CONSTRUCTING MOROCCO:
THE COLONIAL STRUGGLE TO DEFINE THE NATION, 1912-1956

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By

Jonathan Wyrtzen, M.A.

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CONSTRUCTING MOROCCO
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Jonathan Wyrtzen, M.A.
Thesis Advisor: John O. Voll, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

Drawing on recent theories regarding social movements and contentious politics, this dissertation seeks to shed new light on the mobilization of anti-colonial nationalism in North Africa, addressing the core issue of how and why a particular dominant definition of Moroccan Arabo-Islamic “national” identity was forged during the Protectorate period (1912-1956). It argues that this identity, even for a centuries-old Muslim monarchy, was fundamentally reinvented in a struggle over control of the newly created bureaucratic state among French colonial administrators, Arab nationalist activists, and the Sultan. Focusing on the interactive process of constructing communal identity also highlights the fundamental connection between national and subaltern identities in the process of “nation-building.” This is the first history of Moroccan nationalism to focus specifically on how three marginal groups—Berbers, Jews, and women—played central roles at the nexus of conflicting colonialist and nationalist attempts to deny or assert Moroccan national identity.

This case study focused on colonial Morocco addresses broader questions about how Islam, ethnicity, and gender were redefined by both colonization and decolonization in other parts of Africa and the Middle East. It also engages more general debates about
nationalism by focusing on why specific national identities take shape in concrete historical cases, a question unsatisfactorily answered in the meta-theories of nationalism such as those proposed by Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson. In pursuing a methodology emphasizing the interactive nature of the process of constructing Moroccan national identity, the dissertation draws on a diverse array of primary sources to trace the multiple voices that shaped debates during the Protectorate period. These are comprised of Arabic and French printed materials including newspapers, pamphlets, petitions, administrative decrees, police- and military-intelligence files, and personal correspondence. Non-traditional sources are also incorporated including Berber poetry, nationalist songs, protest graffiti, photographs, and oral interviews conducted in Fes and the central High Atlas.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In late August 2001, my wife and I were driven in a van from the Casablanca airport and the heat of the Chaouia plain up to the relative coolness of the cedar-clad Middle Atlas Mountains to begin our new jobs teaching at Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane. As we headed south off of the autoroute near Meknes, three words were painted on the first foothill of the mountains at the town of El Hajeb: Allah, Al-Watan, Al-Malik (God, Country, King). This project’s origins lie somewhere on that road between the mountains and the plains, which we traversed countless times while living in Ifrane for three years. Many people have provided invaluable help on this journey since then, as I have set about exploring how God, Country, and King are interconnected in the construction of Moroccan national identity. Though the following words of thanks constitute a meager offering, I do want to acknowledge those that have been a part of this long journey that started eight years ago.

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To Leila Amel, Moroccan by birth if not by nationality,

Nora Elise, born in Virginia but “from Morocco.”

And, most of all, to Leslie, who got us all there in the first place.
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<tr>
<td>AIU-Paris</td>
<td>Alliance Israélite Universelle, Paris</td>
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<td>BN-Rabat</td>
<td>Bibliothèque Nationale, Rabat</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAOM</td>
<td>Centre des Archives d’Outre-mer, Aix-en-Provence</td>
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<td>CHEAM</td>
<td>Centre des Hautes Etudes d’Administration Musulmane</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Fonds Arsène Roux, Institut de Recherches et d’Etudes sur le Monde Arabe et Musulman, Aix-en-Provence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hassaniya</td>
<td>Al-Hassaniya Royal Archives, Rabat</td>
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<td>Qarawiyin</td>
<td>Qarawiyin Library, Fez</td>
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<tr>
<td>SHD-AT</td>
<td>Service Historique de la Défense- Fond de l’Armée de Terre, Vincennes</td>
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INTRODUCTION

Defining the Nation: Arab, Berber, Muslim, Jew, Man, Woman?

Oh God, the Benevolent, we ask of You benevolence in whatever fate brings,
and do not separate us from our brothers, the Berbers.¹
Modified Latif prayer

At noon at the Grand Mosque of Salé² on Friday, June 20, 1930, a traditional prayer invoked in times of calamity was recited not, as usual, for divine relief from pestilence, drought, floods, or famine, but for assistance against a purported French crusade to divide the Muslim umma, or community, in Morocco: Berbers were being separated from Arabs through a French campaign to Christianize the country’s substantial Berber-speaking population. Earlier in May, a young Moroccan translator working in the Protectorate administration, Abdellatif Sbihi, had worked on a copy of a decree regarding the reorganization of customary law courts in certain Berber regions, that he rightly worried formalized a territorial division of Morocco under separate legal frameworks based on ethnic criteria. He resigned in protest after the dahir (zahir in classical Arabic) was affixed with the customary royal seal of the Sultan on May 16th and later published

¹ Allal al-Fassi, who became one of the most prominent Moroccan nationalists, describes the recitation of this prayer by thousands of worshippers at the Qarawiyin Mosque in Fes following the Friday sermon in his book on the North African nationalist movements, Al-haraka al-Istiqlaliyya fi ’l-Maghrib al-’arabi, (Cairo: 1948, 165). This book was translated English as The Independence Movements in Arab North Africa, trans. by H. Nuseibeh, (Washington, D.C.: American Council of Learned Societies). However, the prayer does not appear in the translation of the passage on the Berber Dahir. This section also oddly puts the date of the demonstration against the Dahir on March 15, 1930 (not in the Arabic original), two months before the Dahir was even published.

² Salé is the sister city of Rabat, the official capital since the colonial period, from which it is separated by the Bou Regreg river.
in the Protectorate government’s Bulletin Officiel. In the first weeks of the summer, Sbihi and other Salé youth finally succeeded in rallying the city’s general population against what became known as the “Berber dahir” by framing the decree as a threat against Islam, which resulted in the outcry at the Grand Mosque at the end of June. The spark of protest against the French Protectorate’s “Berber policy” spread from Salé to other major Moroccan cities in July and August, as the Latif prayer quoted above was used in mosques to publicize the threat and energize demonstrations, including marches and petitions, against the perceived attempt by the French “nasrani” to curtail the jurisdiction of Islamic law, shari’a, over Berber areas of Morocco, to prohibit the teaching and use of Arabic in large areas of the countryside, and ultimately to Christianize the Berber-speaking half of the country’s population. By the end of the summer, the issue had been picked up by the Geneva-based pan-Islamic propagandist, Chakib Arslan, who railed against French neo-crusadism in his La Nation Arabe and

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4 In colloquial Moroccan Arabic and in Berber, the word for Christian, “nasrani,” was used to refer to all foreigners, reflecting the legacy of Portuguese and Spanish efforts to extend control beyond enclave ports since the 16th century on Morocco’s Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts.

5 Chapter 3 covers the Berber Crisis in more depth, including the background to these fears of French missionizing in the Berber countryside. The Bishop of Rabat, Catholic newspapers in Morocco, and some individual members of the Protectorate administrated had aspirations to evangelize Morocco’s Berbers, though this was not the official policy of the Residency.

6 For the most detailed study of Arslan, who for the French at the time represented an ideological threat comparable today to Osama bin Laden, see William Cleveland, Islam and the West: Shakib Arslan and the campaign for Islamic nationalism, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985). In the early 1930s, Arslan forged a strong personal connection with many of Morocco’s young nationalist leaders, some of whom spent time with him in Paris or Geneva during their studies in France.
helped make the infamous “Berber Dahir” a cause célèbre energizing demonstrations across the Muslim world in the early 1930s from Cairo to Surabaya.⁷

While the outbreak of protest in the summer of 1930⁸ was only the first of many developmental stages in the mobilization of a Moroccan nationalist movement (it took twenty-six more years to gain independence in 1956), the birth of the movement in protest against “Berber policy” had a profound impact on how Moroccan nationalists would define their “nation,” creating a lasting precedent for how Muslim and Arab identity could be used to frame and mobilize anti-colonial protest in defense of national sovereignty.⁹ Beginning in that summer of 1930, almost two decades into the Franco-Moroccan “nation-building” project implied in the Protectorate arrangement defined in the 1912 Treaty of Fes, a nascent contest emerged among three parties invested in the project of “constructing Morocco”: 1) the French, who emphasized Morocco’s social and

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⁷ Cartons F2 and F41 at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Rabat contain translations by the French Protectorate’s Service de la Presse Musulmane of hundreds of articles from Arabic press about the Berber Dahir and the “de-Islamization” of the Berbers from newspapers in Tunis, Tripoli, Alexandria, Cairo, Beirut, Aleppo, Damascus, Jaffa, Jerusalem, Nablus, and as far afield as Surabaya, Indonesia. The international furor over the Berber Decree really gained steam in 1931 after it was discussed at the Islamic Congress in Jerusalem during the summer of that year which delegations from across the Islamic world attended.


⁹ Moroccan nationalists commemorated the anniversary of the Berber Dahir with newspaper articles, calls for strikes, and demonstrations throughout the 1930s, but the fervor died down with the exile of prominent nationalist leaders and the onset of the war. However, after independence, the “travesty” of French Berber policy was remembered in newspaper articles on May 16ᵗʰ which appeared in major Moroccan newspapers up until the late 1990s, when King Hassan and, even more so, King Mohamed VI became more accommodating to demands for the recognition of Berber cultural and linguistic rights.
political fragmentation, a lack of "nation-ness," to justify their necessary role in holding the country together; 2) the Sultan, the religio-political symbolic leader of Morocco on whose behalf the French\textsuperscript{10} were ostensibly carrying out the nation-building project embedded in the Protectorate treaty; and 3) urban nationalist activists, who challenged France’s construction of Morocco by defending the historical sovereignty of a Moroccan nation unified by Islam and the “glorious” heritage of Maghrebi-Andalusian Arab culture.

By focusing on Morocco’s specific mid-20\textsuperscript{th} century decolonization struggle, this study addresses a pressing more general question—what is the relationship between “identity” and “nation-building?” On the French side, though great efforts were made to construct a modern state that could effectively administer the country and help them reap the economic benefits of development in Morocco, fundamental “divide-and-rule” policies were implemented to try to ensure that a Moroccan “national identity” would not emerge that could challenge their position in the country. The fact that it was one of these policies, the “Berber dahir,” that gave rise to the nationalist movement created conditions in which the colonial struggle to define the Moroccan nation was inevitably fraught with questions of religious and ethnic identity, with portentous implications for the country’s sizable non-Arab (Berber-speaking) and non-Muslim (Jewish) populations. In the end, at independence in 1956, the official Moroccan national identity had crystallized after decades of anti-colonial nationalist struggle around a lasting triptych (in Arabic, the country’s official language): \textit{Allah, al-Watan,} and \textit{al-Malik} (God, the Nation, the Nation, the Nation).

\textsuperscript{10} It is important to note here that the French, in fulfillment of prior diplomatic commitments, subcontracted control of the northern region above a line from Larache to Melilla, as well as a zone in the southern Tarfaya region, to Spain. I address the complex geographic division of Morocco during the Protectorate period further below.
Why did this particular definition of Moroccan national identity, centered on the unifying symbol of the Sultan (whom the nationalists began referring to as King) and an Arabo-Islamic high culture, prevail at independence, gaining an official legitimacy that has only begun to be renegotiated almost fifty years later?

Despite the fact that Morocco has more than a millennium of Muslim dynastic history (from the 9th century Idrissid dynasty to the current ruling family which took power in the 17th century) and presents an intuitively appealing case for the historical continuity of national identity (an argument, of course, strongly advocated by the nationalists and the Sultan/King), the argument presented in *Constructing Morocco* is that Morocco’s post-independence national identity was, in fact, significantly determined through contingent processes at work during the colonial nation-building project carried out in Morocco by France (and to a lesser extent Spain) during the Protectorate period between 1912-1956. Given the country’s sizeable Berber and Jewish populations, it was not a necessary outcome of the independence struggle that a definition of Moroccan identity unified around an Arabo-Islamic would prevail. It is also important, given the fact that very few other *anciens regimes* survived decolonization in the Middle East and North Africa, to appreciate the contingencies and agencies involved in the fact that

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11 This remains the constitutionally authorized official motto of the country, which one sees emblazoned with white-washed rocks on hillsides across Morocco.

12 During the Protectorate, both Sultan and King were used as the title of the Moroccan sovereign. “Sultan” was used consistently throughout the period, and deliberately so after the nationalists began calling him “King.” The use of King implied a modernization of the office, equating the Moroccan sovereign with European constitutional monarchs, and also was intended to reinforce his current sovereignty. Henceforth, “Sultan” will be used intentionally to reflect its usage in the appropriate contexts (normally in French official discourse and by the Sultan himself for much of the period) and “King” will intentionally be designated when it is used by the nationalists or others.

13 Dynastic rulers in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Ottoman Turkey, and Iraq were ousted before or soon after the nationalist struggle for independence. Pre-colonial indigenous governmental structures in Algeria were
Morocco’s Alawite dynasty, not only survived, but thrived with the *Amir al-Mu’iminin*, or “Commander of the Faithful,” functioning as a central national symbol after independence.

The following chapters examine the Protectorate as a major rupture in Morocco’s history, in which conceptions of communal identity (as in neighboring countries in North Africa and the Middle East during the colonial period) were dramatically impacted, and asks why a certain form of Moroccan national identity—drawing on specific historic, religious, ethnic, and gender markers—was defined during this process. These chapters also explore why certain elements, particularly anything to do with Berber identity, were not included in this version of Moroccan identity as a result of colonial “divide and rule” policies that attempted to bolster French control by coopting these cultural markers.

Much of the general study of nationalism revolves around two fundamental questions: “what is a nation?” and “when is a nation?” This study argues both the “what” and the “when” of nationalism have to be approached by considered “how” the nation functions as a meaningful category for communal identity in a period in which “national” identity becomes particularly salient. Thus, while the focus of this study is national identity, this unit of analysis is approached not as a fixed entity, but as a site that, because of the dramatic expansion of the colonial state during the Protectorate period in Morocco (1912-1956), began (and continues) to be contested over time by multiple parties.

