

egyptian jewish identities

communitarianisms, nationalisms, nostalgias

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In July 1954, Israeli Military Intelligence ordered an espionage network of Egyptian Jews it had formed three years earlier to launch "Operation Susannah" -- a campaign to fire bomb the main Alexandria post office, the United States Information Agency offices in Cairo and Alexandria, the Cairo train station, and several movie theaters in Cairo and Alexandria. The saboteurs (today we would call them terrorists, especially if they were Arabs or Muslims acting against Israel or the United States) were quickly apprehended and brought to trial in December 1954. The verdicts and sentences delivered in January 1955 spanned the range of options. Sami (Shmu`el) Azar and Musa (Moshe) Marzuq were sentenced to death along with the Israeli handlers of the network -- John Darling (Avraham Dar) and Paul Frank (Avraham Seidenweg) -- who were not apprehended and tried *in absentia*. Me'ir Meyuhas and Me'ir Za`fran received seven years in prison. Victor Levy and Philip Natanson were sentenced to fifteen years in prison. Marcelle Ninio and Robert Dassa were condemned to life in prison. Caesar Cohen and Eli Na`im were acquitted. Max Binnet, an Israeli spy apprehended with the network but not directly involved in its operations, committed suicide in jail.^[1] Here, I do not propose to revisit the perennial question in Israeli politics, "Who gave the order?" -- the focal point of a still unresolved political scandal labeled the "Lavon affair" or, in the sanitized discourse of national security, "the mishap" [*ha-`esek ha-bish*].^[2] Instead, I will use the apology for the operation offered in the name of four members of the network -- Marcelle Ninio, Victor Levy, Robert Dassa, and Philip Natanson -- to open a discussion of the identities and loyalties of Egyptian Jews.

After fourteen years in Egyptian jails, the four reached Israel in the prisoner exchange following the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. Their presence in the country was an official secret until 1971, when Prime Minister Golda Meir announced her intention to attend Marcelle Ninio's wedding. Not until March 1975, when the four told their story publicly for the first time on national television, did an Israeli government acknowledge that they had been trained and directed by the Israeli army. Aviezer Golan compiled an authorized collective memoir, *Operation Susannah* (the code name for the bombing campaign), and explained that their actions did not constitute treason against Egypt because

The foursome -- like all the other heroes of 'the mishap' -- were born and brought up in Egypt, but they never regarded themselves -- nor were they ever regarded by others -- as Egyptians. . . . They were typical members of Egypt's Jewish community. . . . It was a community with shallow roots. The Jews reached Egypt during the second half of the nineteenth century or the beginning of the twentieth. . . . [T]hey could not read or write Arabic, and spoke no more of the language than was necessary for the simplest daily needs. . . . All of Egypt's Jews could have been considered Zionists -- or, to be more precise, 'lovers of Zion.'^[3]

Golan, in the name of the four, emphasized the lack of Jewish affinity to Egypt. In contrast, at the press conference convened to announce the arrest of the saboteurs, Egyptian Minister of Interior Zakariyya Muhyi al-Din stressed that the majority of Egyptian Jews were loyal citizens like all other Egyptians. He claimed that some Jews approached by Israeli agents had refused to act against their homeland and that those who did succumbed to trickery or coercion.^[4] He vowed that the government would deal harshly with the minority of Jews who committed espionage and sabotage on Israel's behalf while continuing "to treat the non-Zionists with the kindness and respect due to every decent citizen."^[5] The prosecutor at the Cairo trial of the network summarized this official view in his concluding statement: "The Jews of Egypt are living among us and are sons of Egypt. Egypt makes no difference between its sons whether Moslems, Christians, or Jews. These defendants happen to be Jews who reside in Egypt, but we are trying them because they committed crimes against Egypt, although they are Egypt's sons."^[6] Photo essays on the trial in the weekly *al-Musawwar* and daily reports of the proceedings in *al-Ahram* reiterated that the accused were not being tried as Jews, but

as spies and saboteurs, while loyal Jewish citizens continued to live peacefully and without discrimination.[\[7\]](#)

These contradictory representations of the identity and consequent obligations of Egyptian Jews are products of the national narratives of Israel and Egypt. Both national projects required Jews to identify unequivocally with one or the other. Any ambivalence was an unacceptable betrayal of the nation state and its imperatives. But until the dispersion of the community after the 1956 Suez/Sinai War, Egyptian Jews maintained more complex multiple identities and loyalties than can be accommodated by either of the contending national narratives. Their responses to the demands for loyalty from the emerging national states of Egypt and Israel were inflected by differences of class, ethnic origin, religious rite, educational formation, political outlook, and personal accident. Yet few could embrace fully the options of official state-centered identities. Forced to decide between Egypt and Israel, most chose neither. Decades after the liquidation of the community, some Egyptian Jews have reclaimed their Levantine cosmopolitanism through nostalgic literary reconstructions of Egypt that challenge the canons of Zionist discourse and simultaneously resist the discourse of Egyptian nationalism.

between two homelands: egyptian jewish representations of egypt

The Jewish connection to Egypt, even if partly mythological, is ancient. The Biblical stories of Abraham, Joseph, and the Exodus incorporate Egypt into the sacred geography of the Jewish tradition, and these narratives were regularly invoked. The 1942 *Yearbook of Egyptian Jewry*, whose editor, Maurice Fargeon, openly declared his Zionist sympathies, proudly reviewed the Jewish bond to Egypt:

The history of the Jewish people has been linked, since the remotest times, to that of Egypt. Already in the time of the pharaohs of the first dynasties we find Joseph sold by his brothers becoming, because of his great wisdom and profound judgment, a powerful minister in the valley of the Nile. . . .the children of Israel went to Goshen (a province of Egypt) at the call of Joseph. . . .Moses, the most sublime figure of Israel, the first legislator, emerged from the womb of Egypt. . . . Thus the first chalutzim [pioneers] of history were the Jews of Egypt led by Moses and then Joshua.[\[8\]](#)

According to Fargeon, some Jews did not leave Egypt at the time of Moses but remained and moved to Asyut, where they formed a tribe of warriors. They were later joined by refugees, including the prophet Jeremiah and his secretary Baruch, fleeing the Babylonian conquest of Judea.[\[9\]](#) The 1945-46 edition of the *Yearbook of Egyptian Jewry* reiterated the historic link between Jews and Egypt, and risked offending religious sentiment by suggesting that the source of Jewish monotheism was the ancient Egyptian cult of Ra. The anonymous author of this article (probably Maurice Fargeon) claimed that many Jewish rituals, symbols, and precepts -- circumcision, the candelabrum, the altar, the design of the pillars of the Temple, even several of the Ten Commandments -- derived from ancient Egypt.[\[10\]](#) These assertions are probably drawn from Renan's *The History of the People of Israel*, a popular text among rationalist francophone Jews. The dubious evidence supporting them does not diminish their significance in the construction of the identity and self-presentation of Egyptian Jews. As Renan himself noted, "Getting its history wrong is part of being a nation."[\[11\]](#)

Recapitulating these stories affirmed the ancient bond of Jews with Egypt, hence the legitimacy of their residence there. This history implicitly disputed the positions of Young Egypt and the Society of Muslim Brothers who were, by the late 1930s, antagonistic to the Jewish presence, as well as the Zionist goal of "negation of the diaspora." Referring to Egyptian Jews as pioneers did link them to the Zionist settlement project in Palestine. Fargeon certainly knew that only a small minority of Egyptian Jews supported political Zionism. Perhaps by noting their contribution to the pioneering effort 3,000 years ago, he tacitly excused them for neglecting this enterprise in the twentieth century. Moreover, since even in the time of Moses some Jews remained in Egypt, it would be unreasonable to expect all of Egyptian Jewry to emigrate to Palestine in the twentieth century.

Between the two world wars, many Jews felt no contradiction between Zionist and Egyptian national commitments. In an open letter to Haim Nahum Effendi, the Chief Rabbi of Egypt, the editor of the Arabic/French pro-Zionist periodical *Isra'il/Isra'îl*, Albert D. Mosseri, asked the rabbi to, "Please explain to our brothers that one can be an excellent patriot of the country of one's birth while being a perfect Jewish nationalist. One does not exclude the other."[\[12\]](#) Rabbi Nahum, a consistent anti-Zionist throughout his tenure in office (1924-60), did not accede to this request.

Several Egyptian Jews did participate in both national movements. Liḳ̄ʿon Castro conducted propaganda for the Wafd party in Europe after the 1919 nationalist uprising and founded and edited a pro-Wafd French language newspaper, *La Liberté*; ½, after returning to Egypt. He was simultaneously the head of the Zionist Organization of Cairo and the representative of the Jewish Agency for Palestine in Egypt. Fiḳ̄ʿlix Benzakein was a member of the Wafd, a deputy in parliament, a member of the Alexandria rabbinical court, and president of the Zionist Organization of Alexandria. Despite his Zionist commitments, Benzakein remained in Egypt until 1960, when he emigrated to the United States.[13] The intensification of the Arab-Zionist conflict in Palestine during the Arab revolt of 1936-39 strained such dual commitments, and they became virtually impossible after the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. Yet as late as 1965 Shlomo Kohen-Tzidon, a native of Alexandria who emigrated to Israel in 1949 and eventually became a member of the Knesset, published a book memorializing Shmu'el Azar -- one of the two Egyptian Jews executed for their role in Operation Susannah -- whose central argument, in contrast to prevailing opinion in Israel, was that an accommodation and understanding between the Egyptian and Israeli national movements was possible and desirable.[14]

For Zionist historiography, the creation of the state of Israel and the 1948 war signal the end of the Egyptian Jewish community. Some 500 Zionist activists were interned in Huckstep, Abu Qir, and al-Tur (along with several hundred communists, including many Jews, and Muslim Brothers).[15] The property of those suspected of Zionist activity was sequestered, pro-Zionist Jewish newspapers were closed, and Zionism was declared illegal. The government did little to protect Egyptian Jews and their property from bombings and other attacks generally attributed to the Muslim Brothers during the summer of 1948, not necessarily because it was in sympathy with them, but because it sought to avoid a confrontation with its internal opponents on a complex issue. It would have been difficult to explain vigorously defending the Jews of Egypt to the public in the middle of a war against the Jews of Palestine. Between 1948 and 1950, 20,000 Jews left Egypt, of whom 14,428 reached Israel.[16] Conditions began to improve when Ibrahim `Abd al-Hadi became Prime Minister in early 1949. By the time the Wafd returned to power in January 1950, all the prisoners had been released from internment, and many Jews felt it would be possible to return to life as it was before the war.

