." *Annuaire de l'Émigration*. Rabat: Ministère des communautés marocaines vivant à l'étranger, 1995, 370–27.

Dinelle, Johanne, and Barrette-Dalphond. Andrée. *Femmes et judaïsme: les femmes immigrantes sépharades à Montréal*. Diss: University of Quebec at Montreal, 1985.

Elbaz, André. *Sépharadim d'hier et de demain: trois autobiographies d'immigrants Juifs marocains*. Ottawa: Musée Canadien des Civilisations, 1988.

Kenbib, Mohamed. *Juifs et musulmans au Maroc (1859–1948). Contribution à l'histoire des relations inter-communautaires en terre d'Islam*. Rabat: Université Mohamed V, Publication de la Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences humaines, Série —Thèses et mémoires, no. 21, 1994.

Laskier, Michael M. *North African Jewry in the Twentieth Century, The Jews of Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria*. New York: New York University Press, 1994.

Légaré, Maurice. "La population juive de Montréal est-elle victime d'une ségrégation qu'elle se serait elle-même imposée?" *Recherches sociographiques* 4.3 (septembre-décembre 1965): 312–25.

Lévy, André, and Alex Weingrod, eds. *Homelands and Diasporas, Holy Lands and Other Places*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005.

Shahar, Charles, and Elisabeth Perez. *Analyse du recensement de 2001*. Montréal: Fédération CJA, Octobre 2005: 22.

Stillman, Norman. *The Jews of Arab Lands in Modern Times*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991.

Trevisan-Semi, Emanuela. "Double Trauma and Manifold Narratives: Jews' and Muslims' Representations of the Departure of Moroccan Jews in the 1950s and 1960s.". *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 9 (2010) 107–25.

———. "How Muslims Remember the Departures of the Jews in Contemporary Morocco (The Case of Meknes)." Conference Remembering War, Genocide and Other Human Rights Violations: Oral History, New Media and the Arts. Concordia University Centre for Oral History & Digital Storytelling, November 5–8, 2009.

Shenhav, Yehouda. "Modernity and the Hybridization of Nationalism and Religion: Zionism and the Jews of the Middle East." *Theory & Society* 36 (2007): 1–30.

Trigano, Shmuel. *La fin du judaïsme en terres d'Islam*. Paris: Denoël, 2009.

Tsur, Yaron. *A Torn Community: The Jews of Morocco and Nationalism 1943–1954* [Hebrew]. Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 2001. (English translation forthcoming, Stanford University Press).

Yolande Cohen Member of the Royal Society of Canada. Yolande Cohen has been Full Professor of Contemporary European History at the University of Québec in Montréal (UQAM) since 1976. A specialist in the history of women and gender, Professor Cohen has principally worked on the history of social movements in France and Canada in the 20th century. She is the author of many works, and has recently published *Femmes philanthropes: catholiques, protestantes et juives dans les organisations caritatives au Québec* (2010) [Women philanthropists: Catholic, Protestant and Jewish charity associations in Quebec]. She is presently working on a comparison of Maghrebian Jewish Migrations, France–Quebec from 1945 to the present day. [email: marcel-fournier@cgocable.ca]