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*obiterated during the 132 years under French colonial. (Trans) Jordan, of course, presents another anomaly of a dynasty surviving decolonization, despite the fact that the nation and its Hashemite ruling family were largely a creation of British policy.*
This argument does not deny that some sense of “Moroccan identity” predated European colonization, but I do contend that “Moroccan national identity” was forged during this specific period in which communal identities were re-imagined in response to the rapid transformation of political, economic, and social structures. Colonization created a “nation-sized” political and economic unit, making the “nation” a meaningful category of identity because it was directly tied to sovereignty over this unit. To trace how national identity was defined, it is necessary to examine three central processes at play during the Protectorate period: 1) the construction of the colonial state by militarily subduing the countryside, creating a modern administrative bureaucracy extending control over a defined territory, and establishing a transportation infrastructure linking the country together; 2) the contestation of legitimate control of that state which involved positing rival definitions of the “nation:” and 3) the mobilization of popular support for these competing definitions of the “nation” to create leverage against other parties. In presenting a historical study of the process of “nation-state” building during the colonial period, it is important to note that the domestic struggle among competing groups (the French, the Sultan, and the Arabo-Islamic nationalists) was played out over a time frame including two world wars, the Great Depression, the Cold War, and concurrent decolonization processes in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Actors in the struggle to define Moroccan national identity were connected to a larger international context including the Maghrib (Algeria and Tunisia), the Arab East, the French metropole, and the rest of the colonized world.
It is also crucial to consider the integral importance of three groups—Berbers, Jews, and women—marginalized in what became the dominant definition of Moroccan national identity precisely because they were at the nexus of conflicting colonialist and nationalist attempts to deny or assert Moroccan national identity. This is one of the first studies to analyze the central role of these actors in the process of defining Moroccan identity, both in how elites attempted to include and/or exclude these groups from the “nation” and how they themselves contested, accommodated, and negotiated both the imposition of the colonial state and the nationalist struggle to overthrow foreign domination. This dual focus demonstrates how the national and the subaltern narratives are intimately intertwined and must therefore be studied together to understand the lasting significance of this critical period of Morocco’s history. It is only by examining the contentious process of defining national identity with attention to the role of subalterns that we can understand how religion, ethnicity, and gender were used to answer the question, “what is a nation?,” in Morocco.

**Historiographical and Theoretical Context**

*From Ibn Khaldun to Ernest Gellner*

In approaching the relationship between state and society in North Africa, one must contend with one of the Maghreb’s\(^\text{14}\) most famous sons: ‘Abd-ar-Rahman Abu

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\(^{14}\) Maghreb means “the West” or the “place of the sunset” in Arabic. Since the initial Muslim conquests in the 7th and 8th centuries by armies that originated to the east, the habitable lands between the Mediterranean sea and the Saharan sand sea to the west of Egypt has been referred to as *jazirat al-maghribiyya*, “the Western island.” As with most geographic designations, the terms Maghreb and North Africa are loaded with relative significance – the first defines the region by its orientation to the Arab East (*al-Mashriq*) and the second to its vertical continental position. There is also debate over which states
Zayd ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Khaldun, the 14th century scholar considered by many to be the father of modern sociology and history. A product of a period of intense turmoil in the Western Mediterranean produced by the spread of the plague and the political fragmentation of the Muslim empires of Andalusia and North Africa, Ibn Khaldun’s intellectual quest was to construct an explanatory historical model for political and social change. Using the rise and fall of successive dynasties in the Maghreb (though he also treats Classical antiquity and early Islamic history) as his historical case studies, his basic question was how a central government succeeds in consolidating and maintaining power in society, with civilization being the fruit of the stability this order generates.

In the critical central chapters of his most celebrated work, *al-Muqaddimah*, Ibn Khaldun explores the relationship between the tribal, Bedouin civilizations of the region’s mountain and desert hinterlands and the urban, sedentary civilizations of the plains and coasts, with a compelling argument that the dynastic authority that makes the latter possible is dependent on the group solidarity of the former. To create a cyclical model of how dynasties harness tribal military potential to establish civilizational centers, Ibn Khaldun employs a set of key concepts: ‘asabiyyah (group feeling or solidarity), ‘dawlah (the state, which in Ibn Khaldun’s context was synonymous with ‘dynasty’), and ‘umran (civilization, from the root “to build up”). For Ibn Khaldun, ‘asabiyyah, which in

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actually belong in either designation (specifically whether Libya and Egypt—or Mauritania and Mali—should be grouped together with Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia). Both terms are used in this study, however, not to make an ideological point but simply in a stylistic attempt to avoid tedium.

15 “The Introduction,” to his universal history, *Kitab al-Ibar*. Chapter 2 of *al-Muqaddimah* concerns the organization of tribal society, Chapter 3 is about the bases of royal authority, and Chapter 4 examines the conditions of urban civilization.
Arabic has a negative connotation similar to jingoism in English, is actually a positive force enabling a group to cohere and impose governmental controls (*dawlah*) creating the order urban civilization must have to develop.

Ironically, only Bedouin, tribal societies based on kinship ties contain this type of raw ‘*asabiyyah* needed to create dynastic states. When mobilized by a charismatic leader, often using the ideological appeal of religion to further unify the tribes, this solidarity can help one group dominate others and thereby establish governmental authority. Ibn Khaldun goes on to explain that this produces a cyclical historical process because eventually ‘*asabiyyah* wanes. The necessities of governing require incorporating individuals and groups outside of the tribe, the dynastic family consolidates power in its own hands at the expense of the tribe, and the pleasures of urban life corrupt the purity of the original religious zeal. Eventually, the dynasty is replaced by another tribe with stronger solidarity and military strength. Ibn Khaldun uses this model to explain the rise and fall of civilizations in the Maghrib and broader Mediterranean region from the Greek, Roman, and Arab empires to the more contemporary (to him) great Berber Almoravid, Almohad, and Merenid dynasties. While an urban-rural dichotomy is a basic theme in world history from the Greeks and Barbarians to the Chinese and Mongols, Ibn Khaldun’s innovative insight was to explore the interpenetration and interdependence of the two groups in the political ecology of North Africa and in other parts of the Islamic world.

In the Maghreb, these two poles came to be termed as *bilad al-makhzen* (the land under the *makhzen*, or central government) and *bilad as-siba* (the land of dissidence
outside the control of the government). Makhzen\textsuperscript{16} literally refers to the treasury box in which the ruler’s forces kept taxes collected in the course of military sorties through the countryside. In the pre-modern period, the land of the makhzen can most easily be understood simply as the areas where the government could successfully collect taxes and the land of siba as the lands where it could not. From Arab chronicles up to French colonial scholarship in the 19\textsuperscript{th} and 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries,\textsuperscript{17} the history of the Maghrib has often been told in terms of how urban civilization, usually brought from the outside (Latin or Arab in origin), has succeeded or failed, depending on the strength of the makhzen “center,” to hold off the periodic threat of the tribal siba uprisings.

Up until the past two centuries, Ibn Khaldun’s model applied fairly well to North African (especially to Moroccan) history, with the challenge of how to generate the ‘asabiyyah necessary to maintain power being a constant feature of political life. One change occurred during the maraboutic crisis of the 17\textsuperscript{th} century when sharifian dynasties (the Sa’adians and later the Alawites) rose to rally against the Portuguese and Spanish incursions on the coasts, and the religious element of legitimacy, supplied with a puritanical reformist ideology in the earlier Almoravid and Almohad movements, was replaced with a hereditary charisma derived from physical descent from the Prophet Mohamed.\textsuperscript{18} Still, to supply the military force needed to maintain government, it remained necessary to rely on Arab and Berber jaysh (army) tribes, to which the Sultan

\textsuperscript{16} In English, the word “magazine” is etymologically related to “makhzen,” in its meaning referring to a storeroom for ammunition or small weapons.

\textsuperscript{17} Abdelmajid Hannoum emphasizes the lasting historiographical influence of Ibn Khaldun since De Slane’s translation into French in “Translation and the Colonial Imaginary: Ibn Khaldun Orientalist,” \textit{History and Theory} 42 (1), 61-81.

\textsuperscript{18} The Moroccan maraboutic crisis is dealt with in Jacque Berque, \textit{Ulèmas, fondateurs, insurgés du Maghreb : XVIIe siècle}, (Paris : Sindbad, 1982).
gave land grants and tax-exempt status, or, as Moulay Ismail attempted in the 17th century, to import a slave army from south of the Sahara, the ‘Abid al-Bukhari, ostensibly loyal only to the Sultan.

One of the most critical questions in Moroccan history is how Ibn Khaldun’s model was affected by the colonial intervention at the beginning of the 20th century in Morocco. In 1912, the pretext for the official establishment of a European military and administrative presence in Morocco was that the Khaldunian wheel of history seemed about to turn. In 1911 and early 1912, the Alawite dynasty’s makhzen seemed perilously close to being overthrown by Berber tribal forces surrounding Fes. In the Treaty of Fes signed in May 1912, the French “protector” agreed to guarantee security to the “protectee,” the Moroccan Sultan and makhzen, in order to ensure the economic development of the country. For the French, this meant the total elimination of a siba military threat to the state from tribal areas and the total subjection of the country to a

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19 Of course, in the larger regional framework, the question is how the French intervention beginning in 1830 in Algeria affected the model.
20 The tribes were, in fact, agitated precisely because of increasing direct French military intervention in Morocco and were frustrated about the impotence of the Sultan to stymie this threat. French military advisors had been in the country since the late 19th century and troops had landed in Casablanca and entered Oujda from Algeria in the east in 1907. Similar to the circumstances involved in the Eastern Question, in which European powers in the 19th century attempted to preserve the Ottoman Empire in order to forestall a land war on the continent, Morocco had benefited from a stalemate between France, Britain, Spain, and later Germany over who would control the strategic southern coast of the Straits of Gibraltar. With the signing of the Entente Cordiale (1904) in which Britain and France agreed to respective zones of control in Egypt and Morocco and the 1911 agreement in which France traded areas of the Congo in exchange for Germany dropping claims to Morocco, the diplomatic stalemate preventing an official colonization of Morocco had been broken. Edmund Burke’s Prelude to a Protectorate in Morocco: precolonial protest and resistance, 1860-1912, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976) remains the best history of how the domestic context in Morocco was affected by the increasing economic and military pressures exerted on Morocco in the 19th century leading to a civil war in Morocco at the beginning of the 20th.
21 The French delegated control of a northern zone to Spain (where it already controlled the ports of Ceuta and Melilla) in fulfillment of previous diplomatic commitments. Spain also controlled an enclave in the southern coastal area of Ifni and the Saharan desert region in the far south, the control of which is now contested between Morocco and POLISARIO nationalist forces.
central administration. To impose controls on the population, the French created a bureaucratic state apparatus including ministries governing education, health, commerce, agriculture, industry, beaux arts and antiquities, interior, and indigenous affairs. The colonial vision of the first Resident General, Hubert Lyautey, was to modernize the country, mainly to the economic benefit of the French, without obliterating traditional culture. A core feature of this “associationist” policy, therefore, was to retain an indigenous “partner,” the Sultan and the Palace administration, in which the trappings of traditional government could be preserved in a reinvented neo-makhzen to legitimize the French role in the nation-building project. Though postcolonial Moroccan historiography has tended to parenthesize the Protectorate, emphasizing the historical continuity between pre- and post-colonial Moroccan political culture and institutions, this study focuses on how the colonial period fundamentally changed Moroccan society, most notably in the unprecedented extension of the central government’s control over Morocco’s population.

Lyautey and his team in Morocco consciously sought to avoid mistakes made in the ad hoc colonization of Algeria, most notably, any sense of a republican universalist assimilationism. Following the lead of his mentor, Joseph-Simon Gallieni, with whom he worked in Indochina and Madagascar, Lyautey was an ardent proponent of a “rationalist,” associationist approach following the British and Dutch model. See Raymond Betts, Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory, 1890-1914, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 176 on French colonial policy and Charles-Robert Ageron, Politiques Coloniales au Maghreb, (Paris : Presses universitaires de France, 1973) on the specific evolution of French policy in North Africa.

and territory, transforming the scope and role of the makhzen and profoundly and permanently impacting its urban and rural populations, including their conceptions of communal identity.

This colonial reinvention of a Franco-Moroccan makhzen—essentially a modern, bureaucratic state that attempted to retain an authentic veneer of tradition (much of which was itself invented)—generated two types of resistance, or siba. The first type of resistance to the imposition of state control was classic tribal (rural and mostly Berber) siba attempting to preserve their option of choosing whether to submit to the government’s controls or not, depending on the tribe’s best interest. This type of resistance, centered in the country’s more remote mountain and desert regions, took the French close to a quarter century (1907-1934) to completely quell, in a process they euphemistically labeled “pacification.” The second type of resistance, an “urban siba,” supported the strengthening of a modern bureaucratic state in principle but struggled to wrest control of this neo-makhzen from the French. This resistance had two main players: the Moroccan Arabo-Islamic nationalist movement, in its multiple streams, which pushed for a reform of the Protectorate following the 1930 Berber Dahir, then developed into a political movement demanding independence (the Istiqlal party) in the 1940s; and the Sultan, Mohamed Ben Youssef, who began in the 1940s to try to impose more than nominal control over the neo-makhzen. This delicate maneuver required that he 1) set himself up as the true unifier of the Moroccan nation without provoking the

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24 From the mid-1930s the Moroccan nationalist movement had split into two major factions led respectively by Allal al-Fassi and Mohamed al-Ouezzani. The movement in the Spanish zone was also largely autonomous from that in the French zone, though there were many personal connections.
French authorities, and 2) fulfill nationalist expectations while retaining autonomy from the Istiqlal nationalist party. With the rise of this second type of a nationalist urban siba, the irony of the French colonial “modernizing” effort in Morocco came full circle: in creating the Protectorate they had established a “national” political and economic unit in which a Moroccan call to national solidarity could completely undermine their own rationale for being in the country.