A Zionist activist who left Egypt in late 1949 reported to the Jewish Agency's Department for Middle Eastern Jewry that many of his compatriots felt there would be peace between Egypt and Israel sooner or later and that neighborly relations would be resumed. He affirmed the historic Jewish link to Egypt in the same terms used by the *Yearbook of Egyptian Jewry*:

The Jewish people has taken root in Egypt and the most beautiful Jewish figures resided in that country or came there seeking refuge: Joseph, the first minister of supply in history, our great legislator Moses, Philo of Alexandria, Saadia Hagaon, Maimonides. . . .Our Torah, the most beautiful achievement of the spirit, the charter of humanity, was given to us on Mt. Sinai, land of Egypt.[17]

A few months later Haim Sha'ul, a clandestine Zionist emissary who returned to his native Egypt to organize immigration to Israel, reported that an important Jewish community would continue to live in Egypt and that it was necessary to think about how to organize it.[18] Some 50,000 Jews remained in Egypt until after the 1956 Suez/Sinai War. As late as 1961, when less than 10,000 Jews remained in Egypt, long-time Zionist activist Fiḳ̄ʿlix Benzakein believed that "one day [Jews]. . . will come back in peace to resume our unalterable friendship with the [Egyptian] people." [19] Ultimately, about one-third of all Egyptian Jews resettled in Israel; others reestablished their communities in Europe and the Americas.

millet, minority and citizenship

Aviezer Golan's desire to justify Israeli-inspired espionage and sabotage led him to overlook much that was significant, yet not easily contained by the Israeli national narrative. But the Egyptian national narrative is similarly flawed because the secular-liberal conception of the Egyptian nation invoked by Zakariyya Muhyi al-Din and other Egyptian officials during the trial of the perpetrators of Operation Susannah has never been fully realized. Until 1914, Egypt was a part of the Ottoman Empire, and its Jewish residents were juridically a religious community protected by a Muslim state. The community's affairs were governed by autonomous institutions in accord with the Ottoman *millet* system. Its members consisted of those who accepted the authority of Jewish law [*halakhah*] as interpreted and applied by rabbinical courts,

though by the twentieth century few Jews resorted to these courts except for matters of personal status -- marriage, divorce, burial, inheritance.

This millet identity can be termed communitarianism: the world-view and self-perception of Jews (and other non-Muslims) living in a multi-ethnic, multi-religious empire. There was a high level of toleration, communal autonomy, and cultural symbiosis among Muslims, Christians, and Jews. Individual Jews achieved high positions in the political and economic arenas in late Ottoman and monarchical Egypt. But Muslims occupied the leading military and political positions, and their right to do so was not seriously challenged. This is radically different from current American notions of multi-culturalism because the Ottoman political field was defined by a hierarchical relationship among religious communities and very few people believed that individuals could or should be detached from their religious communities. The installation of the formal apparatus of liberal democracy in Egypt reformed the citizenry into a "majority" and "minorities" and created new forms of hierarchy that were somewhat less transparent because of the liberal discourse of equality.

The secularist slogan of the 1919 nationalist uprising -- "Religion is for God and the homeland is for all" [*al-din li-Allah wa'l-watan li'l-jami`*] -- invited Jews to claim their place as citizens of the Egyptian nation, and some did so. Yet even in the 1920s, the hegemony of secular territorial nationalism was challenged on two fronts by the persistence of colonial privilege and Islamic conceptions of the polity. From 1876 to 1949, the legal affairs of foreign citizens were adjudicated in mixed courts, which Europeans commonly regarded as more "advanced" and modern than the indigenous legal system. But preserving a zone of legal separatism reproduced elements of Ottoman-style community autonomy that undermined liberal notions of citizenship.

The legal autonomy of non-Muslims was not solely a product of colonialism. Until 1955, Egypt recognized the communal courts of all its religious communities. The state colluded in undermining its sovereignty for over three decades because the authority of Islamic *shari`a* courts derived from the same conceptual order that sustained the non-Muslim religious courts. Until Gamal `Abdel Nasser, no political leader commanded sufficient authority to challenge it.

By the late 1930s, the limited character of the independence achieved in 1922 and the inevitable reaction against it eroded liberal territorial conceptions of the nation. British collusion with the monarchy in undermining parliamentary democracy, the continuing British military occupation, the privileged position of Europeans, the intensifying Arab-Zionist conflict in Palestine, and the rise of fascism and communism in Europe led many Egyptians to reject liberal conceptions of the nation and to rearticulate their nationalism in either pan-Arab or Islamist terms, though these had long been elements in the cultural repertoire from which Egyptians drew their self-conceptions.^[20] Such orientations implicitly excluded Jews from membership in the nation, either because they were not Muslims or because Jews were uncomfortable with militant pan-Arabist anti-Zionism and the pro-German sentiments of some Arab nationalists.

At the turn of the twentieth century, autochthonous Jews entitled to Egyptian citizenship by the 1929 nationality law and its successors comprised at least half of the Jewish community.^[21] But in 1948, only 5-10,000 of Egypt's 70-80,000 Jews held Egyptian citizenship. Some 40,000 were stateless, and 30,000 were foreign nationals.^[22] Many of the 10,000 poor, Arabic-speaking residents of the Jewish quarter [*harat al-yahud*] in the Gamaliyya district of Cairo or the 15,000 residents of the port district [*harat al-liman*] of Alexandria were among the stateless.^[23] Jews with foreign citizenship typically acquired it in the colonial era, when the category of Egyptian citizen did not exist, and did not believe that it impugned their identity as Egyptians, though most Egyptians felt otherwise.

Establishing citizenship, like many other transactions between the Egyptian state and its subjects, was a cumbersome procedure. Until the enactment of the Company Law of 1947 requiring firms to employ fixed quotas of Egyptians, those who did not travel abroad had no need for a certificate of citizenship and rarely bothered to obtain it. Chief Rabbi Nahum encouraged eligible Jews to apply for citizenship during the 1930s and 1940s, but despite the nominally liberal language of the law, their applications were often subjected to bureaucratic delay and rejection.^[24] Such practices were not directed specifically at Jews; members of other non-Muslim communities long resident in Egypt -- Syrian Christians, Greeks, Italians, Armenians -- were treated in a similar manner.

Egyptian Jews, like others trapped by the false promises of liberalism, blended elements of communitarianism and nationalism in practices and world views shaped by the European presence in the Middle East yet incompatible with the

logic of the nation state. In what follows, I examine sectors of the Egyptian Jewish community -- the Karaites, the haute bourgeoisie, the Zionist youth movement *ha-`Ivri ha-Tza`ir* [The Young Hebrew], and, to a lesser extent because I have treated them elsewhere, the communists -- whose outlook and activities resist incorporation into the national narratives of Egypt and Israel.[\[25\]](#)

the karaites: an arab-jewish community

The Karaite Jews of Egypt, numbering about 5,000 by 1948, were part of a small minority within Judaism who reject the validity of the Talmud as a source of Jewish law.[\[26\]](#) Karaites have lived in Egypt for over 1,000 years, mainly in Cairo's *harat al-yahud*. They were fully integrated into Cairo's ethnic division of labor and typically worked as goldsmiths and jewelers. Remnants of their historic role persist in the Karaite family names of firms in Cairo's gold market, like al-Sirgani, though no Karaites remain in the trade, and few Egyptians are aware of the origin of these names. In the twentieth century, wealthier Karaites began to move to `Abbasiyya and Heliopolis and to adopt elements of bourgeois, francophone, cosmopolitan culture. But in all respects except religious practice, the daily life of the Karaites of *harat al-yahud* was indistinguishable from that of their Muslim neighbors.

In March 1901, the Karaite communal council was reorganized and recognized by the Egyptian state.[\[27\]](#) The somewhat archaic Arabic name of this body (*majlis milli*) expresses the Karaites's self-conception as a communal-religious Ottoman millet.[\[28\]](#) The editor of the community newspaper explained, "Our community's existence is based on religion so it is our first duty to preserve our religion and to behave in accord with the law of our lord Moses" [*shari`at sayyidina Musa*].[\[29\]](#) When the shaykh of al-Azhar died in 1945, Karaite Chief Rabbi Tuvia Levi Babovitch attended the funeral, and the community newspaper extended condolences "to the Egyptian nation and the Eastern countries" [*al-umma al-misriyya wa'l-aqtar al-sharqiyya*] -- a formulation implying that Egypt was a Muslim country, not a liberal secular state in which religion was irrelevant to citizenship.[\[30\]](#) The same conception motivated the congratulations offered to "the Egyptian people" on the Muslim feast of *`id al-adha*.[\[31\]](#) Similarly, the community greeted "the Christian peoples" [*al-umam al-masihyya*] on the occasion of "the foreign new year" [*ra's al-sana al-ifranjiyya*].[\[32\]](#)

The Karaites's historical narrative legitimated their presence in Egypt with reference to its Islamic history and the protected status of Jews according to Islamic law. One account claimed that Karaites resided in Egypt when it was conquered for Islam by `Amr Ibn al-`As, who gave them a plot of land at Basatin (near Ma`adi) as a communal cemetery and exempted them from paying the *jizya* tax. Another traced the Karaite presence in Egypt to the eighth century, the time of Anan Ben David, whom Rabbanites consider the founder of the Karaite sect.[\[33\]](#) Both versions affirmed that, except during the reign of the Fatimid Sultan al-Hakim, Karaites enjoyed good relations with their Muslim neighbors.[\[34\]](#)

These linguistic usages and historical narratives are imbedded in the categories of Arabo-Muslim culture. By the 1940s most Karaites had only partially assimilated the liberal notions of citizenship and nationality recently introduced to Egypt. They saw themselves as a protected religious minority in a Muslim country, employed concepts and institutions derived from the Islamic cultural and political tradition, and explained their Egyptian identity in those terms.

At the same time, educated Karaite youth, responding to the mass murder of European Jews and the widespread hopes for a new world in the post-World War II era, began to feel constrained by the limits of communitarianism. Some were not particularly interested in religion, did not pray regularly, did not observe the Sabbath scrupulously, and used Passover *matzah* [unleavened bread] baked by Rabbanite Jews.[\[35\]](#) The Young Karaite Jewish Association (YKJA) was formed in 1945 by educated youth seeking to establish a modern identity for their community. They published an Arabic bi-monthly, *al-Kalim* [The Spokesman], which appeared regularly until 1956 and promoted a program of communal reform including the study of Hebrew and modern forms of sociability such as the Karaite boy scout troop, the Karaite youth orchestra, theater performances, sports activities, and outings of young men and women to the Pyramids, Saqqara, the Barrages, and Ma`adi. *Al-Kalim* also campaigned to improve the status of women.[\[36\]](#) This orientation demonstrated considerable strength when the YKJA challenged Rabbi Babovitch and the community council by supporting a slate of candidates in the council elections of 1946. Seven of its ten candidates were elected.[\[37\]](#) Except for the particularity of Hebrew (which has its parallel in Muhammad `Abduh's efforts to reform the

study of Arabic), the activities encouraged by the YKJA were the same as those embraced by liberal Egyptian nationalists seeking to create modern, bourgeois citizens, though conducting them within the Karaite community reinforced communitarianism as much as it promoted nationalism.

In this spirit, an editor of *al-Kalim*, Eli Amin Lisha`, criticized the Karaites's social isolation. He reproached Rabbi Babovitch for failing to visit the newly appointed *shaykh* of al-Azhar in 1946 or to greet King Faruq when he returned to Cairo from Alexandria and urged the community to participate in Egyptian national holidays "because our Egyptian citizenship requires this." This would win the affection of "our Egyptian brothers" and increase their sympathy for the community.[38] Lisha`'s appeal to assume the responsibilities of national citizenship acknowledged that Karaite practices and outlooks were still largely communitarian. Moreover, his concern for the community's image in the eyes of other Egyptians is itself a form of communitarian sentiment.

The editors of *al-Kalim* linked the project of communal reform to the Egyptian national revival and regarded Karaite Jews as Egyptians in all respects. The newspaper's front page often featured the cartoon figure of "Abu Ya`qub" -- the Jewish counterpart of "al-Misri Effendi," who symbolized the modern, educated, Egyptian nationalist.[39] Sometimes the two were shown walking arm in arm; sometimes Abu Ya`qub appeared alone, accompanied by an article on his Egyptian character. *Al-Kalim* repeatedly referred to Karaites as "*abna' al-balad*" [sons of the country], a populist term connoting authentic Egyptians. Language, dress, and gender relations were commonly cited as markers of the Karaites's authentic Egyptian identity.

The language of instruction in the Karaite communal schools was Arabic. Even today, many Karaites who live in Israel speak Egyptian Arabic as their daily language. *Al-Kalim* proudly noted that Karaite dialect and usage was indistinguishable from that of other Cairenes.[40] Even in referring to contested localities for which Jews and Arabs used different names, *al-Kalim* used Arabic not Hebrew terms -- "Nablus" [Shkhem], "al-Quds al-sharif" [Jerusalem], and "Filastin" [the Land of Israel].[41]

Karaites were fully integrated into Arabo-Egyptian culture. *Al-Kalim* often published poetry in colloquial Egyptian [*zagal*], an art commonly considered a marker of cultural authenticity.[42] The poet laureate of the community, Murad Farag, composed both *zagal* and standard Arabic *qasidas*. His style was said to resemble that of Ahmad Shawqi, a leading twentieth-century Egyptian poet.[43] *Al-Kalim*'s editor-in-chief, Yusuf Kamal, was the son of Da'ud Husni (1870-1937), a major figure in modern Arabic music and composer of the first Egyptian opera, "Samson and Dalilah." Each year on the anniversary of his death, *al-Kalim* celebrated Husni's artistic accomplishments, sometimes reprinting articles from other Arabic publications affirming the nationalist contribution of his music.[44]

According to *al-Kalim*, Karaite men wore *sharawil* [baggy pants] and *tarabish* [fezes] like other Egyptians, and there was "almost no difference in outward appearance between the Karaite woman and her Muslim friend." [45] The Karaites, unlike their Rabbanite brothers, were "Eastern" and "conservative" in their social customs. Karaite women did participate in mixed cultural and sports clubs, but this was legitimate because it encouraged marriage and did not violate propriety, as women of other communities had already done the same.[46] This comment acknowledged changes in Karaite gender relations while affirming the norms of Middle Eastern patriarchy and a communitarian outlook. The author of this article in *al-Kalim* emulated the Egyptian nationalist movement in assigning to women the burden of cultural authenticity while promoting moderate reforms in their status so that they could become proper companions for male citizens.

The relationship between the Karaite community court and the Egyptian state illustrates the unstable amalgam of communitarianism and the demands of citizenship informing Karaite practices by the 1950s. Like all the non-Muslim religious communities, the Karaites opposed the abolition of religious courts despite nationalist criticism of this institution. *Al-Kalim* reprinted an article in *al-Ahram* arguing that these courts were not an Ottoman innovation (hence not properly Egyptian), but a valid Islamic institution established in the time of the Prophet.[47] Each year the link between the Karaite court and the state was renewed when the governor of Cairo confirmed its members, who were required by law to be Egyptian citizens. In October 1949, the judges who had served the previous year were reappointed by the community council. An official of the governorate sent to certify the citizenship of the judges rejected their claims to be Egyptians and demanded that they obtain certificates of citizenship. This official admitted that he, like most Egyptians, did not have such a certificate. Jacques Mangubi, the head of the communal council and a

senior employee of Bank Misr, then explained, "It is known that we are Egyptians. The government must determine if we are foreigners or Egyptians. And as long as we are not foreigners, then we are Egyptians." Yusuf Kamal affirmed that the members of the court were Egyptians, but that it was difficult for them to obtain certificates of citizenship "for reasons not hidden from anyone." He advised the government to expedite the procedures for certifying citizenship and to facilitate granting certificates to all Egyptians regardless of religion.[48] This was an unusually bold criticism of the government and a departure from the loyalist quietism typical of the Karaite community.

Most Karaites were entitled to be and wanted to be Egyptian citizens, but met with official resistance to their claim. Yet a low-level state official might well be uncertain about the identity of even this most Egyptian of all Jewish communities. As Eli Amin Lisha` acknowledged, "some [Karaites] have French or Russian citizenship even though they and their fathers have never left the country, and this is because citizenship used to be sold, and a Karaite may have bought it though he is 100 percent Egyptian" [*wa-huwa masri lahman wa-daman*]. [49] This incident indicates, in a small but crucial way, that non-Zionist Jews were not treated exactly like other Egyptians, as the government and press claimed during the trial of the Operation Susannah conspirators, even though they might have wished to be.

There is probably a measure of defensiveness in *al-Kalim's* representation of the Karaite community, because articles stressing its Egyptian character appeared after events threatening the status of Jews in Egypt, such as the anti-Zionist demonstrations on the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration on Nov. 2, 1945 that degenerated into anti-Jewish riots and the start of the first Arab-Israeli war on May 15, 1948. But many such articles were unconnected to any crisis. [50] Even if its insistence on the Egyptian identity of the Karaites was strategically motivated, *al-Kalim* was an Arabic publication and the only organ of the Karaite community from 1945 to 1956 giving substance to the claim. The Karaite community was deeply imbued with Egyptian Arab culture while remaining fully Jewish in its own terms.

This included a religiously based love of Zion but no organized involvement with political Zionism. [51] The *he-Halutz* [Pioneer] Zionist youth movement (see below) tried to organize Karaites and Rabbanites in *harat al-yahud*, but with limited success. The Cairo Zionist Federation had no ties with Karaites, and few residents of *harat al-yahud* belonged to Zionist youth movements. [52]

Murad Farag, the leading intellectual of the community, had long advocated closer relations between Karaites and Rabbanites. He encouraged some of the educated youth around *al-Kalim* who were unsatisfied by the communitarianism of their elders to seek contacts with the Rabbanites, who were considered more "advanced." Stepping beyond the boundaries of their community exposed these Karaite youth to the full range of political orientations of the post-World War II era, and some became Zionists. Farag's closest disciple, Maurice Shammas, wrote for the Rabbanite Arabic newspaper, *al-Shams* [The Sun], between 1946 and 1948 and then for *al-Kalim* before he emigrated to Israel in 1951. Several hundred young Karaites emigrated to Israel between 1948 and 1956 against the advice of Chief Rabbi Babovitch. [53]

The best-known Karaite involved in organized Zionist activity was Moshe Marzuq, who was executed for his role in Operation Susannah. He was a member of *he-Halutz* and the underground self-defense [*Haganah*] organization established by emissaries from Palestine in 1946 before becoming a spy and saboteur for Israel. As a physician in Cairo's Rabbanite Jewish hospital, the son of a wealthy family, and a French citizen, his social and cultural milieu was not limited to *harat al-yahud*, and this explains his receptivity to Zionism.

Marzuq's arrest and execution had a chilling affect on the community. Yet a significant proportion of the community remained in Egypt until the 1960s. Because most Karaites were thoroughly Arabized and defined themselves in terms rooted in their experience as an Ottoman millet, they tended to remain in Egypt longer than Rabbanites. Ultimately, they could not resist the forces reshaping the Egyptian political community in ways that effectively excluded Jews.

cosmopolitanism and egyptianism: the jewish haute bourgeoisie

If Karaites regarded themselves as Egyptians on the basis of their long residence and Arabic culture, the Jewish haute bourgeoisie did not believe that their lack of these attributes made them any less Egyptian. This segment of the community was comprised largely of Sephardic immigrants from Aleppo, Istanbul, Izmir, Salonika, and Tunis who found refuge and opportunity in the expanding economy created by the cotton boom and the opening of the Suez Canal.