It is here that Ibn Khaldun and Ernest Gellner meet. In his 1983 *Nations and Nationalism*, Gellner (who, it should be noted, conducted his field work at the Ahansal zawiya, a religious lodge, in Morocco’s High Atlas during his anthropologist phase in the 1950s-1960s and wrote extensively about the Muslim world afterwards) helped lay out the modernist paradigm that dominates the study of nationalism. His influential contribution was to firmly link nationalism to modernity, providing a structuralist model emphasizing the post-industrialization economic imperative for nationalism. According to Gellner, in the transition from agro-literate to industrial culture, a new bureaucratic system emerged requiring context-free communication and the imposition of a homogenizing “High Culture” on a given population: nationalism necessarily arose out of economic realities to create a functional political unit and population fitting this criterion. Gellner asserts that in modern society we have all been castrated, a “mamlukization” in

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which kinship has been superseded as a societal organizational principle by a homogenized socialization in the High Culture.27

Where this model is weak is in explaining why the High Culture supplying the content for nationalism generates feelings of group solidarity that legitimize the government controlling a nation-state political unit. Modernists tend, by emphasizing its “invented”28 or “imagined”29 qualities, to stress the contingent and fabricated nature of the communal solidarity proposed by nationalism. According to Gellner, the historical and cultural components of this homogenized national identity are purely arbitrary, “any old shred or patch would have served as well.” 30 Similarly, Benedict Anderson’s work compellingly theorizes the mechanics by which this solidarity is created, namely that the spread of mass literacy produces a mass consciousness capable of imagining the unit of the national community, but does not illuminate why communities are imagined the way they are. In Khaldunian terms, neither Gellner’s nor Anderson’s deductive meta-theories provide much help in explaining how and why a particular nationalism, mobilized

27 See Chapter 2 of Gellner’s Muslim Society, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), titled “Cohesion and identity: the Maghreb from Ibn Khaldun to Emile Durkheim.” While this chapter focuses directly on the question of solidarity in modern societies, specifically drawing a distinction between the mechanical solidarity of tribal society and the organic solidarity of urban society, I think Gellner’s over-commitment to a realist segmentary model limited his ability to see the reality that all ‘asabiyyah, even in a supposed mechanical form, is a type of “imagined community,” and therefore has significant potential in industrial and industrializing societies. On “mamlukization” in the transformation of Middle Eastern society with modernization, see his “Tribalism and the State in the Middle East,” in Philip Khoury and J. Kostiner (eds.), Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 109-126. In his introduction to the edited volume, Arabs and Berbers: From the tribe to the nation in North Africa, (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1972), he argues Berber ‘asabiyyah has been diluted since colonization and urbanization and can no longer generate a separate ethnic identity in the Maghreb. The “Berber Spring” in Algeria in 1981 and the recent rise and recognition of a Berber cultural movement in Morocco are evidence that these identities can be reimagined to help mobilize political movements.

30 Gellner, Nations and Nationalism, p. 56.
around a specific national identity, is able to generate the requisite ‘asabiyyah needed to
establish governmental control. Why do certain “shreds and patches” of history
successfully serve in the construction of the “nation” while others are irrelevant? Why do
certain invented or reinvented traditions resonate in the mobilization of nationalist
movements? And, in the case of a largely illiterate and tribal population like Morocco
during the Protectorate, is a national “imagined community” impossible or are there
mechanisms other than print capitalism which create the conditions for a “national” sense
of identity and solidarity?

Bridging the Nation and the Subaltern

The post-colonialist challenge to colonialist and nationalist hegemonies of
knowledge, best exemplified in the Subaltern Studies project, also fails to explain why
nationalist anti-colonial narratives were as successful as they were in mobilizing support.
This approach laudably creates a space for subaltern agency, deconstructing binary
unities and emphasizing ambivalence, hybridity, and liminality, but offers limited insight
into the resonant strength of the nationalist, “hegemonic,” construction of identity. Why
does the “nation” work? In an effort to address this inadequacy, this study purposely

31 Examples include Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in Cary Nelson and
Lawrence Grossberg (eds.), Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture, (Urbana: University of Illinois
Press, 1988), Partha Chatterjee’s The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories,
and Homi Bhabha’s (ed.) Nation and Narration, (London: Routledge, 1990) focus on more literary
deconstructionist critiques of colonialism and nationalism.
bridges the “nation” and the “subaltern” by examining both as meaningful categories of analysis that are fundamentally linked.

To explain the saliency of nationalism and understand its dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, I argue it is necessary to examine the processual dynamics of contention involved in framing specific national identities over time. In this approach, I examine the construction of Moroccan national identity as an “interactive campaign” (using Charles Tilly’s label), in which the claims of the central actors, whether the activist nationalist leaders, the French colonial authorities, or the Sultan, can only be understood in their relation to those of the other political actors. This “interactive” analysis of power and contestation in the evolution of the Moroccan nationalist movement provides a key to explaining how and why this discourse of “national identity” took the shape it did. It also directly addresses the heated modernist-primordialist debate in the literature on nationalism over the relative importance of cultural content and the past for nationalism.

Though constructed, modern nationalisms must be translated into mass movements for them to have substance (in our case, to create leverage against the

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33 This debate was cleverly encapsulated in the “Do Nations Have Navels?” Warwick Debate between Ernest Gellner and his former student, Anthony Smith. Gellner summed up his difference with the more primordialist approach of Smith saying, “Anthony and I now tend to get pitted against each other on what has become one of the major dividing lines in the study of nationalism, namely, the dividing line between what I now call primordialists and modernists, where one side says that nations were there all the time or some of them were anyway, and that the past matters a great deal; and where the modernists like myself believe that the world was created round about the end of the eighteenth century, and nothing before that makes the slightest difference to the issues we face.” The debates were published in *Nations and Nationalism*, 2 (3), 1996, pp. 357-370 and are also available online at the London School of Economics website at http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/gellner/Warwick0.html.
colonial state), and it is in this process that the link to identity becomes relevant. In the contest for political power, frames of national identity are developed, with varying degrees of success, to motivate mass support. It is here that the “constructedness” and “primordialism” of nationalism are linked. While “identity” is undoubtedly reinvented by modern nationalism (and, as this study explores, by colonialism), it must evoke some degree of resonance in the target population to provide legitimacy. In other words—to work, nationalism must correspond at some level to existing feelings of solidarity (or, what might be called the “primordial sentiments”\textsuperscript{34}) to generate the broader ‘\textsc{asabiyyah}’ necessary to mobilize support.

However, as subsequent chapters will demonstrate, this does not imply that nationalists simply tinker with identity until they get it right, finally tapping into a core unifying national essence. Rather, by studying nationalism as a continual process in which what may be termed “repertoires of identity”\textsuperscript{35}—whether cultural, linguistic, religious, historical, or other—are tapped in efforts to redefine the “nation” in relation to an “Other,” it is also possible to understand the intimate connection between nationalism and the subaltern groups it necessarily marginalizes. Prasenjit Duara explains the “relational” nature of nationalism, stating,

> The multiplicity of nation-views and the idea that political identity is not fixed but shifts between different loci introduces the idea that nationalism is best seen as a relational identity. In other words, the nation, even where it is manifestly not a recent invention, is hardly the realization of an original essence, but a historical configuration designed to include certain groups and exclude or

\textsuperscript{34} Here I nod slightly to Geertz who accepts that there are some “givens” (whether tribal, linguistic, religious, etc.) that, even if they are also socially constructed themselves, influence an individual’s behavior. However, the emphasis of my argument is on “how” these can be activated in very different ways depending on a variety of contextual factors. Clifford Geertz, “The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States,” in \textit{Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa}, (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963).

\textsuperscript{35} Of course, here I am improvising on Tilly’s formulation about contention.
marginalize others—often violently.\textsuperscript{36}

In the Moroccan case, like other examples of colonialism, the European “Other” was the fundamental “oppositional term” for the nationalists, but, at the same time, a group of potential “smaller ‘others’”—in this case ethnic (Berber), religious (Jews), and gendered (women) others—were essential additional counterpoints in the evolution of a discourse privileging an Arab, Muslim, patriarchal,\textsuperscript{37} and ultimately monarchical definition of national identity and unity. This study traces how “repertoires of identity” were mobilized against the “other” by various parties for their own ends (for example, “Islam” was used to rally support by the Sultan, urban nationalists, Berber tribes, and even by the French and Spanish) and how these ambiguities created tensions as ‘\textit{asabiyyah}’ was re-imagined during the colonial period to buttress or challenge control of the strengthened state.

**Methodology and a Note on Sources**

The methodology employed in this study is based on the argument made above that nationalism must be understood as a relational struggle over identity carried out in a contest over who has legitimate control over the resources of a modern bureaucratic state. The French effort to construct Morocco, both physically in infrastructure investment and ideologically in their framing of the Protectorate relationship, is first examined, as this


\textsuperscript{37}Chapter 5 explores how a feminist discourse of women’s liberation and advancement was used in nationalist ideological framing but, at the same time, continued to legitimate an overarching patriarchal social and political order. Leila Abouzeid’s The Year of the Elephant (Austin, TX: Center for Middle Eastern Studies at UT-Austin, 1989) recounts, in the form of a novel, the disappointment felt by her mother’s generation when these dreams of liberation failed to be consummated after Independence.
project neared completion in the early 1930s. I then turn to the rural and urban responses to the creation of the colonial state in the early resistance to the “pacification” of the bled (or countryside) up until the critical final years of revolt leading to independence in 1956. In terms of geographic scope, this dissertation is unique in its attention to developments in Morocco’s urban centers and in its rural areas. Also, though the preponderance of sources available on this period are from the French zone, I have deliberately incorporated the Spanish zones (in the north and south) and the Tangier international zone in my analysis, especially in assessing how these regions provided staging areas in which to challenge the hegemony of the Spanish and French colonial states (notably in Abd el-Krim’s “Rif Republic” in the mid-1920s, the relative freedom of the nationalist press in Tetouan and Tangier in 1930s and 1940s, and in the activities of the Moroccan Liberation Army based in the north in the final years of the Protectorate).

This methodological framework focused on different attempts to define the Moroccan nation in the colonial period required gathering a wide-range of primary sources in French, Arabic, and Berber in Morocco and France. These comprise several different genres and represent an attempt to reflect the interactive process of identity construction described earlier. I have, to the greatest extent possible, incorporated the different voices of the various groups mentioned above, two of which (Berbers and women) are almost silent in the existing historiography of this period. Thus, the

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38 The former have received the bulk of attention in historical scholarship since the 1950s, while the latter have only recently become a focus for Moroccan historians. This reflects the reality that there are much fewer primary sources available for rural history. One example of this new focus is Amina Aouchar’s *Colonisation et campagne berbère au Maroc*, (Casablanca: Afrique orient, 2002). Also, see Hsain Ilahiane and Thomas Park, “Sources for the Socio-Economic Study of Rural Morocco,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 33 (2002), pp. 271-290, on new approaches to Moroccan rural history.
following chapters synthesize Arabic and French print sources including newspapers, journals, books, pamphlets, petitions, posters, administrative decrees, police- and military-intelligence files, personal correspondence, ethnographic studies, official reports and other sources including Berber poetry, nationalist songs, protest graffiti, photographs, and oral interviews conducted in Fes and in the Central High Atlas.

In Morocco, I gathered documents from various archives in Rabat including the Bibliothèque nationale, the Institut royal de la culture Amazigh, La Source, the Allal al-Fassi Archive, the Haut commission aux anciens résistants et anciens membres de l’Armée de libération, and the Archives Hassaniya at the royal palace; in Fes at the Qarawiyn library; in Tetouan at the Daoudiyya Archive, the Bibliothèque générale et archives, and the Bennouna family library; and in Casablanca at the Musée du judaïsme marocaine. I also conducted oral interviews in Rabat, Fes, and the village of Aghbala, in the Central Atlas. In France, I collected materials in Paris from the Service historique de l’armée de Terre at the Château de Vincennes, the diplomatic archives at the Quai d’Orsay, the Fond Ninard at the Institut de monde arabe, the Académie des sciences d’outre mer; and the archives of the Alliance israélite universelle. In Aix-en-Provence, I accessed documents at the Centre des archives d’outre mer and the Fond Arsène Roux at the Maison méditerranéen des sciences de l’homme. And in Nantes, I used the extensive official collection of Protectorate archives at the Centre des archives diplomatiques.

In terms of structure and chronology, the following chapters are arranged thematically around the principal players involved in the struggle to define Morocco during the colonial period, though a gradual temporal progression from 1912 to 1956 is
also reflected. Chapter I, “Constructing the Colonial State: the Reinvented Franco-
Moroccan Makhzen,” analyzes the Protectorate structure that was implemented following
the signing of the Treaty of Fes in 1912 and that twenty years later was represented in the
Palace of Morocco exhibit at the 1931 Colonial Exposition in Paris.39 The institutional
components of the colonial state that were created to modernize the country are examined
as well as the dualist ideological underpinnings of the associationist colonial policy
implemented by the first Resident General, Lyautey.40 Burke describes this dichotomous
colonial paradigm as the “Moroccan Vulgate.”41 In this chapter, I expand this concept
further in exploring the litany of binaries, what I call the “Two Moroccos,” which
underlay the Protectorate imaginary: *blad al-Makhzen* versus *blad as-siba*, Arab versus
Berber, *Maroc utile* versus *Maroc inutile*, modernization versus traditionalization, *ville
nouvelle* versus *medina*, and so forth.

This schizophrenic paradigm permeated the colonial arrangement in Morocco.

By the nature of the Protectorate treaty, the French were bound to unify and modernize
the country under the nominal authority of the Sultan, but at the same time, their policies
divided the country politically, administratively, and juridically. The fundamental
political division involved the parceling of the country into French (the central bulk of the
country), Spanish (the northern zone, the Ifni enclave, and the Saharan regions in the far

39 The discussion of the Moroccan pavilion at the 1931 Colonial Exhibition in the Bois de Vincennes draws
inspiration from Timothy Mitchell’s “world-as-exhibition” Foucauldian analysis in *Colonising Egypt* (New
40 The definitive work on Lyautey and the Protectorate is Daniel Rivet’s *Lyautey et l’institution du
41 Edmund Burke III, “The Image of Morocco in French Colonial Scholarship,” in Ernest Gellner and
south), and International (Tangier) zones of control. Within the French zone, regions were divided between civilian and military control. Administratively, the colonial state rested on a fundamental dichotomy between the bureaucratic ministries (Public Instruction, Commerce and Industry, Interior, Beaux Arts, etc.) created to administer a modern state (staffed and run by French) and the Sultan and the “neo-Sharifian makhzen” which represented the nominally sovereign “indigenous” partner. With the justice system, the Protectorate codified a jurisdictional division between Islamic law (shari’a) for “Arab” Muslims, Berber customary law for so-called “Berber” tribes, “Mosaic” law for Moroccan Jews, and French courts for Europeans. (It was the blurring of this line between the Berber and French courts that sparked the initial protests in 1930 mentioned earlier giving rise to the Moroccan nationalist movement). The educational system further reinforced the “divide and rule” colonial logic by segregating along sectarian lines (schools for Europeans, for “Arab” Muslims, for “Berbers,” and for Jews), class lines (primaire and college for children of notables and trade schools for others), and, as typical of the period, gender lines (first traditional craft schools and later primaire and college schools created for Muslim girls that were separate from those for boys).

At the same time that these policies attempted to reinforce sectarian, ethnic, and gender divisions in Moroccan society, colonization generated the physical conditions necessary for the emergence of a unified modern nation-state by creating what amounted to a “national” transportation and communications infrastructure (including the dramatic expansion of roads, railroads, ports, telegraph-telephone, and post) that strengthened

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42 Algerian Jews, under the 1870 Crémieux Decree, had been naturalized as French citizens, and thus, in Morocco, were under the jurisdiction of the French European courts.
connections between city and countryside. With modernization through agricultural (including irrigation and mechanization) and industrial (mining, manufacturing) colonial development, Morocco’s economic geography was dramatically reoriented away from the two previous centers of trans-Saharan and Mediterranean commerce, Fez and Marrakech, to the Atlantic coast, as Rabat and Casablanca, grew in economic, cultural, and political importance. In almost every Moroccan city, Lyautey’s modern-traditional dichotomy was physically imprinted on an urban geography that was starkly divided into the ville nouvelle, the modern city, and the medina, the walled traditional city.

The second chapter, “La Montagne berbère: Pacification, Dissidence, and Submission,” examines the difficult integration of Morocco’s tribal areas into this expanding sphere of state control. Since the rise of Alawite dynasty in the 17th century, the Moroccan government had attempted to impose authority on these regions through a mixture of military displays of power, bribery, and diplomacy. This chapter situates the French military conquest of Morocco between 1907-1934 in light of this long view, as the French themselves justified the pacification in historic terms related to the blad al-makhzen and blad as-siba. As background, I outline the evolution of a Berber policy

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45 The French assiduously studied Moulay Hassan’s harkas (military excursions to collect taxes and project power) in the Atlas and beyond in the Tafilelt in the 1870s and 1880s. In fact, many Indigenous Affairs officers kept copies on hand of al-Nasiri’s Kitab al-Istigsa, which chronicles Moroccan history during this period.
influenced by the Kabyle myth\textsuperscript{46} inherited from the French experience in Algeria and reinforced during military campaigns in the Middle Atlas between 1911-1919. In the course of the “pacification” of the mountain refuges of the Berber tribes, a Moroccan school of Berber specialists including Bruno, Le Glay, Guennoun, and, most of all, Montagne\textsuperscript{47} were extremely influential in creating the ideological foundations for a Berber policy that sought to ally the Berbers to the French cause. The essence of this policy was to attempt to buttress the French position in Morocco by turning the traditional \textit{blad as-siba} into their own power base, monopolizing its military potential by incorporating these warriors in the colonial army and then trying to wield this threat to stave off the urban nationalists and the Sultan.

Towards this end, Indigenous Affairs officers\textsuperscript{48} played a key role as the agents on the ground entrusted with preserving tribal tradition against the “contamination” of Islamization and Arabization. This was attempted predominantly by preserving Berber customary law, administered by tribal councils (\textit{djemaas}), and by creating a separate Berber educational system.\textsuperscript{49} However, the imposition of this colonial administration


\textsuperscript{47} In terms of his influence on sociology and ethnography, Robert Montagne was France’s equivalent to Evans-Pritchard. As a colonial administrator in the French Protectorate, his opus on the segmentary opposition of \textit{leffs} in the High Atlas, \textit{Les Berbères et le makhzen dans le sud du Maroc: essai sur la transformation politique des Berbères sédentaires}, (Paris : F.Alcan, 1930) had an enormous impact in shaping colonial attitudes and policy. The best assessment of Montagne’s legacy is François Pouillon and Daniel Rivet (eds.), \textit{La sociologie musulmane de Robert Montagne: actes du colloque EHESS & Collège de France, Paris, 5-7 juin 1997} (Paris : Maisonneuve et Larose, 2000).

\textsuperscript{48} The ideological heirs of the \textit{Bureaux Arabes} implemented by the French military following the military conquest in Algeria in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century.

\textsuperscript{49} In these schools, only Berber and French were allowed, though later, parents of students pressured the administrators to teach Arabic and Islam at the Berber schools. The elite bastion of the Berber system, the
involved the indelible rationalization and systematization of the idiosyncrasies of localized, tribal particularism. Though seeking to preserve “Berber” identity, they unavoidably transformed these communities by the very act of pacification and rule, which ironically usually tended to integrate these areas more closely with the Arabic-speaking urban centers.

The second half of the chapter represents one of the first substantive attempts to investigate the Berber experience of the “pacification” based on actual Berber primary sources. Because it was (and remains) a predominantly oral culture with very low rates of literacy, rural Morocco’s own voices have rarely been represented in scholarship on this period. However, through an extraordinary body of archived material at the Fond Roux in Aix-en-Provence, it is possible to investigate how this upheaval was interpreted through transcribed poems collected over a period spanning nearly the entire Protectorate. Through this oral record, I examine tribal attitudes and responses towards the Makhzen, the French conquest, and their own “jihad” waged against this conquest. These poems process attitudes about submitting to the government (moving from “dissidence” to “submission”), living under the French administration (lauding the benefits of security but critiquing corruption), and daily preoccupations including the availability of sugar and tea, problems with irrigation, and, of course, romantic dilemmas. What is also reflected in this source is an unparalleled insight into the ways in which this population, over a large geographical area from the Middle Atlas down through the High Atlas into the Souss area, imagined their community (à la Anderson, but without a print culture) in Azrou College, was actually visited by an incognito Sultan Mohamed V on Christmas Day in 1943, who asked whether Arabic and Islam were taught there.
the midst of and after their anti-colonial struggle; they also provide insight into how these Berber tribes viewed those they considered “others” during the period of colonization, most notably the French *rumi*,\(^{50}\) Arabs, Jews, and even Senegalese troops deployed against them.

In Chapter 3, I turn towards the urban “Arab” nationalist movement that grew out of the protest against the Berber decree in 1930. Titled “Contesting the Colonial State: The Moroccan Nationalist Movement,” this part of the study focuses specifically on the mobilization of protest in which a group of young, educated leaders framed the struggle against the French and sought to garner support for this struggle in the Moroccan public, first in the cities and then later in the subdued rural areas discussed in Chapter 2. An analytical framework rooted in social movement theory and the study of political contention is utilized to reconsider the evolution of the Moroccan nationalist movement and its efforts to frame and mobilize the nation after 1930.\(^{51}\) This evolution is broken down into three periods: 1) an anti-colonial reform phase (1930-1937), from the Berber crisis to the exile of the most prominent leaders of the two nationalist movement streams, Allal al-Fassi and Mohammed el-Ouezzani, on the eve of World War II; 2) a period of regrouping and shifting to demands for independence (1938-1943), during World War II under the Vichy regime and then Allied control; 3) the explicit mobilization of a mass movement demanding independence (1944-1948), including the issuance of the Manifest

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\(^{50}\) Similar to the use of *nasrani* mentioned earlier, meaning Christian, the Berber word *rumi* refers to foreigners, again having a religious undertone as a non-Muslim. The deepest roots of the word go back to the Roman attempts to pacify North Africa.

\(^{51}\) Two recent studies of nationalism have demonstrated the utility of a social movement theory approach: David Romano, *The Kurdish nationalist movement: opportunity, mobilization, and identity*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006) and Mark Beissinger, *Nationalist mobilization and the collapse of the Soviet State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
of Independence in January 1944 and the riots at the end of that month, and the mobilization of mass political parties, including the dominant *Istiqlal* (Independence) party, that dominated the nationalist anti-colonial struggle from that point forward.

Several interrelated questions about these stages of nationalist contention from 1930-1956 are addressed: what were the changes in the political and social context in the Protectorate creating opportunities for political mobilization? What resources were available, or not, to movement activists? And, how did movement leaders frame the struggle to motivate broad-based support among the Moroccan population? In investigating the mobilization of resources in this social movement, this study also tracks the dimension Tilly has labeled “repertoires of contention,”52 the limited sets of imaginable tactics (i.e. sit-ins, street barricades, marches, strikes, etc.) groups choose to use at a given locale and period in history. Two questions regarding the “repertoire” Moroccan activists used in their anti-colonial struggle are important: first, how these struggles both mirrored existing repertoires in Europe53 and, at the same time, demonstrated a specific adherence to an “Islamic” repertoire of contention (indigenous to Morocco or drawn from examples elsewhere),54 and two, to what extent activists improvised, changing this repertoire over time as the movement gained experience through trial and error. The existing literature on protest in the Muslim world

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52 See Charles Tilly, *From mobilization to revolution* (Reading, Mass., 1978) and *Popular contention in Great Britain, 1758-1834* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995) in which he defines repertoires of contention as “the established ways in which pairs of actors make and receive claims bearing on each other’s interests,” p. 43.

53 Activists drew from a repertoire including strikes, street demonstrations, petitions, boycotts, broadsides, and journalistic propaganda.

54 For example, the use of mosques as free spaces in which to mobilize protest, exemplified in the *Latif* prayer mentioned at the beginning of the chapter which was used to rally support against the Berber Dahir. The *halqah*, a story-telling circle, was also a site of contention where satire was used subversively against the French.
concentrates on very recent examples;\(^5^5\) and this study attempts to provide more historical depth to our understanding of how repertoires of contention were transformed in the nationalist struggle and beyond.

This chapter also analyzes the link between the repertoires of contention suitable to movement objectives and the “framing” of the nationalist cause, or how tactics and ideology were linked. Drawing on the work of Benford and Snow,\(^5^6\) I ask how movement actors constructed three levels of meaning: first, identifying the nature of the problem in the colonial context (diagnostic framing), second, proposing a solution to this problem (prognostic framing), and, third, inducing passive “free-riders” to participate in the struggle (mobilization framing). I also analyze how public displays of contention, in a culture of orality, were themselves linked to the framing process and functioned as a symbolic text of common struggle contributing to the crystallization of an Andersonian “imagined community” in Morocco. The history of Morocco between 1930-1956 demonstrates the dynamic nature of the framing process as different tactics and different ideological framings of the struggle were employed to encourage more widespread participation in protest.


This chapter also examines how boundary activation (defining who is in and who is out) in the framing process created a paradox in the construction of the “Moroccan nation” by simultaneously including and excluding those marginalized by the discourse of Arabo-Islamic nationalism which was most commonly used in articulating anti-colonial sentiment: the non-Arabs (Berbers), the non-Muslim (Jews), and those largely excluded by both the nationalists and the French colonizers from a patriarchal political order (women). Two paradoxical sides to this dimension of framing are examined: 1) how nationalists used Arabization and Islamization (including an effort to create a parallel Arabic educational system and the use of a discourse of jihad in framing anti-colonial protest) to contest expanding French political, economic, and, perhaps the most threatening, cultural hegemony; and 2) how they also countered French efforts to divide the population into opposing groups by emphasizing the historical solidarity of the Moroccan nation, with special attention to the “primordial” attachment to this nation of the Berbers and Jews and the pivotal role Moroccan women must play in making the nation strong.

The fourth chapter, “Morocco’s Jews: Between Assimilation, Nationalism, and Zionism,” focuses on the critical position of Morocco’s only religious minority during the period under study. Morocco’s Jewish community, one of the most ancient in the world, often played a critical role in Morocco’s relations with the outside world as far

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57 Some argue it dates from the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE or even from the diaspora following the Babylonian conquest in 587 BCE. For the general history of Jews in Morocco, see Haim Zafrani’s *Le judaïsme maghrébin: le Maroc, terre des rencontres des cultures et des civilisations*, (Rabat: Marsam, 2003) and H.Z. Hirschberg’s two volume *A History of the Jews in North Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 1974-1981).
back as the 16th century. In the 19th century, with increased European economic intervention in Morocco, Jews in Morocco began to be caught between Europeans and Muslim Moroccans as economic intermediaries (protégés) and culturally with the assimilationist educational initiatives of the Alliance Universelle Israelite which began opening French schools in 1863 in Tetouan. With the imposition of the French and Spanish protectorates, this process was accelerated as the French enshrined religious identification into social and legal definitions of nationality.