These locales were part of the Ottoman Empire, as was Egypt until 1914, so the Jewish immigrants were not juridically foreigners. They were Arabic and, occasionally, Turkish speakers, and their "Eastern" culture allowed them to acclimate easily.

Kinship connections throughout the Mediterranean basin, a long tradition of diasporic commercial activity, and participation in the local cultures of the Levant and overseas French culture enabled Jewish businessmen to function as commercial intermediaries between Europe and the Ottoman realms and to obtain foreign citizenship in the process. In the shadow of British colonial rule, from 1882 to 1922, several Sephardic families established business enterprises on their own and in conjunction with European, and then later Muslim Egyptian, partners. These alliances became prominent institutions of the Egyptian business class during the first half of the twentieth century and linked the prosperity of the Jewish haute bourgeoisie to Egypt and its future.

Yusuf `Aslan Qattawi (Cattawi) Pasha (1861-1942), president of the Sephardic Jewish community council of Cairo from 1924 to 1942, was the most visible Egyptian Jew of the interwar era, not only because of his leadership of the community, but perhaps even more so because of his extensive business and political activity.^[54] He studied engineering in France, returning to Egypt to work for a time in the Ministry of Public Works, and then left to study the sugar refining industry in Moravia. Returning to Egypt, Yusuf `Aslan Pasha became a director of the Egyptian Sugar Company and president of the Kom Ombo Company, which developed and cultivated sugar on 70,000 acres of desert land in Aswan Province. Building from this base in the sugar industry, the Qattawis established several industrial, financial, and real estate enterprises in collaboration with the Suari¹/₂s and other Jewish families, amassing considerable economic and political power.

Tal`at Harb, the founder of Bank Misr and apostle of Egyptian economic nationalism, began his career in the employ of the Suari¹/₂s and Qattawi families, first at the Da'irah Saniyeh Company and then as a managing director of the Kom Ombo Company.^[55] He acknowledged his debt to the Suari¹/₂s and Qattawis and maintained close relations with the Cairo Jewish business elite. When Tal`at Harb established Bank Misr in 1920, he invited two prominent Jews with whom he had collaborated on the Executive Committee of the Egyptian Chamber of Commerce and the Commission on Commerce and Industry, Yusuf `Aslan Qattawi and Yusuf Cicurel, to join him as founding directors, and Qattawi became Vice-President of the board.

The Qattawi family claimed residence in Egypt since the eighth century, and Yusuf `Aslan identified himself as an Egyptian of Jewish faith. Under his leadership, the Cairo Sephardic Jewish community council adopted a consistent non-Zionist position.^[56] Though his grandfather apparently acquired Austrian citizenship, Yusuf `Aslan was an Egyptian citizen, as this was a condition for membership on the board of Bank Misr. His French education was not a marker of otherness or a political liability; it was a symbol of modernity and progress common to the sons of the landed elite, the business community, and many leading intellectuals of the early twentieth century.

The Qattawi family's Egyptian identity was reinforced by its ties to the royal family and political activism. Yusuf `Aslan received the title of Pasha in 1912. He was an appointed deputy for Kom Ombo from 1915 to 1922, and his parliamentary colleagues elected him to the committee to draft the 1923 Constitution. He served as a minister in two pro-monarchist governments in 1924-25, though he was forced to resign because he maintained correct personal relations with Sa`d Zaghlul. King Fu'ad appointed him to the Senate in 1927. His wife, Alice (ni¹/₂e Suari¹/₂s) was first lady of honor to queens Farida and Nazli. Though he was a monarchist and did not support the Wafd, Yusuf `Aslan Qattawi considered himself an Egyptian patriot. His nationalism was socially conservative and business oriented, not unlike that of Tal`at Harb.

His sons, `Aslan Bey (1890-1956?) and Reni¹/₂ Bey (1896-?), succeeded him in both the political and business arenas. Both were educated in Switzerland, but like their father they insistently asserted their Egyptian identity and cultivated the family's relationship with the royal family. When Yusuf `Aslan Pasha retired from the Senate in 1938, King Faruq appointed `Aslan to take his father's place. The same year Reni¹/₂ was elected deputy for Kom Ombo. Both retained their positions until 1953, when the parliament was dissolved by the regime of the Free Officers.

Reni¹/₂ Qattawi inherited his father's leadership of the Cairo Sephardic Jewish community. He urged Jews to see themselves as an integral part of the Egyptian nation and in 1935 encouraged the formation of the Association of

Egyptian Jewish Youth whose manifesto proclaiming "Egypt is our homeland, Arabic is our language" called on Jews to take part in the Egyptian national renaissance.[57] The Association of Egyptian Jewish Youth and its newspaper, *al-Shams*, supported Reni Qattawi for the presidency of the Cairo Sephardic Jewish community council as the candidate best able to promote the Arabization and Egyptianization of the community.[58] He was elected and served from 1943 to 1946.

Reni Qattawi aggressively opposed political Zionism, which gained significant support for the first time during World War II. In November 1944 he and Edwin Goar, vice-president of the Alexandria Jewish community, sent a "Note on the Jewish Question" to a meeting of the World Jewish Congress in Atlantic City, arguing that Palestine could not absorb all the European Jewish refugees and noting Egypt's exemplary treatment of its Jews.[59] In late 1944 and early 1945, Qattawi carried on a sharp correspondence with Lion Castro demanding that Castro close the camps operated by the Zionist youth movements. Qattawi was unable to impose his will on the Zionist elements of the community council, and this was apparently the cause of his resignation in August 1946.[60]

The Qattawi family maintained extensive business relationships with all the leading Muslim families in the emerging Egyptian bourgeoisie of the inter-war period. Such inter-communal business alliances were common among other wealthy and powerful bourgeois Jewish families: Adis, Aghion, Goar, Mosseri, Nahman, Pinto, Rolos, Tilche. Other bourgeois Jewish families operated within an "ethnic economy." [61] This was the case of the Cicurel family after the 1920s. In 1909 Moreno Cicurel, an immigrant from Izmir, opened a large department store in the heart of the European section of Cairo.[62] Moreno's three sons were born in Cairo, and the family must have become Egyptian citizens by 1920, when his second son, Yusuf Cicurel, became a director of Bank Misr. Although Yusuf Cicurel participated in several of Bank Misr's ventures in the 1920s, his younger brother Salvator devoted most of his attention to the family business. The Cicurel store became the central concern of the family after the 1920s, when it developed into Egypt's largest and most fashionable department store chain: Les Grand Magasins Cicurel et Oreco. In addition to his managing the family business, his active sports life, and his service to the Egyptian state on various economic commissions, Salvator was an active leader of the Jewish community. He served on Cairo's Sephardic Jewish community council and succeeded Reni Qattawi as president from 1946 to 1957.

The Cicurel store had a foreign cultural character due to its largely non-citizen Jewish staff, its exclusive and largely imported merchandise, and the use of French by employees and customers on the shop floor. Nonetheless, a memorandum submitted to the Ministry of Commerce described the firm as "one of the pillars of our economic independence." [63] This apparent contradiction could not be indefinitely maintained. At the outbreak of the Suez War, unlike in 1948, the Cicurel firm was placed under sequestration. The store was quickly reopened, but the Cicurel family soon ceded its majority holding to a new group headed by Muslim Egyptians. In 1957, Salvator Cicurel left Egypt for France.

Regardless of the character of their business activity, most of the older Jewish bourgeoisie embraced loyalist, Egyptianist sentiments -- a natural accompaniment to their comfortable lives and prominence in many sectors of the Egyptian economy. In 1943, when Jews constituted less than 0.5 percent of Egypt's population, they comprised over 15 percent of all directors of joint-stock companies.[64] A substantial portion of the Jewish bourgeoisie remained in Egypt after 1948. The annual volumes of *The Egyptian Who's Who* list the most prominent names in commerce, industry, law, and politics. Fifty-two percent of those names I could identify as Jews in the 1947 edition remained in Egypt and continued to be listed on the eve of the 1956 war. Over one hundred new Jewish names were added to the directory during the 1950s, and as late as 1959, at least 181 Jews were listed.[65]

Thus, between the Arab-Israeli wars of 1948 and 1956 a substantial portion of the Jewish elite remained in Egypt and continued to play a significant, though diminishing, role in its economic life. This elite did not, in the main, immigrate to Israel after leaving Egypt. Like Jews throughout the Middle East in the 1950s who abandoned their countries of origin with the intensification of the Arab-Israeli conflict, most of those who had a choice went to Europe or the Americas.

french culture, radical politics, and jewish youth

In 1860 the Paris-based Alliance Israélite Universelle embarked on a Jewish "mission civilisatrice," to uplift and

modernize the Jews of the Middle East by imbuing them with French education and culture.^[66] French opposition to British imperial policy in Egypt throughout the nineteenth century allowed many Egyptians, not only Jews, to embrace French culture as an acceptable form of European modernity, and, by the late nineteenth century, French was the *lingua franca* of the entire Egyptian business community. Knowledge of a European language was virtually a requirement for a white-collar job in the modern private sector of the economy and constituted significant cultural capital, so many Egyptian Jews willingly underwent de-Arabization.