The “Jewish Question” in Morocco was centered on what place this religious minority had in the nation. The transformations of their status before and during the Protectorate are examined in a section exploring the meanings of dhimmi, protégé, and citizen. Then, the three major competing claims on Moroccan Jewish identity are examined in sections devoted to Assimilation, Zionism, and Moroccan nationalism. In the interwar period, these tensions over identities and loyalties increased in tandem with the rise of troubles in Palestine and the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe, which culminated in the crisis posed by the outbreak of World War II and the imposition of the statut des Juifs by the Vichy regime. Following the Allied “Operation Torch” invasion of North Africa and the end of the war, the chapter considers the precarious position of the community in the view of increasing tensions throughout the 1940s over the loyalties of

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Morocco’s Jewish population regarding Moroccan versus Israeli independence, particularly over the problematic issue of Jewish emigration from Morocco to Palestine.

Chapter 5, “A Woman’s Place in the Nation,” focuses on the impact of colonization and state building on women in Morocco and the integral role of gender issues in framing nationalist contention. One of the challenges regarding this topic is that there is a regrettable lacuna of scholarship covering any dimension of women’s history during this (or any other) period of Moroccan history. This chapter will hopefully contribute to a growing body of literature addressing these gaps in the historiography by using gender as a critical lens to re-evaluate Morocco’s colonial history. The dual focus of this chapter is to assess how colonial administrators, nationalist ideologues, and the Palace framed the place of women in the Moroccan nation, and how, from primary sources, women themselves sought to shape their own role in the movement towards independence. This study of the Moroccan case is contextualized in relation to recent scholarship on the position of women in similar circumstances in the Mashriq, particularly in Syria/Lebanon, Palestine, and Egypt. One immediate observation in this

61 The earliest efforts to treat this period have been in the form of fiction or memoirs. See Driss Chraibi’s, La Civilisation, ma mere, (Paris: Gallimard, 1972); Leila Abouzeid’s The Year of the Elephant (Austin, TX: Center for Middle Eastern Studies at UT-Austin, 1989); and Fatima Mernissi’s Dreams of Trespass: tales of a harem girlhood, (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., 1994) which recalls the author’s own experience growing up in Fez in the 1940s. Liat Kozma’s chapter “Moroccan Women’s Narratives of Liberation—A Passive Revolution,” in James McDougall (ed.) Nation, Society, and Culture in North Africa (London: Frank Cass, 2003) examines the connection between current struggles for women’s rights in Morocco and historiographical debates over the role of women in the nationalist struggle. Recently, official initiatives have been made to include (or subsume) the history of women during this period in a narrative of nationalist resistance. The Federation for the Advancement of Resistance Fighters and Army of Liberation convened a conference on the role of women in the resistance and published these papers in a book titled, Dowr al-Mara al-Maghrebiyya fi Milhama al-Istiqlal wal-wahida (2000)

comparison is the tremendous lag of Morocco’s women in terms of education and literacy, which made Morocco often decades behind other countries in the organization of women’s associations and the publication of journals, books, or other materials written by women. Historically, Morocco’s women have been the repository of rich oral historical and literary traditions, which has limited their representation in scholarship relying predominantly on textual sources. Thus, this chapter, though focused in part on literate elites, seeks to convey the broader heterogeneous experiences of Moroccan urban and rural women—Arab, Jewish, and Berber—and the ways socio-economic status impacted their educational opportunities.

First, I explore how the Protectorate sought to reinforce the colonial construction of “traditional” indigenous Morocco in terms of legal and educational policies pertaining to women. On the legal side, Lyautey’s “traditionalization” policy involved systematizing and codifying personal status laws which enshrined a patriarchal legal and social order in shari’a, Mosaic, or Berber customary law. In terms of educational policy, schools created between 1911 and the late 1920s focused on teaching indigenous girls traditional crafts such as embroidery and rug weaving. From the early 1940s, when some Moroccan parents demanded their girls be taught Arabic, French, science, math, and Islam in a primaire and college system similar to their boys (private “Free Schools” were also established for this purpose), I analyze the growth of a women’s movement closely aligned with the Istiqlal party and focused on the advancement of women’s education and literacy. This section explores the nationalist appropriation of a feminist discourse, 

beginning in the early 1940s, and how women leaders including the Sultan’s daughter, Princess Lalla Aicha, and the nationalist leader, Malika Al-Fassi, articulated a modernist, reformist, and nationalist Islam that placed women’s progress at the center of the movement towards independence. The latter part of the chapter traces the growing influence of the Palace in the 1940s in the advocacy of women’s advancement and ways elite and uneducated women themselves sought to expand their rights through participate in the “national resistance” during the final years of the Protectorate.63

The final chapter, “Return of the King,” analyzes the role of the Sultan, whom the nationalist used the title “king” to emphasize his modern political authority, during the last years of the Protectorate (1947-1956) as he positioned himself as the symbol of national unity amidst growing demands for autonomy. This chapter overviews his early biography and the evolution of his role between 1927-1947, from taking power upon his father’s death, through the fall of France, the Vichy administration, and the changes wrought by the Allied invasion in November 1942. In encouraging the publication of a Manifest of Independence signed by nationalist leaders in Fes in January 1944, the Sultan gradually pressed for more autonomy in actually ruling the country. The historic 1947 trip to Tangier constituted the first irrevocable break between him and the French administration. The symbolic importance of his crossing the colonial administrative boundaries between the French, Spanish, and international zones was clear to nationalists demanding the independence and unification of the country, and his speech on April 12th pointedly left out a traditional declaration of gratitude for the tutelage of the French

Protectorate while declaring Morocco’s support of the American-sponsored Atlantic Charter and commitment to pan-Arabism in the newly created Arab League.

Between 1947-1956, the confrontation between French and Moroccan nationalist constructions of Morocco escalated to a breaking point. General Alphonse Juin was sent as a new Resident General to reign in the Sultan and ensure order in 1947. Under Juin and his successor, General Augustin Guillaume (who took over in September 1951), a growing rift continued to split between the French vision of “Two Moroccos” and the designs of a Sultan increasingly aligned with the nationalist and broader pan-Arab movements. The rift broke into the open in 1953 with the Qaid affair in which the Moroccan governor of the Marrakech region, Thami el Glaoui, led a petition drive calling for Mohamed V to break with the Istiqlal or be deposed. Glaoui orchestrated, with Guillaume’s consent, displays in which thousands of Berber cavalry surrounded the palace in Rabat, in a symbolic “siba” pressure against the King. Ultimately, after the King refused to capitulate, the French Resident General, Guillaume, deposed him, exiling Mohamed V and the royal family first to Corsica and later to Madagascar, and put a more compliant Alawite, Moulay Ben Arafa, on the throne. The exile signified the total rupture of the Protectorate agreement, with the “Protector” inverting siba and makhzen to preserve its own position of control.

During the final two years of the Protectorate, the country entered a period of widespread turbulence, with increasing violence in the urban areas of Casablanca, Rabat, and Fes, which finally spread to the bled, or countryside, in late 1955. When the allegiance of the “Berber bloc” itself was called into question as a rural siba began during
the summer of 1955 (simultaneous to the war beginning next door in Algeria), the French
negotiated the return of the King, who came back to Morocco on November 17, 1955.
This chapter finishes by examining the forces at work at this crucial moment in which
Mohamed V negotiated his own dominant position over the “factions” in Moroccan
society including the nationalist parties, the Moroccan Liberation Army (which had
begun a guerilla war in the Rif mountains of the north and in scattered part of the Middle
and High Atlas), and a mass public ecstatic at his return.

The conclusion assesses the synthesis of national identity which crystallized with
the return of the King and the attainment of independence in 1956. Specific attention is
devoted to tensions that were created as the “Two Moroccos” were unified which entailed
1) the submerging of Morocco’s Berber identity (co-opted and de-legitimized by its
association with French colonial policy) into an Arabo-Islamic nationalist cultural
hegemony that positioned Morocco firmly in the “Arab-Maghreb” and broader “Arab
world” of the Nasser-dominated 1950s; 2) the compromising of women’s aspirations for
further political and social advancement in efforts to consolidate the regime after
independence; and 3) a strengthening of central control over the religious sphere that
contributed to the emigration of the country’s Jewish minority. I conclude by assessing
the current renegotiation of these ethnic, gender, and religious components of national
identity with the rise, since the early 1990s of a Moroccan Berber cultural movement,
which gained official sanction in 2001 with the creation of the Royal Institute of
Amazigh (Berber) Culture;\textsuperscript{64} the growth of a Moroccan women’s movement that recently succeeded in getting reforms regarding women’s rights in the Mudawanna, the personal status code, approved by the King in 2004; and the growing role of Islamist social and political movements, including Abdessalam Yassine’s al-Adl wa-Ihssan organization and the PJD, or Justice and Development Party.

\textsuperscript{64} One of the primary tasks of the institute was the development of a curriculum to begin teaching Berber in rural schools.
CHAPTER I

CONSTRUCTING THE COLONIAL STATE:
THE REINVENTED FRANCO-MOROCCAN MAHZZEN

This chapter outlines the French definition of Moroccan national identity embedded in the colonial state constructed in the two decades between the creation of the Protectorate in the 1912 Treaty of Fes and the celebration of this colonial imaginary in the Palace of Morocco exhibit at the 1931 International Colonial Exposition (ICE) outside Paris. It first examines the unique hybrid form of colonialism delineated in the Treaty of Fes, an ostensibly “associationist” partnership in which the French pledged to carry out the task of economic and political development necessary for nation-building, on behalf of the Moroccan Sultan. Then, via a virtual tour of the Moroccan pavilion at the ICE, it considers how this endeavor was fleshed out during the tenure of the first Resident General of the Protectorate, Hubert Lyautey (1912-1926), the “architect of modern Morocco,” and his immediate successors. This examination of the anatomy of the “Reinvented Franco-Moroccan Makhzen” focuses on the institutions and infrastructure constructed in the process of colonial nation-building; but it also considers the underlying ideological framework, what Lyautey referred to as the “philosophy of the thing,”¹ that structured Protectorate policy. By denying the existence of a unified Moroccan nation, and instead emphasizing “historically” deep divisions (regional, ethnic,

¹ Lyautey was describing the logical order of the layout of ministries in the recently built ville nouvelle Rabat, the administrative capital of the Protectorate, during a tour with French journalists and engineers, but this “philosophy of the thing” extended beyond urban planning into the whole colonizing enterprise in Morocco (See Timothy Mitchell’s last chapter in Colonising Egypt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 161-2, 172-179. My discussion of the colonial exposition later in the chapter also draws heavily on Mitchell’s insights into the relationships among representation, order, and the mediation of colonial power.
religious, social, and economic), this framing of Moroccan identity implicitly justified French control of their oeuvre, their “making of Morocco,” for an indefinite period of time.

Protector and Protectee: Colonial Nation-Building in the Name of the Sultan

In the long Khaldunian view of the waxing and waning of the makhzen’s capability to project power in North Africa, French intervention beginning in 1830 in Algeria and later in Tunisia (1881) and Morocco (1912) constituted a major historical rupture, with the state expanding to an unprecedented extent in the Maghreb. For Morocco, the creation of the Protectorate in 1912 constituted the first time in more than 1300 years that an external (“Christian”) power, rather than an indigenous dynasty, had attempted to impose the central governmental control. Perhaps more significantly, the French (and Spanish) ability to eventually succeed in establishing a virtual monopoly on the use of force within defined territorial boundaries for the Sharifian empire radically transformed the historic dynamic tension between the blad al-makhzen and the blad as-siba, giving the makhzen a dominance that had never been achieved before. For the first time, tribal, mainly Berber-speaking, groups that had historically been able to leverage

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2 Italian intervention in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica (modern Libya) beginning in 1911 can also be seen in this light, though the Italians, and Spanish, struggled with “state-building” in their North African holdings.

3 The lineage of Islamic dynasties officially begins with Idriss I, who began to consolidate a kingdom in the late 8th century around Volubulis, and expanded under his son, Idriss II, who founded Fes. In addition to subsequent Arab and Berber Muslim dynasties, some of which created large empires encompassing most of the Iberian peninsula and much of North Africa, the Barghawata kingdom along the Atlantic coast which lasted from the 8th-11th centuries represents one of the most successful central governments in Moroccan history. Due to limited written documentation and the fact that the Barghawata followed a syncretic religion combining elements of Islam and Judaism, the kingdom receives short shrift in Moroccan historiography.
their own military capability to threaten or aid the central government to their advantage
were ultimately totally subdued in 1934.

In fact, it was a *siba* threat against the *makhzen*, the uprising of the Berber tribes
surrounding Fes in 1911 that served as the final pretext for France to impose formal,
political control over Morocco in 1912. Throughout the 19th century, Morocco benefited
from its strategic position on the southern coast of the straits of Gibraltar. Morocco was
protected by a reluctance among European states to threaten the balance of power
(primarily between Britain and France); ⁴ instead the major powers agreed to refrain from
occupying the country while they parceled the rest of the continent up in the colonial
“scramble for Africa.” The Sharifian empire in Morocco avoided direct military
conquest for the most part, ⁵ but the Sultan and *makhzen* increasingly lost economic
autonomy, including the ability to control trade and raise tax revenues as Western powers
 gained more and more capitulatory privileges throughout the century, ⁶ the Sultan was
forced to pay an oppressive indemnity to the Spanish government following the Spanish-
Moroccan war 1859-1860, and ultimately all government receipts were taken over by
European banks, following the 1906 Algeciras Conference, to pay back this debt and

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⁴ In many ways this situation represented a “Moroccan” corollary to the “Eastern Question” presented by
the geostrategic (controlling the route to India, for example, for the British) and economic importance of
the Ottoman Empire. Up until World War I, European powers refrained from unilaterally dismembering
the Ottoman Empire in order to avoid precipitating a land war on the continent. Of course, they did nibble
away at the edges (the French in Algeria and Tunisia, the Italians in Libya, and the British in Egypt, for
example), though each of these incursions increased diplomatic tensions on the European continent.
⁵ The Spanish did invade the north in 1859 and occupied Tetouan until 1860, when a British brokered
agreement led to their withdrawal on the condition that the Sultan pay a large indemnity.
⁶ The 1880 Madrid conference further eroded the last vestiges of Morocco’s economic independence, with
European powers and the United States agreeing to protect Morocco’s territorial integrity to ensure equal
economic access in an early “Open Door” arrangement.
others incurred in the Moroccans’ *tanzimat* attempts at military modernization in the last decades of the century.

The diplomatic stalemate shielding Morocco from France’s desire to fill in the missing piece of their imperial arc extending from Tunisia to its holdings in West Africa began to shift in the first decade of the 20th century. In the 1904 Entente Cordiale, France and Britain acknowledged their respective zones of control in Morocco and Egypt. French troops landed in 1907 in Casablanca and subdued most of the hinterland surrounding the city on the Chaouia plain. From the east, troops under Lyautey’s command pressed into Morocco’s oases close to Algeria’s southern Oranais region and occupied the border town of Oujda in 1907, in response to the murder of a French medical missionary in Marrakesh in March. Under the destabilizing pressure of this foreign military threat, a Moroccan civil war broke out between Moulay Abd al-Aziz and his brother Moulay Abd al-Hafidh, who claimed leadership of a *jihad* to try to defend the country’s sovereignty.⁷ Hafidh defeated his brother’s forces in 1908, and was recognized as the Sultan in 1910 by the international signatories to the 1906 Act of Algeciras.⁸ German opposition to French designs on Morocco was finally resolved in 1911 after the French agreed to hand over a part of Congo to them.

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⁸ The 1906 Algeciras Conference was convened in Spain to resolve tensions between Germany and France over the future of Morocco, on which both had colonial designs. The act reorganized Morocco’s customs and created a State Bank to ensure the revenues of the *makhzen* were collected to pay back Moroccan debt to European creditors.
By 1912, the French had a green light to move forward in Morocco, but a debate continued about what kind of regime to impose. While many in the colonial lobby (representing French Algerian interests), pressed for a so-called “tribes-policy” of taking direct control over Morocco tribe by tribe (by concluding treaties with tribal chiefs through negotiation or, more often, using military force), in the end it was a so-called “makhzen-policy” championed by the Quai d’Orsay that won out. This approach preserved the indigenous governmental structure in Morocco—the Sultan and the makhzen—as a partner lending what was essentially a colonial project more legitimacy: this so-called “associationist” policy was defended as a more diplomatically sensitive and efficient method of extending French control in North Africa.

On March 30, 1912, in Fes, the Sultan, Moulay Abd al Hafidh, and the French emissary to Morocco, Eugene Regnault, signed a treaty establishing a Protectorate partnership between the French Republic and the Moroccan Sultan. In this partnership, the French agreed to “protect” the position of the Moroccan “protectee,” the Sultan, to establish the conditions necessary to modernize the “medieval” Islamic kingdom. The stated purpose of the Protectorate, according to the treaty, was to “establish a stable regime founded on internal order and general security that will permit the introduction of reforms and will assure the economic development of the country.” The French tutor would help Morocco develop as a modern state and economy. While the Protectorate was a clear precursor for the “mandate system” used by Britain and France to cloak their

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colonial designs in the Middle East following World War I, the major significant difference is that, rather than being based on the principle of the self-determination of the Moroccan people, the Protectorate was created as an agreement between the French government and an individual sovereign, the Moroccan Sultan.¹⁰

To eliminate any vestiges of the siba threat of resistance to the makhzen, in the treaty the Sultan ceded to the French the right to militarily occupy Moroccan territory and to take over responsibility for policing on land and sea in order to maintain security and order; this was to be done to protect “His Sharifian Majesty” and whomever might inherit the throne from dangers that menace his person or throne or compromise the tranquility of his state. The French Government also took over all diplomatic representation of Morocco. In order to facilitate the modern development of the country, the treaty stipulated that the French government could institute whatever administrative, judicial, educational, economic, financial, or military reforms it judged necessary within Moroccan territory. On the “protectee”’s side, the treaty pledged the new Protectorate regime would safeguard the traditional religious respect and prestige accorded to the Sultan, including control of religious institutions (habous), and would organize a reformed Sharifian Makhzen to administer these institutions.

In terms of Ibn Khaldun’s model, this partnership bypassed the perennial ‘asabiyyah dilemma, how group solidarity could be harnessed to strengthen the central government’s legitimacy. In essence, the French forced the Sultan to allow them to

¹⁰ Significantly, the Franco-Moroccan Common Declaration (March 2, 1956) which stipulated the formal end of the Protectorate treaty and recognized Moroccan independence was also signed in the name of the French Republic and the Moroccan King.
provide the potent military force necessary to project the *makhzen*’s power and control over the cities and countryside. The Residency quickly took over the day-to-day administration of the country as a bureaucratic neo-makhzen was created to extend the government’s reach into the economy, schools, courts, agriculture, religious life, and land tenure. Over the next two decades, a Protectorate partnership was constructed that carefully preserved the façade of the Sultan’s sovereignty to legitimize the reality of a highly modern state bureaucracy under French control. The next section will examine how this hybrid colonial state took shape under Lyautey’s tenure as Resident General and how a French framing of “Two Morocos”—a systematic dualism breaking the country into sociological, historical, administrative, ethnic, and cultural binaries—helped inform a policy that simultaneously aimed at denying the existence of a unified Moroccan nation, justifying a privileged and necessary French “protector” role in helping build that nation, and safeguarding against the possibility that Moroccan national unity could ever be attained.

**“A Tour of Morocco in One Hour” – The Sultan’s Visit to the Moroccan Pavilion at the 1931 Colonial Exposition**

The symbolic apogee of the Protectorate fiction of Franco-Moroccan partnership occurred in the Moroccan Sultan’s tour of the Palace of Morocco at the International Colonial Exposition (ICE) on August 7, 1931 during an official visit to France. The ICE can itself be seen as the crowning celebration of the French colonial dream of *la plus Grande France*, “Greater France.” Held from May to November in the Bois de Vincennes on the eastern outskirts of Paris, the exposition’s official slogan was “The
Tour of the World in One Day.” It was intended to showcase France’s imperial grandeur for the benefit of a metropolitan French audience, which numbered over 7 million visitors over the six months the exposition was open.\textsuperscript{11} Pavilions dedicated to each of France’s overseas possessions\textsuperscript{12} were constructed with painstaking detail to showcase the empire’s natural and cultural riches and the results of its mission civilisatrice, or civilizing mission, spreading French culture and enlightenment. The exposition also addressed the capitalist bottom-line, seeking to market the commercial benefits of colonization, as substantial space was set aside for private vendors\textsuperscript{13} and each colonial pavilion included information for potential investors.

The 1931 ICE followed in the tradition of 19th century expositions tracing back to the French Industrial Exposition of 1844 in Paris and the Great Exposition held in London’s Crystal Palace in 1851. Paris was also the site of several further expositions, most notably the 1889 Exposition for which Gustave Eiffel designed his eponymous structure. As Timothy Mitchell has demonstrated, the expositions served as powerful representations of a “European historico-geographic order of culture and evolution, an order reflected and reproduced in the multitude of plans, signposts, and guidebooks to the

\textsuperscript{12} Other colonial powers were invited to attend, though the British, having convened their own colonial exhibition in 1924 and 1925 declined to set up an exhibit in a “celebration of French colonialism.” The 1931 ICE included displays by Portugal, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Italy, and the United States, which put up a scale replica of Mount Vernon, George Washington’s residence in Virginia.
\textsuperscript{13} An example of the colonialist-capitalist relationship was the Louis Vuitton pavilion, which displayed a variety of sumptuous travel gear, all made from colonial products including gold, silver, and leather. “Les Visages de l’exposition: Parmi les pavillons commerciaux,” L’Illustration, 26 September 1931, Supplément Commercial, p. XX.
exposition.” A key element of this representational attempt at ordering was the colonial sections included in almost all of the expositions. The Egyptian exhibit at the 1889 World Exposition in Paris, which simulated a winding street in Cairo, was one of the earliest and most impressive examples of this type of representation.

The concept for the 1931 ICE grew out of the popularity of the earlier colonial sections, though its pedagogical purpose was much more intentional, reflecting the vision of the ICE’s commissioner general, Marshal Lyautey, who had been called out of retirement to head up the commission in charge of the exposition, to educate and motivate the French public and French businesses about the glory and potential of Frances’ overseas empire. Care was taken in the architectural designs used to distinguish metropolitan (art deco) pavilions from those of colonies (native motifs). Spatially, the layout of the exposition started with the metropolitan center (the Cité des Information and Section Métropolitain) and spatially moved a visitor outward (in a reverse cultural evolutionary descent) through colonial pavilions, ending at the ultimate periphery, the animal kingdom represented in the jardins zoologiques. While a small cottage industry of scholarship has been dedicated to the 1931 ICE, little has been written specifically about the Palace of

14 Mitchell, ibid, xiv.
Morocco or the official visit of the Sultan there in August 1931. A closer examination of the exhibit and the royal visit adds another angle to our understanding of the ICE, but more importantly, for our study, it also provides a remarkable snapshot of the French construction of Morocco at the mid-point of the Protectorate.

The Moroccan Sultan’s tour of Palace of Morocco at the International Colonial Exposition was, in fact, arranged in response to a direct request by Mohamed ben Youssef to Lucien Saint, the French Resident General in Morocco. The twenty-two year old Sultan viewed the exposition as a perfect opportunity to make an official visit to France with the same pomp that he had experienced while accompanying his own father for the 1926 inauguration of the Mosque of Paris. Saint arranged for an invitation to be extended through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and also agreed to allow the young two and a half year old crown prince, Moulay Hassan II, to accompany his father on this trip. Despite budgetary belt-tightening as France began to feel of the effects of the Great Depression, Saint’s emphasis on the importance of this gesture for France’s “Muslim policy” was heeded and a regal month-long tour, setting out from Casablanca on August 2, was authorized.

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17 The young Emperor of Annam, another head of state (under a French “protectorate” in Indochina), was present for the inauguration of the exposition in May. King Faysal of Iraq also made an official visit to the exposition later in the summer (touring the Syria pavilion must have been a somewhat awkward exercise with his French hosts).
18 Mohamed ben Youssef took the Moroccan throne upon his father’s death on November 17, 1927, at the age of eighteen. His father Youssef ben Hassan had succeeded his brother, Moulay Abd al-Hafidh when he abdicated, after signing the Treaty of Fes, and retired to Tangiers with a stipend supplied by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
19 Hassan was cared for and supervised by a French governess who began his instruction in French on the trip.
From Casablanca, the Sultan and a large Moroccan delegation including all of the major makhzen officials and qaids from each of Morocco’s civil and military regions traveled aboard the French cruiser, Colbert, to Marseille and then via a special overnight train to Paris. Upon their arrival at the Gare de Lyon, they were met by the French President, members of the government, and municipal and regional leaders. At this welcoming ceremony, the Moroccan Sultan gave a speech expressing his pleasure in the visit and lauding the modernizing and civilizing role of the French Protector:

Our joy at seeing France again does not equal the pleasure we take in coming here officially as Morocco’s dignified representative, bringing the greetings of our Majesty, our Makhzen, and our Moroccan people, as well as an expression of our recognition of the French work which is permitting Morocco to progress in all of the branches of civilization and to lead it to take its rank among the most modern peoples of the world.

This work, of which the most illustrious pioneers are Maréchal Lyautey, Mr. Steeg, and Mr. Lucien Saint, is truly dignified in the glorious annals of France and of its great principles, because it has been brought about with all due respect to our religion, our tradition, and our customs to endow Morocco with an administrative organization and the economic tools that will assure it a normal and prosperous development. This has been provided through a necessary precondition, the admirable French peace that has been established based principally on peaceful penetration and the winning of hearts. The goal has been reached, from myself to the last of my subjects. We work with the French in the most brotherly of collaborations in order to render our country worthy of the great Nation that protects it, and of the admiration that others have for it.21

The speech delivered a pitch-perfect summary of the associationist partnership envisioned by Lyautey, with a hearty thanks to the benevolent French Protector who had pacified the country and laid the groundwork for development while always respecting indigenous traditions, religion, and culture.

After two days of official functions, including a visit to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, a meeting with the French President and dignitaries at the Hotel de Ville, and a

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night’s entertainment at the comic opera, the Moroccan delegation was ready for the main event of the visit, a tour of the Colonial Exposition. On Friday morning, the Sultan, Lucien Saint (the Resident General), and an entourage of Moroccan dignitaries traveled to the eastern edge of Paris in a motorcade. They were met by the High Commissioner of the exhibition, Marshal Hubert Lyautey, at the ceremonial grand entrance, the Porte d’Honneur. Flanked by an honor guard of spahis (native mounted cavalry serving in the colonial army in Morocco) and the Sultan’s own garde noire, the vehicles proceeded past the Metropolitan Section, the Cité des Informations, and the Musée des Colonies before veering right past the Madagascar Pavilion’s cow-skull-decorated Tour des Bucrânes to the Grande Avenue of the French Colonies, the primary axis of the exposition. The Moroccan delegation passed pavilions dedicated to French possessions including Somalia, Oceania (the Tahitian pavilion), the French enclaves in India, New Caledonia, New Hebrides, French Guyana, Martinique-Réunion-Guadeloupe, and large pavilions dedicated to French Catholic and Protestant missions. The motorcade then paused for a moment in front of the grandiose model of the Angkor Wat and the Indochina pavilions before proceeding past the French West Africa pavilions to the bronze 82 meter high Tower of the Army which marked the endpoint of the Avenue of the Colonies.