The political inflection of a French education in Egypt was often towards the left. Many French teachers, even in the Catholic schools, were leftists participating in a national-secular program of cultural imperialism -- the *mission laïque* [lay mission]. Consequently, many students in French schools -- Muslims and Christians as well as Jews -- became Marxists of one sort or another. Marxism entered the Jewish schools through French teachers or emissaries from Palestine, where socialist Zionism was hegemonic. These schools became centers of the Zionist youth movements, who proposed that Jewish youth transcend what they were by becoming Jewish nationalists. The largest and most active of these movements was *ha-Ivri ha-Tza'ir* [The Young Hebrew], the Egyptian branch of *ha-Shomer ha-Tza'ir* [The Young Guard]. *Ha-Shomer ha-Tza'ir* embraced Zionism and internationalism simultaneously, though usually unsuccessfully. The youth movement and its kibbutzim of *ha-Kibutz ha-'Artzi* [The National Kibbutz] federation had a strong pro-Soviet left wing which strove to minimize the differences between their Marxist-Zionism and Soviet-style Marxism-Leninism.^[67] Until November 29, 1947, when the United Nations General Assembly voted to partition Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state, *ha-Shomer ha-Tza'ir* opposed establishing a Jewish state and favored a binational Arab-Jewish state.

Since their social background and political positions had much in common, there were constant ideological debates between members of *ha-Ivri ha-Tza'ir* and the Jewish communists. The pressure of constant debate with the communists and the personal influence of their emissary from Palestine, Eli Peleg, a strong supporter of the movement's left wing who eventually became a communist, led *ha-Ivri ha-Tza'ir* to take its Marxism very seriously. To be sure, *Ha-Ivri ha-Tza'ir*'s conception of binationalism and Arab-Jewish coexistence in Palestine was naive and paternalistic. Nonetheless, the Arab presence in Palestine and the surrounding countries was far more concrete for Egyptian members of *ha-Ivri ha-Tza'ir* than it could be for their European or American counterparts.

Between 1938 and 1944, five branches of *ha-Ivri ha-Tza'ir* were established in Egypt, three in Cairo and two in Alexandria, with 700-800 members.^[68] Three groups of graduates left for Palestine between 1945 and 1947 and eventually established Kibbutz Nahshonim, leaving some 500 members in Egypt by May 15, 1948. Unlike the other Zionist groups, *ha-Ivri ha-Tza'ir* began to operate underground in late 1947 (and to use the name *ha-Shomer ha-Tza'ir*). Consequently, only five of its leaders were apprehended in the roundup of Zionist activists at the start of the Arab-Israeli war, and the movement was able to maintain most of its strength. In 1950, after a large group left Egypt to join Kibbutz `Ein Shemer, *ha-Shomer ha-Tza'ir* claimed 350 members, including 70 seniors.^[69] Therefore, while most of the Egyptian Zionist leadership was interned, the leaders of *ha-Shomer ha-Tza'ir* directed the entire underground effort to organize Jewish immigration to Israel during the second half of 1948 and early 1949. They reported to Eli Peleg, who became director of the Jewish Agency's Department for Middle East Jewry in Paris, after he was forced to leave Egypt on May 25, 1948.

In the spring of 1949, Eliyahu Brakha and Haim Sha`ul, emissaries of the Jewish Agency's Mosad le-`Aliyah [Immigration Organization] arrived in Cairo to assume responsibility for this work. Sha`ul was a graduate of *ha-Ivri ha-Tza'ir* in Egypt and knew the movement's local leadership well, but Brakha had the confidence of the Israeli government and the Jewish Agency which were dominated by MAPAI [The Israel Workers Party], while *ha-Shomer ha-Tza'ir* was a component of the rival MAPAM [The United Workers' Party]. Brakha split the united *he-Halutz* [Pioneer] movement, which before his arrival had sent its graduates to kibbutzim affiliated with both MAPAI and MAPAM, by demanding that it be transformed into MAPAI's *ha-Bonim* [The Builders] youth movement. About half the members refused and formed *Dror -- he-Halutz ha-Tza'ir* [Freedom -- The Young Pioneer], the youth organization of *ha-Kibutz ha-Me'uhad* [The United Kibbutz] federation which was, until 1954, mainly affiliated with MAPAM, though it was less solidly left wing than *ha-Shomer ha-Tza'ir*'s kibbutz federation.

Dror established a strong base at the Lycée de l'Union Juive pour l'Enseignement of Alexandria where, according to one graduate, the dominant ideology was Marxism-Leninism. Alexandre Roche, for example, taught his students

dialectical and historical materialism in geography class, and Ms. Mizrahi had her nine-year-old pupils conduct monthly sessions of criticism and self-criticism.^[70] In preparation for MAPAM's second party congress in Israel, Dror members began to discuss the positions of the party's two kibbutz movements on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and other political issues such as democratic centralism. The left-wingers concluded that the kibbutz was not a revolutionary institution at all, and many of them adopted communist positions. After a year and a half of ideological ferment, Dror's leadership decided to liquidate the movement in June 1952. Most of the senior members became communists in Egypt, Israel, or France; others joined ha-Shomer ha-Tza'ir.^[71] Similar debates raged in ha-Shomer ha-Tza'ir, though because it was a more disciplined formation with a longer tradition, the movement was not threatened with ideological liquidation.^[72]

The indistinct boundary between fractions of the middle class and the accidental factors influencing an individual family's choice of school produced a large zone of intersection between the social and cultural milieux of communist and socialist-Zionist Jewish youth. In the early 1950s the boundary between communism and socialist Zionism was permeable. The same French cultural influences and the political ferment of the post-World War II era attracted some Egyptian Jewish youth to Zionism while their brothers, sisters, and cousins, embraced communism. Zionist nationalism and communist internationalism, which was programmatically the left wing of the Egyptian nationalist movement, both looked beyond the narrow confines of the Egyptian Jewish community and sought to resolve the contradictions of being Jewish in Egypt by alternative manipulations of the same categories of modernist political discourse. Parents and older relations were often just as displeased by youthful political activism whether it was Zionist or communist.

nostalgias: beyond nationalism?

Rahel Maccabi's autobiographical memoir, *Mitzrayim sheli* [My Egypt], was one of the first Hebrew books to portray Jewish life in Egypt for an Israeli audience. Maccabi grew up in an upper-middle-class family in Alexandria, but her life history is exceptional. After several visits with her family, she emigrated to Palestine in 1935, joined a kibbutz of ha-Shomer ha-Tza'ir, and became an officer in the Haganah and then the Israeli army. These pioneering Zionist credentials authorized her to write about her youth in Alexandria of the 1920s and 1930s.

Maccabi's childhood milieu was almost entirely isolated from everything Arab or Egyptian. She made only the slightest effort to learn Arabic in school; even her knowledge of colloquial Egyptian was minimal, as is evident from the errors in simple Arabic words in her text. She knew of a neighborhood in Alexandria where Jews spoke Arabic, but never went there.^[73] At an early age she "came to the conclusion that the world of the Egyptians is frightening."^[74] Her father's family, originally from central Europe, Arabized rapidly after her paternal grandfather married into the Qattawi family and settled in Cairo. Her father was educated in Arabic and had worked in the sugar industry. Rahel and her mother avoided Cairo and her father's family, which they constituted as the Egyptian other.

Rahel Maccabi's mother became a Zionist in 1904 by reading the British *Jewish Chronicle*. She belonged to a wealthy Baghdadi family that emigrated to Bombay to trade in precious stones and then came to Egypt at the time of Napoleon's invasion. Though she was far more deeply rooted in the Arab world than her husband's family, Rahel's mother had learned to regard everything Arab as dirty, foreign, and barbaric. Internalizing this message, Rahel perceived "an unfathomable distance that separated Cairo of those days, with its Jews dressed in Eastern style and living in a quite traditional, patriarchal, primitive world, from the atmosphere in which mother grew up."^[75] For Maccabi, everything Egyptian was unreal, inferior, or frightening, except for her exoticist memories of flowers, food, and rose water.^[76]

My Egypt affirms the Zionist national narrative: some Egyptian Jews became good Zionists even before 1948; they were unaffected by contact with anything Arab, and their Jewish identity was preserved by leaving Egypt as soon as possible. In the triumphalist atmosphere following Israel's overwhelming victory in the 1967 war, the publishing house of ha-Shomer ha-Tza'ir found a ready market for this image of Egypt and its Jews. Conquest of a substantial piece of Egyptian territory in that war stimulated a desire for knowledge about Egypt that explained military victory as a consequence of civilizational superiority.

The first chapters of *My Egypt* were written in 1965 and appeared as essays in *Keshet*, the journal of the Canaanite movement, which rejected Zionism and the concept of a world-wide Jewish people in favor of a native Hebrew identity rooted in the Middle East. In Israel of the 1950s and 1960s, it was rare to find any cultural expression of the fact that a

high proportion of its residents were born in Muslim countries of the Middle East or children of those born there. Rahel Maccabi's acknowledgment of her birthplace was apparently sufficient for *Keshet's* editor, Aharon Amir, to find her writing of interest. He dubbed her essays *My Egypt*. She disliked the title's suggestion of a sentimental attachment she did not feel toward Egypt and would have preferred "Qantara-West" -- the last train station in Egypt on the way to Palestine. This title would clearly proclaim her Zionist trajectory, but the reference was too obscure for the Israeli public.^[77]

Like Maccabi, Jacqueline Kahanoff was also raised in an upper-middle-class family and educated in French schools where Zionism was a rarity among the Jewish pupils. Many of her essays, including her signature piece, "The Generation of Levantines," were written in English, translated by Aharon Amir, and published in the late 1950s and early 1960s in the first issues of *Keshet*, whose outlook was far more congenial to Kahanoff than to Maccabi. Unlike Maccabi, Kahanoff felt a strong positive connection to Egypt, noting with pride that her schoolmates were "pro-nationalist as a matter of principle," though their parents were "pro-British as a matter of business and security."^[78] Sensitive to her location in a potentially explosive cultural and political border zone, she consciously sought a creative Levantine synthesis.

. . . even though we sympathized with the Muslim nationalists' aspirations, we did not believe them capable of solving the real problems of this society, and for this they could not forgive us. As Levantines, we instinctively searched for fruitful compromises, feeling as we did that the end of the colonial occupation solved nothing unless western concepts were at work in this world, transforming its very soul. We knew that Europe, although far away, was inseparably part of us because it had so much to offer. These radically different attitudes toward Europe and towards our conception of the future made the parting of our ways inevitable.^[79]

Although they wished to identify with Egypt, Kahanoff and her schoolmates had no doubt that European culture was more advanced and should be the dominant component in the Levantine synthesis she aspired to. She "wondered how those young Muslims intended to change conditions in Egypt if they did not realize that learning what the Europeans knew was the most important thing of all."^[80] Until 1956 she could have found many good Egyptian nationalists who agreed with her. Decades after Egypt attained formal independence, its elite classes retained much of the culture of imperialism. The Suez War initiated a new and perhaps inevitable phase in the process of decolonization in which Europe was decisively repudiated.

Since they felt they could not be full participants in the Egyptian national movement, Kahanoff and her Jewish friends tried to realize their youthful ideals by starting a clinic in *harat al-yahud*. Despite their initial success, they had to abandon the project because the head of the Jewish community in the *hara* accused them of advocating birth control and Zionism, to which they responded that the second allegation was a lie. Blocked in both the Egyptian national arena and in reforming the Jewish community, Kahanoff left Egypt in 1940, recalling, "I loved Egypt, but could no longer bear to be part of it, however conscious I was of its queer charm, its enchantment, its contrasts, its ignoble poverty and refined splendor."^[81] After living in the United States and Paris and establishing herself as an English novelist, Kahanoff moved to Israel in 1954.

Keshet was a highly regarded literary journal, though very few Israelis embraced its cultural politics. Kahanoff's celebration of Levantinism was abhorrent to the dominant Ashkenazi Zionism that required the mass migration of the Middle Eastern Jews to Israel to populate the country but detested their culture and regarded Levantinism as a curse to be avoided at all costs. Critics praised Kahanoff's sensitivity and emotional range, but Levantinism was not an idea that could elicit a serious response from the militantly Eurocentric Israeli cultural establishment.

Until Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in 1977, the centrality of Egypt in the Arab confrontation with Israel made it difficult for Egyptian Jews to say anything positive about Egypt or their lives there. The Sadat visit created a receptive audience in Israel for those from middle-class backgrounds in Cairo and Alexandria who chose to contest Rahel Maccabi's representation of the Jewish experience in Egypt. Remembering Egypt in a positive light allowed them to reclaim their places as cultural, and in some cases economic, intermediaries. Post-1977 memories of Egypt generally reject Maccabi's colonialist Orientalism and insist that there was much that should be valued in Jewish life in Egypt. For this generation, Jacqueline Kahanoff's work is a point of departure. In the hopeful atmosphere

following Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, her essays were collected in a warmly received book, *Mi-mizrah shemesh* [From the east the sun]. A review in what was then an avant-garde literary magazine endorsed her revalorization of Levantinism.^[82] Such critical receptivity was encouraged by the soaring hopes for peaceful normalcy in Israel, though it was far from unanimous.

Yitzhak Gormezano-Goren's *Kayitz Aleksandroni* [Alexandrian summer], a semi-autobiographical novel recalling his family's last summer in Alexandria before they emigrated to Israel in December 1951, also appeared during the post-Sadat visit euphoria. Like Kahanoff, Gormezano-Goren relishes the hybrid Mediterranean identity of Egyptian Jews. His story begins with a sardonic lesson in cultural geography.

Yes, precisely Mediterranean. Perhaps it is by virtue of this Mediterraneanism that I sit here and spin this tale. Here, in the Land of Israel, which lies on the shores of the Baltic Sea. Sometimes you wonder if Vilna is really the Jerusalem of Lithuania or if Jerusalem is the Vilna of the Land of Israel.^[83]

The novel is suffused with unstable dualities and shifting identities. The narrator is and is not Robbie, the-ten-year-old son of a mid-level employee of the Ford Motor Company. The middle-class propriety of Robbie's Jewish family is undermined by homoeroticism, which his mother identifies as Arab.^[84] The Muslim servants of the family speak French. Many of the central characters of the novel are not exactly who they seem to be and slip easily in and out of ostensibly incompatible roles. The retired jockey, Joseph Hamdi-`Ali, is a Turkish Muslim who has converted to Judaism. His son, David Hamdi-`Ali, is also a jockey but does not have his father's single-minded passion to win. He will marry Lili al-Hadaf, a Muslim. David's rival, Ahmad al-Tal`uni, embodies Muslim Egyptian aspirations and resentment of the privileged foreigners and minorities. The competition between them ignites chauvinist rioting. Yet, al-Tal`uni is not a typical Egyptian, but a bedouin favored by the wife of the British Consul. Because of al-Tal`uni's appetite for victory, Joseph Hamdi-`Ali regards him as his spiritual heir and a more worthy successor than David. Rabbi Ferrara consistently refers to Joseph by his Muslim name, Yusuf. Towards the end of his life, Joseph Hamdi-`Ali worries that Allah may punish him for converting. In the style typical of the rationalist intelligentsia of the Iberian *convivencia*, the one God shows different faces to Muslims, Christians, and Jews.^[85]

Alexandrian Summer received several positive but patronizing reviews that avoided engagement with the themes of the book and treated it as a light and pleasant diversion or background to current political developments.^[86] Reviewers who noticed Gormezano-Goren's valorization of Mediterraneanism were distressed by it. One did not understand the passage about Vilna and Jerusalem and wondered if it could mean that Israel was a foreign implant in the Middle East.^[87] Another found nothing positive at all in his memories of Alexandria and concluded, "if this is Mediterraneanism, then it is better for us for now to remain on the coast of the Baltic Sea."^[88]

Perhaps in response to such arrogant Eurocentrism, the second volume of Gormezano-Goren's Alexandria trilogy, *Blanche*, has a more sharply anti-Ashkenazi tone. Unlike Jacqueline Kahanoff, Gormezano-Goren is not sure that Europe should be the dominant element in the Mediterraneanism he advocates. But he is not naive, and *Blanche* directly engages the historical processes that led Jews to "leave the flesh pot of Alexandria in exchange for the food ration books of the early 1950s in Israel." But Gormezano-Goren is equally conscious of the loss of his community's distinctive heritage. Raphael Vital, who sang in the taverns of Alexandria, lost his voice "in the desolate desert between Alexandria and Beersheba."^[89] Although it has been modulated by years of accommodation to the hegemonic Euro-Zionist discourse in Israel, the resurgence of Middle Eastern Jewish culture following the 1977 electoral victory of the Likud and the peace with Egypt enabled Yitzhak Gormezano-Goren to attempt to retrieve this Egyptian Jewish voice.

Blanche was not well-received by reviewers. The influential Dan Miron dismissed it as "Alexandrian kitsch" and pronounced the entire genre of Mediterranean Jewish writing to be "an entirely marginal phenomenon" in Hebrew literature.^[90] Tamar Wolf also denounced *Blanche* as "Alexandrian kitsch" (perhaps one of these critics was less than entirely original), and, with unwarranted self-confidence, she scolded Gormezano-Goren for anachronistically inserting Flash Gordon and Superman cartoons into Alexandria cinemas of the 1940s.^[91] She believed that they, like so much that is valued and recognized by Israeli yuppie culture, could only be a product of the 1980s.

I suspect that one element of *Blanche* that offended the critics, though none of them dared to refer to it, is the portrayal of Zionist activity in Alexandria in the late 1940s as a dilettantish and ineffectual Ashkenazi-initiated project with no

appeal to the young members of Robbie's family except for cousin Rosie and the superficial and flighty Raphael Vital. Characters in *Alexandrian Summer* and *Blanche* acknowledge that there is no future for Jews in Egypt, but Gormezano-Goren is ambivalent about the Zionist resolution of their problem. In an interview after *Blanche* appeared, Gormezano-Goren ridiculed the heroic pretensions of Zionism: "Operation Susannah in 1954, during which Jews were arrested and hung in Egypt, revealed the infantile Zionist base there."[\[92\]](#)

And so we return to Operation Susannah -- the Israeli-led campaign of espionage and sabotage -- with which we began. Robert Dassa spent fourteen years in an Egyptian prison for his role in that fiasco. In 1979, eleven years after his release, he returned to Egypt as a journalist for the Arabic service of Israeli television to cover Prime Minister Menahem Begin's visit to Alexandria. Thirteen years later he finally wrote about his memories of Egypt in his own name.[\[93\]](#) *Be-hazarah le-kahir* [Return to Cairo] is a report of his twenty-some return trips since 1979 interwoven with a recapitulation of the events of Operation Susannah, the trial of the conspirators, and their experiences in Tura prison. Publication of this book by Israel's Ministry of Defense represented both a long overdue repayment of a debt to the author and supervision over its contents. Did Dassa, once he was permitted to speak in his own voice about his identity, confirm Aviezer Golan's assertions with which this essay began?

Dassa's central preoccupation is his repeated accusation that Israeli military and political authorities have never assumed full responsibility for the operations he and his colleagues undertook on behalf of the state. He accuses the mythic figures in the history of Israel's security establishment -- David Ben-Gurion and Moshe Dayan -- of failure to request their release in the prisoner exchange following the 1956 war because they were a political embarrassment, causing them to spend twelve more years in jail unnecessarily.[\[94\]](#) These charges ultimately reinforce the national security discourse regulating discussion of the Lavon affair in Israel because of the questions Dassa never asks: What was the purpose behind the orders he executed? Was it justified to endanger the entire Egyptian Jewish community by ordering him and his colleagues to bomb civilian targets in Egypt? What does this activity imply about Israel's policy priorities? What was the effect of the Lavon affair on Israeli-Egyptian relations?