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22 This entrance was formerly known as the Porte de Picpus and also as the Porte Dorée. The majority of visitors attending the exposition came through this main gate, as a new metro station had been added there to help bring the inhabitants of Paris; city buses also dropped off passengers headed to the exposition at this gate.

23 The model of the Buddhist temple measured 55m in height and 5000 m² in area and inside contained 80 dioramas of life in Indochina.
Just past the military monument, the automobiles stopped in front of the entrance
to the Palace of Morocco, an arched gate styled after the magnificent 17th century Bab
Mansour in Meknes. A large crowd pressed in as the Sultan, Lyautey, and the rest of the
entourage got out of the cars to enter the exhibit. The reporter covering the event for the
weekly *L'Illustration* reported on the spectacle, “A powerful and beautiful vision: the
mounted spahis, standing up in their stirrups, their burnouses opened up like wings,
saluting with their swords; the *garde noire* rendering honors; and a vague murmur from
the crowd, a slow, rhythmic music of song and instrument welcoming the arrival of the
Sultan.”

The General Commissioner for the Moroccan Section, Nacivet, met the group
at the gate and then led the Sultan and the others on a guided tour through the incense-
filled palace halls of the exhibit.

The Palace of Morocco had been designed by Robert Fournez and Albert Laprade
(two architects who had served with Lyautey in Morocco that had been very involved in
the urban design of Rabat and Casablanca) as a series of presentation halls, courtyards,
and gardens intended to evoke the palaces of Fez and Marrakesh. The overall goal of
the palace was to comprehensively represent France’s oeuvre as a “Protector” in Morocco
since 1912, and as Lyautey had commented years earlier when showing off the colonial
capital, Rabat, the result was a fascinating distillation of the “philosophy of the thing.”

An official report during the pavilion’s planning stages explains the linear progression of
its exhibits and the representational “order” intended in the displays:

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25 Benzoin, or amber resin, was burned during the Sultan’s visit in incense burners placed throughout the
26 Patricia Morton, *Hybrid Modernities: Architecture and Representation at the 1931 Colonial Exposition,
The places reserved for the different services have been distributed in the Palace in a manner to give visitors as precise and logical an idea as is possible of the succession of different operations that were needed in the pacification, the administrative organization, and exploitation of the riches of our Protectorate.  

The report goes on to add it was not enough just to represent French colonial development, the *mise en valeur*: “However, to measure the work accomplished, it is necessary to show what Morocco was like before our arrival, or at least the state we found it in immediately after the pacification.” This binary conception of traditional versus modern Morocco was displayed in the ordering of the display halls within the palace.

First, from the Avenue of the Colonies, a visitor entered an exhibit hall detailing the stages of the initial “pacification” rebellious tribes. To highlight a “before and after” sense in the display (and of course to add an important exotic attraction sure to please the average visitor), a space was dedicated immediately after the Hall of the Army to an exhibit titled “Du Maroc en 1912,” showing the undeveloped, “medieval” state of the country’s cities, roads, and coastline (which had few if any ports) on the eve of the French arrival. This area also had an alcove dedicated to the Moroccan government before the creation of the Protectorate, to showcase the progress they had achieved in modernizing the Makhzen. Next, to demonstrate France’s role in “protecting” Morocco’s traditional culture, the central area of the Palace of Morocco was the “Salle des Arts Indigènes,” a huge hall dedicated to traditional Moroccan handicrafts. (A visitor had the opportunity to buy many of these items, including rugs, embroidery, tea sets, and other

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28 Ibid.
products, in the *souq*, or market, area that was set up on the way out of the pavilion).

Finally, the visitor passed through halls dedicated to the ministries of the modern colonial state dedicated to health, education, industry, agriculture, forestry and water conservation, public works, and mining, before exiting back through a traditional *souk*, or market, out to the Place d’Afrique du Nord.

The rest of the chapter proceeds through these rooms which encapsulated the major components of the French definition of Morocco and delineated the “philosophy” of the Protectorate partnership. The strange ironies of this partnership, particularly the unique binary impulses of modernization and traditionalization that constituted the core principles of Lyautey’s “associationist” colonial approach in Morocco are remarkably distilled in the Protectorate’s representation at the exposition. No other moment more eloquently expressed this construction of the reinvented Franco-Moroccan Makhzen and its nation-building partnership than the scene that Friday morning in August 1931, as Lyautey and the Moroccan Sultan were guided through the displays of the Palace of Morocco.
The Hall of the Pacification: Conquering and Administering the *Blad as-Siba*

*The hall of the pacification evokes the different stages of the French pacification, the composition of the steps of the hardy civil and military pioneers, and notably their two elite corps—the Indigenous Affairs officers and Civil Control officers, that permitted them to push further forward: steps of conquest became, almost immediately, steps of culture.*

As discussed at the beginning of the chapter, the initial *raison d’être* for French intervention in Morocco was that the Sultan and the *makhzen* could not control the threat of tribal unrest in the countryside. Quelling “dissidence”—the *siba*—was a central feature of the civilizing mission of helping create a strong central government, which the French colonial school believed Morocco (and the rest of North Africa) had perennially lacked. In contrast to the *razzia* slash and burn approach implemented in the conquest of Algeria, in Morocco, Lyautey championed the euphemistic “peaceful penetration,” his infamous *tache d’huile*, or oil stain, in which a three-pronged approach combining political, economic, and military action would achieve the “pacification” of the country, without firing a shot. “Show force in order to not have to use it” was a maxim as was the importance of the “right man on the ground” which highlighted the importance of good intelligence officers who knew the tribes, could identify potential allies, and could play tribes off of each other in order to ensure their “submission” to the central government.

“Pacification” was the first stage of modern nation-building and, after passing through the reconstructed Bab el-Mansour and the Court of Honor, the first exhibit hall a visitor entered in the Palace was dedicated to the army’s work in accomplishing this task,

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with sections dedicated to the Indigenous Affairs and Civil Control officers responsible for making “steps of conquest” become “steps of culture.” The corner to the right of the entrance contained a large rotating diorama depicting three scenes from the village of El Hajeb, intended to symbolically depict the oeuvre pacificatrice, or pacifying work, of the French throughout Morocco’s countryside. A traditional market town perched at the foothills of the Middle Atlas to the south of Meknes, El Hajeb was located at a crucial intermediary zone between the tribes of the central Moroccan plains surrounding Meknes (including the Guerrouane and Beni Mtir) and the highland tribes south in the Middle Atlas mountains (the Beni Mguild and Zaian). Soon after the Treaty of Fes was signed in 1912, El Hajeb had been one of the first military posts to be constructed. In the early “pacification” of hostile Berber tribes that threatened the vital east-west corridor between Rabat and the Algerian border, it served as a strategic center for attempting to persuade hostile tribes to submit through trade, medical services, and diplomacy. It also served as a staging post for punitive expeditions against those that continued armed struggle against the “makhzen.”

The first scene in the diorama depicted Berber tribes arriving in El Hajeb to perform the targuiba ceremony. This ritual act of submission in which a bull’s hamstrings were cut, causing it to fall into a kneeling posture on the ground, was typically performed before French officers when a tribe surrendered and submitted to the

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31 For the exposition, the army published a series detailing the achievements and contributions of the army in the colonial enterprise from Morocco and West Africa to Indochina. The history of the pacification was titled “Les Opérations militaires au Maroc,” (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1931) and it detailed the army’s pacification activities from 1907-1931.
32 SHD-AT, Carton 3H 305. Letter from Moroccan commissioner for the International Colonial Exposition to General Vidalon, High Commander of Troops in Morocco (July 11, 1930). This report details the design of the exhibit described below.
rule of the state. When the display turned, the next scene showed troops and tribesmen working on the construction of the post at El Hajeb, including the Indigenous Affairs office and building roads linking the village to Meknes in the plains below and to the mountains above. The final section displayed the end result of the army’s successful “peaceful penetration” into the hostile tribal region: the model of El Hajeb included a completed Indigenous Affairs office with a medical clinic and a tribal council court building next door. While Chapter 2 focuses more fully on the articulation of the French “Berber policy” in the early years of the Protectorate, it is important to note here that the tribal council, or *jami’a*, was the central pillar of the tribes policy that sought to ally Berber chiefs directly to the French administration. As this “divide and rule” policy developed, Berber customary law (‘urf in Arabic and izref in Berber) became the vehicle through which the French sought to safeguard Berber cultural and linguistic distinctiveness against the “pernicious” progress of Islamization and Arabization. The court proceedings were ostensibly supposed to only be conducted in Berber and transcribed in French (though Arabic often ended up being used anyway).

On the other side of the entrance, a huge map of Morocco at 1/200,000 scale covered an entire wall and detailed, in color coded zones, the progress of the “pacification” since 1907 and the growing web of roads and railroads built to supply the army as it expanded military operations against the *blad as-siba.*

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33 To this day, the Indigenous Affairs offices are referred to by Moroccan Berbers as the *biro arabe*, emphasizing the Algerian legacy of the 19th century *bureaux arabes* in the Moroccan colonial administration.

34 In 1931, the conquest, or “pacification,” of Morocco was not totally complete, as several zones in the High Atlas and in the Saharan regions in the south remained “insoumis,” not yet submitted to the Franco-Moroccan Makhzen’s control. Officials responsible for the exhibit were highly sensitive to the public’s
world war in 1914, the bulk of the Atlantic and central plains had been “pacified” (what Lyautey termed “useful Morocco”) and the Zaian Berber areas surrounding Khenifra had been subdued enough to open the northeast route connecting Marrakesh to Fes. During the war, despite a severe depletion in troop strength, the southern regions of Tiznit (1917) and the Sous (1919) were pacified, and a north-south corridor between Meknes over the High Atlas to the Tafilet area in the edge of the Sahara in the central south had been opened. In the 1920s, the French set about pacifying the more remote mountain and desert regions of the country, Lyautey’s “Maroc inutile,” in a series of hard-fought campaigns against Berber strongholds in these areas. After being forced to help the Spanish defeat the Berber leader Abd El-Krim Al-Khattabi and his forces of the “Rif Republic” which had begun to threaten the French zone in the mid-1920s, the French returned to the last siba strongholds. At the time the ICE was being held in 1931, the French colonial army (much of which was composed of Berber partisans who themselves had only recently been pacified) was focused on the Central Atlas areas around Tounfit and the lands of the Ait Yahia. It took three more years, though, to subdue the last strongholds in the High Atlas, the Jbel Saghro, and the Anti-Atlas in the far south in 1934.

perception of the progress of the army’s progress. In a walk-through of the exhibit in April 1931 (prior to the opening of the Exposition) with the French President, Lyautey noticed the map only reached in the southwest to Tiznit and failed to show how close France was to the possibility of connecting with its colonial possessions in Mauritania. He subsequently ordered the map to be enlarged. SHD-AT, Carton 3H 305. Letter from Moroccan Commissioner to the International Colonial Exposition in Paris to General Vidalon, High Commander of the Occupation Troops, (April 10, 1931).

35 Lyautey himself resigned as Resident General in disgrace in 1926 after the World War I hero Pétain was sent in to take over the military campaign.
The rest of the exhibit was dedicated to representing how “pacified” Morocco was administered. A huge relief map of Morocco in the center of the room\(^{36}\) showed military installations, artillery depots, and airfields, and marked off the administrative division of the country into civilian and military zones of control. This administrative bifurcation was also reflected on the opposite wall of the hall, which was divided between a display for the Direction of Indigenous Affairs and the Civil Control administration.

The Indigenous Affairs Service constituted the idealized vanguard of Lyautey’s associationist Protectorate vision and the officers in the service were the emblematic heroes of the *mission civilisatrice* in Morocco. In an 1891 article, "The Social Role of the Officer in Universal Military Service" and a 1900 article titled, “The colonial role of the army,” both published in *La Revue des Deux Mondes*, Lyautey outlined a neo-associationist vision for the military in which the army officer was the key agent in the colonial project. Skilled in languages, ethnography, and agricultural techniques, these men were ostensibly vital liaisons between the colonial state and tribes being incorporated under that state.

The Indigenous Affairs Service in Morocco traced its lineage back to the legacy of the Algerian *bureaux arabes*, the military administrative system used up to 1870 in most areas of the colony in which military officers trained in local language and culture were given wide prerogatives. It also grew out of the pre-Protectorate “scientific

\(^{36}\) The Protectorate’s geographic service played a key role in representationally “constructing” Morocco by cartographically defining the entity as a bounded territory. More accurate mapping, including the extensive use of aerial photography, was also a vital tool for the pacification campaigns between 1907-1934.
penetration” 37 conducted to lay the groundwork for France’s entry into Morocco.

Starting in the late 19th century, there was a growing interest in Morocco in France, particularly after Charles de Foucauld published *Reconnaissance du Maroc*, an account of his exploration of the little-known country in 1883-84. In 1903, a *Mission Scientifique du Maroc* was instituted at the Tangier French legation to conduct research expeditions in Morocco; the results were published in a set of volumes titled *Archives Marocains*. With the establishment of the Protectorate, steps were quickly taken to formalize this knowledge and develop a curriculum for A.I. officers. The scientific mission in Tangier was incorporated first in a training school for officers set up in Meknes which was later moved to Rabat with the creation of the I.H.E.M (Institute des Hautes Etudes Marocains). The IHEM served as a think tank/officer training program for Arabic, Berber, customary law (‘urf/izref), Islamic law (*shari’a*), Moroccan history, sociology, ethnography, etc. 38

In the early years of the Protectorate, a Moroccan school of expert opinion had coalesced in what Edmund Burke has summed up as the “Moroccan Vulgate,” analytical paradigm reducing the complexities of Moroccan history, political organization, and society into a set of interrelated dichotomies. The first was the division of the country into *Blad al-Makhzen* (the taxable area under the control of the Sultan) and the *Blad As-siba* (the non-tax paying areas in rebellion against the Sultan’s government). The French overlaid this distinction with further correlated binaries—Arab and Berber, urban and

38 Research conducted in Morocco was often published in the academic journal published by the IHEM, *Hespéris: archives berbères et bulletin de l’Institut des hautes-études marocains*) which was created in 1921. Since 1960, the renamed journal has been published as *Hespéris-Tamuda.*
rural, and plains and mountains. The A.I. officers trained with this “vulgate” played an important role in the pacification and the administration of the bled, the idealized “authentic” Moroccan countryside. During the pacification, they conducting reconnaissance, created tribal maps, and attempted advance negotiations with chiefs to ensure their submission to the makhzen. After a tribe submitted, the A.I. officer was assigned to a post where he administered a circle (the basic administrative unit in the Protectorate). There, the A.I. officer oversaw the tribal councils (many times working on codifying their customary law), planning agricultural development projects, and enlisting soldiers for the colonial army (this last task was particularly vital as the pacification itself was mainly carried out by tribesmen—mostly Berber speaking—that had been incorporated into the makhzen’s forces).