Dassa oscillates between recapitulating well-worn elements of the official narrative -- the Cairo judicial proceedings were a show trial;[\[95\]](#) Paul Frank was a double agent who betrayed the network;[\[96\]](#) he felt no connection to Egypt[\[97\]](#) -- and disclosures that undermine it. He grew up in a mixed Alexandria neighborhood with no apparent anti-Semitism.[\[98\]](#) His parents, both twentieth-century immigrants to Egypt, were Middle Eastern Jews from Jerusalem and Yemen. Zionism was "quite an exceptional thing in the Egyptian Jewish community."[\[99\]](#) No other members of his family were Zionists. His sister married a Muslim Egyptian and lived with him in the fashionable Muntazah district of Alexandria as of the writing of his book.[\[100\]](#)

Return to Cairo is bracketed by Dassa's confessions that he craves connection with Egypt. "I do not come to Egypt as a tourist. I never was and never will be a tourist there. I come to it as a free citizen, and only there can I express the full feeling of liberation."[\[101\]](#) Throughout his years in jail he yearned for Alexandria, and after leaving Egypt he dreamed and hoped for the moment he would return.[\[102\]](#) When he did revisit Alexandria, he felt as though he never left it. Dassa concludes his account of his travails by revealing that "In order to feel complete freedom, I need to walk freely in the streets of Cairo. Only there do I feel that I really have been released."[\[103\]](#)

Thus, Robert Dassa's admission that his well-being requires continuing contact with Egypt is a sharp repudiation of Aviezer Golan's effort to contain Operation Susannah within the boundaries of the Israeli national narrative. Even as he justifies his acts of espionage and sabotage against Egypt, Dassa, like Jaqueline Kahanoff and Yitzhak Geormezano-Goren, acknowledges that his well-being requires him to maintain a strong connection to Egypt. This may seem almost schizophrenic in a modern political universe defined by the proposition that individuals must be loyal to only one state. Dassa's contradictory sentiments suggest exclusivist conceptions of national identity and national sentiment are a relatively recent construction that do not necessarily conform to previously existing forms of political community in the Middle East. Aviezer Golan's imposition of the Zionist representation of Jewish identity on the "heroes" of Operation Susannah obliterates the complex multi-vocality of Egyptian Jewish identities.

This is more than a historical curiosity. It points to the continuing failure of state-centered discourse and essentialist conceptions of the nation and citizenship in both Egypt and Israel. Recalling the experience of a communitarian Middle Eastern environment of ethnic and religious pluralism invites us to consider whether multi-culturalism is compatible

with the liberal conception of a nation-state composed of loyal, individual, equal citizens. Finally, it suggests ways that Jews, by claiming an identity as indigenous inhabitants of the Middle East, can conclude a cultural peace more substantial than any diplomatic agreement.

Notes

This essay was first presented to the workshop on Rethinking Nationalisms in the Arab World held at the University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado on September 21-24, 1994 and sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities. This research was assisted by a grant from the Joint Committee on the Near and Middle East of the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies with funds provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Ford Foundation.

1. Marcelle Ninio's lodger, Armand Karmona, was arrested by the Egyptian police. Though he was apparently uninvolved in the network, he either committed suicide or was beaten to death by his interrogators. For a fictionalized account of his fate, see the French novel by his daughter, Marcelle Fisher, *Armando* (Tel Aviv: Yeda Sela, 1982).
2. Eliyahu Hasin and Dan Horwitz, *Ha-parasha* (Tel Aviv: `Am ha-Sefer, 1961); Hagai Eshed, *Mi natan et ha-hora'ah* (Jerusalem: Edanim, 1979); Iser Harel, *Kam ish `al ahiv: hanituah hamusmakh ve-ha-mematzeh shel "parashat lavon"* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1982); Shabtai Tevet, *Onat ha-gez* (Tel Aviv: Ish Dor, 1992).
3. Aviezer Golan, as told by Marcelle Ninio, Victor Levy, Robert Dassa, and Philip Natanson, *Operation Susannah* (New York: Harper, 1978) 5-6. Original Hebrew version: *Mivtza` Suzannah* (Jerusalem: Edanim, 1976).
4. *Al-Ahram*, 6 Oct. 1954: 1.
5. *The Story of Zionist Espionage in Egypt* (Cairo: Ministry of Information, 1955) 25, 61.
6. Don Peretz, "Egyptian Jews Today" (an unpublished report compiled for The American Jewish Committee, Committee on Israel, January 1956) 35-36, quoting Foreign Broadcast Information Service, January 6, 1955; YIVO Institute for Jewish Research (New York), American Jewish Committee Records (RG 347), Foreign Affairs Division FAD-1/Box 15.
7. *Al-Musawwar*, 15 Oct., 29 Oct., 17 Dec., 1954 and especially Hasan al-Husayni, "Ma`a jawasis isra'il fi al-sijn," Jan. 7, 1955.
8. *Annuaire des Juifs d'Egypte et du proche-orient, 1942*, ed. Maurice Fargeon (Cairo: La Socii½ti½ des Editions Historiques Juives d'Egypte, 1943) 117.
9. *Annuaire des Juifs* 1942: 118.
10. *Annuaire des Juifs 5706/1945-1946*: 80-86.
11. Ernest Renan, *Qu'est que c'est une nation?*, 7-8, qtd. in Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990) 12.
12. Albert D. Mosseri, "L'espoir d'un vieux sioniste," *Israï½l* 6.12 (20 mars 1925):1, qtd. in Michael Laskier, *The Jews of Egypt, 1920-1970* (New York: New York UP, 1992) 51.
13. Maurice Mizrahi, *L'Egypte et ses Juifs: Le temps ri½volu, xixe et xxe si½cle* (Geneva: Imprimerie Avenir, 1977) 37-44; Gudrun Kri½mer, *The Jews in Modern Egypt, 1914-1952* (Seattle: U of Washington P, 1989) 126, 128.
14. Shlomo Kohen-Tzidon, *Dramah be-aleksandria ve-shnai harugai malkhut: Mehandes Sh. `Azar ve-doktor M. Marzuq* (Tel Aviv: Sgi`al, 1965).

15. Anon., letter of a Jewish prisoner in El-Tor, Yad Tabenkin, Kibutz Me'uhad Archive (Efal), Ha-makhon le-heker ha-tnu'ah ha-tzionit ve-ha-halutzit be-'artzot ha-mizrah, "Mitzrim, El Tor, Huckstep," anonymous letter of a Jewish prisoner in El-Tor (where conditions were much worse than in Huckstep or Abu Qir) to Jewish prisoners in Huckstep asking them to help free them (Henceforth YT). Other sources state that as many as 1,000 Jews were interned, but this usually includes Jewish communists and a certain inflation due to distance from the spot.

16. Laskier 187.

17. "Rapport presenté à l'Agence Juive Department du Moyen Orient sur la situation actuelle des Juifs en Egypte par un Juif d'Egypte ayant quitté l'Egypte vers la fin de l'année 1949," 13. Central Zionist Archives (Jerusalem) S20/552, Jewish Agency, Department for Middle Eastern Jews, Matzav ha-yehudim be-mitzrayim, 1948-1952/no subdivision (Henceforth CZA).

18. CZA, S20/552/851/71/28754 Haim Sha'ul le-mahleket ha-mizrah ha-tikhon, Cairo, Mar. 12, 1950.

19. Felix Benzakein, "A History in Search of a Historian," *The Candlestick* (monthly publication of Congregation Sons of Israel, Newburgh, NY) reprinted in *Goshen: alon moreshet yahadut mitzrayim*, 7 (December 1988): 11. The 1960 census reported 8,561 Jewish residents.

20. For a survey of these orientations see Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski, *Beyond the Nile Valley* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995).

21. Shimon Shamir, "The Evolution of the Egyptian Nationality Laws and Their Application to the Jews in the Monarchy Period," *The Jews of Egypt: A Mediterranean Society in Modern Times*, ed. Shimon Shamir (Boulder: Westview, 1987) 41, 58. The census of 1947 gives the figure of 65,639 Jews, but most Jewish sources regard this as an underestimate.

22. Shamir 34.

23. Arkhion ha-Haganah (Tel Aviv) 14/1024, "Pe'ulot ha-haganah be-mitzrayim, 1947," Avigdor (Levi Avrahami) le-ha-ramah, Sept. 1, 1947.

24. There are no statistics available, but the testimony of Egyptian Jews is nearly unanimous on this point.

25. On the communists, see Joel Beinin, *Was the Red Flag Flying There? Marxist Politics and the Arab-Israeli Conflict in Egypt and Israel, 1948-1965* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1990).

26. For comprehensive modern histories of the Karaite Jews of Egypt, see Mourad El-Kodsi, *The Karaite Jews of Egypt, 1882-1986* (Lyons, NY: Wilprint, 1987) and Yosef Algamil, *Hayahadut hakara'it be-mitzrayim be'et he-hadashah* (Ramla: Ha-Mo'etzah ha-'Artzit shel ha-yehudim ha-kara'im be-yisra'el, 1985). As of this writing, there are no more than a dozen Karaites left in Egypt.

27. *Al-Kalim*, 1 Mar. 1945: 2; 1 April 1950: 2-3.

28. In a discussion with Maurice Farid Musa (Maurice Shammass), Chief Rabbi Haim Nahum noted that in Turkish *milla* means "a people" and not a religious community and that for this reason the Rabbanite Jews called their communal council *al-majlis al-ta'ifi*. See *al-Kalim*, 16 June 1950: 6. Regardless of its etymology, the phrase used by the Karaite community could not but invoke the late-Ottoman millet conception.

29. *Al-Kalim*, 1 April 1945: 2.

30. *Al-Kalim*, 1 Sept. 1945: 10. A more secular formulation might have offered condolences to the Muslim *umma* or to Egyptian Muslims.

31. *Al-Kalim*, 16 Nov. 1945: 6.

32. *Al-Kalim*, 1 Jan. 1946: 6.
33. *Al-Kalim*, 1 June 1948: 2.
34. Matatyia Ibrahim Ridwan, "al-Qara'un fi al-`asr al-islami," *al-Kalim*, 1 Dec. 1945: 5.
35. Yusuf Zaki Marzuq, "Sama`tu. . . walakin lam usaddiq," *al-Kalim*, 1 June 1948: 5. The observations of this article were confirmed by Maurice Shammas, interview, 5 May 1994.
36. For example, the editor of *al-Kalim* interviewed five young women during a trip to Ma`adi sponsored by the YKJA and printed their pictures in the paper. He considered this a bold step because of the many conservative ideas and social restrictions on women prevalent in the community. *Al-Kalim*, 1 June 1945: 6-7.
37. *Al-Kalim*, 16 Nov. 1946: 12. See also the introduction to Tuvia ben Simha Levi Babovitch, *In lam as`a li-nafsi fa-man yas`a liyya* (Cairo: Jam`iyyat al-Ikhwan al-Qara'in, 1946).
38. Eli Amin Lisha`, "Makanat ta'ifat al-qara'in fi misr," *al-Kalim*, 1 Jan. 1947: 3.
39. *Al-Kalim*, 16 Dec. 1945, 1 June 1948 and many others.
40. Ridwan, "al-Qara'un fi al-`asr al-islami" 5.
41. *Al-Kalim*, 1 Mar. 1947: 1; Ridwan, "al-Qara'un fi al-`asr al-islami," 1 June 1948: 2.
42. See Joel Beinin, "Writing Class: Workers and Modern Egyptian Colloquial Poetry (*Zajal*)," *Poetics Today* 15.2 (Summer 1994): 191-215.
43. *Al-Kalim*, "al-Qara'un fi misr," 1 June 1948: 2.
44. *Al-Kalim*, 1 Dec. 1945: 3; 1 Jan. 1951: 4-5; 16 Dec. 1953: 2; 16 Dec. 1954: 2-3; 16 Dec. 1955: 6.
45. Ridwan; "al-Qara'un fi misr," *al-Kalim*, 1 June 1948: 2.
46. Eli Amin Lisha`, "al-Qara'un fi misr," *al-Kalim*, 16 June 1946: 8.
47. Ahmad Safwat Basha al-Muhammi, "Quda' al-tawa'if al-milliyya wa-tashih khata' sha'i` `anhi," *al-Kalim*, 16 Nov. 1950: 4, 14. When communal courts were abolished in 1955, the community publicly supported the decision. See Abu Ya`qub, "Tawhid al-quda'," *al-Kalim*, 1 Nov. 1955: 2.
48. Y.[usuf] K.[amal], "al-Jinsiyya al-misriyya wa-a`da' al-majlis al-milli," *al-Kalim*, 1 Mar. 1950: 6.
49. Lisha`, "al-Qara'un fi misr," *al-Kalim*, 16 June 1946: 8.
50. *Al-Kalim*, 16 Aug. 1947; 15 Oct 1949; 16 May 1951; 16 July 1951; 1 Feb. 1952; 1 Oct. 1952.
51. The only reference to anything that could be considered Zionism in *al-Kalim* between 1945 and May 15, 1948, when Zionist activity was legal in Egypt, is a letter to the editor by Lieto Ibrahim Nunu, on 1 July 1945: 11, encouraging Karaite youth to settle in Jerusalem because only one Karaite currently resided there, and he could not perform his religious obligations alone. This suggestion is framed entirely in religious communal terms and does not use the vocabulary of political Zionism. The proponent was neither a regular contributor to *al-Kalim* or a recognized leader of the community. Kri;½mer 214 refers to this as a call for `aliyah. I suspect she relied on the opinion of Siham Nassar, *al-Yahud al-misriyyun bayna al-misriyya wa'l-sahyuniyya* (Cairo: Dar al-`Arabi, 1980) 75. Like many Egyptians, Nassar does not sufficiently appreciate that political Zionism sought to transform Jewish religious devotion to Palestine into a secular national bond.
52. YT, testimony of Lazare Bianco (interviewed by Shlomo Barad, 6 Mar. 1985).

53. YT Bianco; Nelly Masliah, interview, 8 May 1992.
54. See Eric Davis, *Challenging Colonialism: Bank Misr and Egyptian Industrialization, 1920-1941* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1983) 93-97 and *L'Annuaire des Juifs d'Egypte et du proche-orient, 1942*: 248.
55. Davis 91-97.
56. Kriġmer 95, 195.
57. *Israġl*, Nov. 18 1937, qtd. in Bat Ye'or, "Zionism in Islamic Lands: The Case of Egypt," *Wiener Library Bulletin* 30.43-44 (1977): 27.
58. Kriġmer 101-2.
59. CZA S25/5218, R. Cattaoui et E. N. Goar, "Le point de vue des communitġs Juives d'Egypte: Note sur la question juive."
60. Kriġmer 201-202.
61. For the definition of an ethnic economy, see Edna Bonacich and John Modell, *The Economic Basis of Ethnic Solidarity* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1980) 110.
62. On the Cicurel family and the early history of the store see Kriġmer 44-45, 101, 107, 213; Robert Tignor, *State, Private Enterprise, and Economic Change in Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1984) 60, 66, 102; Mizrahi 64-65; *L'Annuaire des Juifs, 1942* 250; Nabil `Abd al-Hamid Sayyid Ahmad, *al-Hayat al-iqtisadiyya wa'l-ijtima`iyya li'l-yahud fi misr, 1947-1956* (Cairo: Maktabat Madbuli, 1991) 38-40.
63. Ahmad, *al-Hayat al-iqtisadiyya wa'l-ijtima`iyya* 39.
64. Thomas Philipp, *The Syrians in Egypt, 1725-1975* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1985) 137.
65. E. J. Blattner, ed., *Le Mondain ġgyptien: L'annuaire de l'ġlite d'Egypte (The Egyptian Who's Who)* [title varies] (Cairo: Imprimerie Francaise, 1947, 1952, 1954, 1956, 1959).
66. Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance Israġlite Universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey, 1860-1925* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990).
67. For the political history of ha-Shomer ha-Tza`ir and MAPAM, see Beinín, *Red Flag*.
68. Yad Ya`ari ha-Shomer ha-Tza`ir Archive (Giva`t Haviva) 18-2.1 (4) Mitzrayim, Tnu`at ha-shomer ha-tza`ir [same as 97.10 (5 `ayin)], "Nahshonim -- Erev zikaron le-Aharon Keshet za"l be-30 le-moto, 1983."
69. CZA S20/112/230/71/18394, "Din ve-heshbon `al ha-tnu`a be-mitzrayim" from hanhagah ha-rashit shel ha-shomer ha-tza`ir, mitzrayim, no date, received in Jewish Agency 23 Jan. 1950.
70. Jacques Hassoun, interview, Paris, 30 May 1994.
71. Hassoun interview; YT Hativa 2- Hu"l. Mekhal 1. Tik 2, "Hitkatvuyot shel va`adat hu"l `im shlihim ve-`im snifim," especially "Du"ah `al ha-tnu`ah be-mitzrayim ve-hisulah," 9 July 1952; Hativa 2-Hu"l. Mekhal 1. Tik 3 "Hitkatvuyot shel pe`ilim `im ha-merkaz ba-'arezt."
72. Laskier 155, cites an anonymous report from the Office of the Advisor for Special Tasks of the Israeli Foreign Ministry claiming that in June 1951 thirty senior members were expelled from ha-Shomer ha-Tza`ir because they considered that their primary loyalty was to the Soviet Union and Marxism rather than to Zionism and the State of Israel. See CZA S41/449/bet/1/851/71. June 20, 1951. Several of the movement's leaders (Albert `Amar, Ninette

Braunstein, Beni Aharon, et. al. [interview, April 28, 1994] who were on the spot emphatically denied that this occurred. Laskier's source may have been a fictitious report composed to impugn the reputation of MAPAM.

73. Rahel Maccabi, *Mitzrayim sheli* (Tel Aviv: Sifriat ha-Po'alim, 1968) 90.

74. Maccabi 9.

75. Maccabi 30.

76. Maccabi 10, 60, 83, 84-86.

77. Rahel Maccabi, "Mitzrayim sheli," *Hotam*, 14 Aug. 1968: 12.

78. Jaqueline Kahanoff, *Mi-mizrah shemesh* (Tel Aviv: Yariv-Hadar, 1978) 17.

79. Kahanoff 29.

80. Kahanoff.

81. Kahanoff 31.

82. Ya'irah Ginosar, "Otzmat ha-kfilut," *Iton* 77. 8-9 (May-June 1978): 14.

83. Yitzhak Gormezano-Goren, *Kayitz Aleksandroni* (Tel Aviv: `Am `Oved, 1978) 9.

84. Gormezano-Goren 134.

85. Gormezano-Goren 136.

86. Shulamit Kori'anski, "Kmo shahar she-nirdam," *Maznayim* nun 1 (Dec. 1979): 151-52; Yisra'el Bramah, "Aleksandria, hazarnu elayikh shanit," *Akshav* 39-40 (Spring-Summer 1979): 341-44. Gershon Shaked adopts a similar attitude, explicitly consigning *Alexandrian Summer* and other novels of the same genre to the "margins of literary life" by designating it as "nostalgic-folkloric," in his authoritative history of Hebrew fiction, *ha-Siporet ha-ivrit, 1880-1980*, 4 (Tel Aviv: Kibbutz Meuhad and Keter, 1993) 173, 187.

87. Izah Perlis, "Sipurah shel aleksandria," *Al ha-Mishmar*, 29 Dec. 1978.

88. Ester Etinger, *Yerushalayim* 13.3 (Spring taf shin lamed tet): 92.

89. Yitzhak Gormezano-Goren, *Blanche* (Tel Aviv: `Am `Oved, 1987) 80, 81.

90. Dan Miron, "Ha-genrah ha-yam-tikhoni ha-yehudi ba-safrut ha-yisra'elit," *Ha-`olam ha-zeh*, 8 April 1987. Miron also discusses Amnon Shamosh's novel, *Mishel `Azra Safra u-banav*, set in Aleppo.

91. Tamar Wolf, "Kitsh aleksandroni," *Iton* 77.87 (April 1987): 7.

92. Anat Levit, interview with Yitzhak Gormezano-Goren, *Ma`ariv*, 6 Feb. 1987.

93. Robert Dassa, *Be-hazarah le-kahir* (Tel Aviv: Misrad ha-Bitahon, 1992).

94. Dassa 100, 102, 105, 106.

95. Dassa 7.

96. Dassa 18, 30.

97. Dassa 14.

98. Dassa 11, 12.

99. Dassa 13.

100. Dassa 15.

101. Dassa 8.

102. Dassa 10.

103. Dassa 111.