The Indigenous Affairs display in the “Hall of Pacification” represented the prestigious position of the Indigenous Affairs officers in the Protectorate’s nation building project with a montage of images. At the top of the wall, reliefs showed A.I. officers performing their duties with one departing on a sortie with a contingent of partisans, another receiving the submission of tribes with the sacrifice of a bull, and another meeting with indigenous chiefs at the A.I. bureau. Immediately below, a sequence of large photos showed A.I. officers conducting reconnaissance missions in the

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40 The history of these soldiers, the tirailleurs, goums, mokhzanis, and partisans, who fought in the colonial army to pacify the country and later served as Moroccan units (tavors) in World War II and postcolonial conflicts in Indochina and even Algeria, has only recently begun to be explored. See Driss Maghraoui’s work including “Moroccan colonial soldiers: between selective memory and collective memory,” *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 20, Spring 1998, 21-43.
mountains, a doctor performing vaccinations, a road being built between Marrakesh to
Telouet in the High Atlas, and tribes submitting to an officer.

The “Two Moroccos” of the Moroccan Vulgate were also embedded in the
structure of the display. In the center of the photos described above, there was a large
map delineating the military territories under the control of the Direction of Indigenous
Affair and those under Civil Control: a dark line and colored shading denoted tribal areas
that remained unpacificed.\footnote{SHD-AT, Carton 3H 305. Note au sujet de la participation du Service des Affaires Indigènes à
l’Exposition Coloniale de 1931.} A long vertical panel represented the various regional
“types” of Morocco’s tribal peoples in three major sections depicting Morocco’s north,
the Rif-Jebala zone; the Middle Atlas, the “Berber Mountains”; and the South, the
Saharan region.\footnote{SHD-AT, Carton 3H 305. Letter from the Chief of the Civil Control to the Chief of the Commerce and
Industry Service, dated May 28, 1930.} In front of the panels, seven mannequins were dressed in different
clothing characteristic of these major regions, including a “native” of the North wearing a
jellaba, a mokhzani wearing a blue burnous, a Middle Atlas Berber, a “blue man” from
the Southern desert, and a Glaoui partisan from the High Atlas. The A.I. officer was the
symbol of the French accomplishments in bringing these tribal, largely Berber speaking
populations in the mountainous bled, the historic blad as-siba, under the control of the
benevolent French makhzen.

According to the logic of the “pacification,” submitted areas under the military
administration of the Direction of Indigenous Affairs would ultimately be handed over to
civilian rule, the Civil Control, which occupied the other side of the display wall.

Because the so-called blad al-makhzen was the first to come under French control, the
Civil Control display correlated closely to the other side of the “Two Moroccos,” which included the cities, plains, and “Arabs.” In the following circulary note sent out in the first years of the Protectorate, Lyautey highlighted the critical importance of “partnership,” or at least the appearance of partnership, in how the French set up the Civil Control administration:

The Protectorate is the negation of direct administration. Administration must always appear to be supported by the native authorities under the supreme authority of the Sultan, under our simple control. The heads of municipal services are themselves controllers, placed next to pashas, the effective chiefs in the administration of cities.43

Three large panels displayed snapshots of this Franco-Moroccan partnership on the civilian side of the administration. The first panel was divided into two major parts portraying Moroccan urban areas and the Atlantic plains, the two major zones under the purview of the Civil Control. The city section showed a scene from a session of a Makhzen court, with a French controller present at the proceedings conducted by the local pasha. Just as the A.I. officer oversaw the administration of tribal customary law, the civil controllers “partnered” in the administration of areas under Islamic law. It is worth noting here that the judicial system in the Protectorate was further divided as Europeans were subject to French courts and the country’s sizable Jewish population was under the jurisdiction of rabbinic courts.

Below the court scene there were three large photographs depicting the traditional/modern bifurcation in urban life: a large photograph of veiled women in a cemetery in Rabat, one of the Place de France in Casablanca full of pedestrians and traffic, and one of a mellah (the Jewish section of the Moroccan city). Below the

photographs, different “types” of city-dwellers, including “traditional” and “evolved” natives, were painted in watercolors. The dual priorities in the French project of constructing Morocco, modernizing the country and preserving its traditional culture, were perhaps most clearly evident in these depictions of how Morocco’s cities were transformed during the Protectorate. Lyautey had ordered his urban planners to protect the *medina*, or traditional Moroccan city, and build the modern section of the city, the *ville nouvelle*, adjacent to the *medina* in all of the historic urban centers in Morocco. As Janet Abu-Lughod has argued, however, this policy created a *de facto* “urban apartheid,” a hierarchical division between the indigenous Muslim and European sectors of the city. The traditional city was protected, but it was also frozen in terms of development and expansion, creating serious problems as the demography of the country became increasingly urbanized over the course of the Protectorate. The two worlds, traditional and modern, represented by the two halves of the city were separated by a *cordon sanitaire* (usually a wide boulevard), with the Europeans protected from “contamination” by the indigenous population.

The countryside surrounding the major cities on the Atlantic coast and central plains was represented in the second half of the panel. In the center, a Civil Controller was riding on a horse, surrounded by *mokhzani* Moroccan soldiers, including a Zemmouri soldier wearing a large hat decorated with silk fringe. To the left, various agricultural

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development activities were depicted with French administrators working to battle locust infestations and distributing seeds to members of a *Société indigène de prévoyance*. Below these, a contrast was drawn between the contributions of traditional Morocco and modern France to urban life. On the right, there was a panoramic shot of Moulay Idriss, a sacred Moroccan city containing the shrine of the founder of the first Moroccan Muslim dynasty, and pictures of ancient fortresses constructed by the sultans. On the left, these structures, useful “only for war,” were contrasted with agricultural villages, the “centers of riches and prosperity through which the French domination was implanted.”

In an antechamber between the Hall of the Pacification and the next room, a final component of the “peaceful penetration” supposedly carried out during the pacification was represented in a display dedicated to the Health Services. Lyautey created a special unit for medical assistance that, though formally independent of the military, worked closely with it in the pacification campaigns. The *groupes sanitaires mobiles* that were formed consisted of a doctor, who carried instruments and medicine on mules, and an escort of a couple of Moroccan *mokhzani* troops who traveled through the countryside ahead of, and alongside, troops moving forward against dissident tribes. A book celebrating the “civilizing” contribution of these military doctors summed up their role in the pacification:

> Everywhere, in our diverse colonies, in Indochina, Tonkin, Madagascar, West Africa, as well as in the African Mediterranean, the pacification of a country has marched hand-in-hand with hygiene and assistance. The military doctors who came with the troops of occupation have immediately begun fighting smallpox, the plague, malaria, typhus and

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other epidemic scourges.⁴⁷

For the author, himself a medical doctor who had toured the country in the mid-1920s, the medical service which was part of the oxymoronic “peaceful conquest” had a redemptive effect on the colonizing project: “Certainly, colonial expansion has its harshness; it is not, of course, without reproach, but if something ennobles and justifies it, it is the almost saintly activity of the doctor, which can be understood as that of a missionary.”⁴⁸

_Du Maroc en 1912: The Morocco that Was_

The next two exhibition halls in the Palace of Morocco were dedicated to the “traditional” side of the modernization-traditionalization dichotomy expressed in the French construction of Morocco. The first of these, the hall labeled “Du Maroc en 1912,” was setup to demonstrate to the visitor the undeveloped, near-“medieval” state of the Sharifian Empire on the eve of the French arrival, what the London Times correspondent in Tangier, Walter Harris, fondly and nostalgically referred to as the “Morocco that was.”⁴⁹ Having left the hall dedicated to the army’s work in “pacifying” Morocco, which explained the military rationale for why the French had been needed to “protect” the

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⁴⁷ René Cruchet, _La Conquête pacifique du Maroc_, (Paris: Editions Berger-Levrault, 1930), 91. This doctor from Bordeaux visited Morocco in the mid-1920s and wrote a book about the practice of medicine in Morocco before and after the establishment of the Protectorate.

⁴⁸ Ibid. The role of medicine in the colonial construction of the Protectorate is beginning to be explored by several historians. Rivet includes an important section on this topic in _Lyautey Et L’institution Du Protectorat Français Au Maroc, 1912- 1925_, Vol.2, p. 224. The story of Émile Mauchamp, a French doctor whose murder in the medina of Marrakesh in 1907 provoked the bombardment and landing of troops in Casablanca, has been used a window into the impact of French colonialism in two recent works, Jonathan Katz, _Murder in Marrakesh: Émile Mauchamp and the French Colonial Adventure_ (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006) and Ellen Amster’s article, "The Many Deaths of Dr. Émile Mauchamp: Medicine, Technology, and Popular Politics in Pre-Protectorate Morocco, 1877-1912," _International Journal of Middle East Studies_. Volume 36, August (2004), 409-428.

⁴⁹ Walter Harris, _Morocco That Was_ (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1921).
Moroccan makhzen from tribal uprisings, this next room was intended to show why they were needed to develop this “backward” country.

In 1912, Morocco had almost nothing in the way of a modern economic, communications, transportation, or administrative infrastructure. There were a handful of roads in the country and no cars, except for a few driven for amusement on the palace grounds by the Sultan Abd al-Aziz (who also owned the only stretch of railroad in the country, which took guests on a short ride through his palace gardens in Marrakesh). The only links between cities were trails, over which animals carried people. Morocco’s few ports were extremely ill-equipped. The Atlantic coast provides almost no natural harbors, and those that did exist (at Salé, at the mouth of the Bou Regeg River, and at Mehdia at the mouth of the Sebou River) had silted up due to neglect. Most seaborne trade came through Tangier or Larache on its way to Fes in the north, and in the south, passed through El Jadida (south of Casablanca) on its way to Marrakesh and surrounding areas.

In 19th century traveler’s accounts and in the scientific missions sent out to study the country, French and other European visitors to the country viewed Morocco as being nearly pristinely preserved, by its isolation, as a medieval Muslim society. A dominant feature of this orientalist paradigm was that it presupposed the object of analysis—whether the medina, artisanal guilds, tribal structure, religious practices, tribal or shari’a law, political structure, and so forth—was static, a fixed entity that could be assessed, probed, measured, and catalogued. This ahistorical bias created a tendency within French scholarship to replicate a “before and after” paradigm that ignored any

dynamism, fluidity or agency on the Moroccan side—whether talking about Berber political organization,51 the makhzen-siba tension in Moroccan history,52 or the Islamic city53 —before the arrival of the French in 1912.

An important element in defining “pre-Protectorate” Morocco focused on the “traditional makhzen.” In the Du Maroc en 1912 exhibit an alcove was dedicated to the makhzen and contained a huge diorama focused on the Sultan. This scene, evoking Delacroix’s 1845 The Sultan of Morocco and His Entourage, depicted the Sultan leaving through the massive 17th century Bab al-Mansour gate in Meknes, mounted on a horse and shaded by the imperial parasol. Having pledged in the Treaty of Fes to protect the person of the Sultan and institutions of the makhzen, Lyautey, a strong royalist sympathizer, focused on rehabilitating and maintaining the ceremonial prestige of the Alawite dynasty. This component of Lyautey’s traditionalization policy is a classic example of what Terrence Ranger and Eric Hobsbawm have labeled the “invention of tradition.”54

On one level, this process constituted a “reinvention” (and appropriation) of makhzen traditions that had been in use for centuries. For Lyautey and other officials, the reign of Hassan I (1873-1894), widely-revered as the last great Moroccan sultan, served

54 The Invention of Tradition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
as an idealized blueprint for the *makhzen*.\textsuperscript{55} Meticulous attention was paid to the protocol and accoutrements of the royal office, including the use of the parasol, the symbol of rule.\textsuperscript{56} Historically, the Sultan had been accompanied by his palace retinue and a large armed force, or *mahalla*, on trips through the countryside during which the ruler would collect taxes (voluntary or forced), resolve disputes, and receive and give gifts to tribal chiefs. To maintain the prestige of the *mahalla* under the Protectorate, the Sultan was assigned a unit of designated troops, including a dedicated artillery contingent, to supplement his personal force, the Black Guard, which dated back to the creation of a slave army by Moulay Ismail in the 17\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{57} The Residency also stringently upheld the *hedya* ritual in which notables from each of Morocco’s cities and chiefs representing each of the tribes would travel to Rabat to offer homage by giving the Sultan gifts at the three major religious feasts of the year—Mouloud (the birth of the Prophet), Aid El-Sghir (or “Aid al-Fitr,” celebrating the end of Ramadan), and Aid al-Kabir (or “Aid al-Adha,” celebrating Abraham’s sacrifice of his son).

The construction of the reinvented *makhzen* also entailed the wholesale invention of new traditions. For example, in 1914, the Sultan Moulay Youssef commissioned the director of music for the Moroccan Troops, Mr. Zichbauer, to compose a sort of national anthem, the “Sharifian hymn,” to be played at official ceremonies and at the presentation

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\textsuperscript{55} The court historian, Ahmad ibn Khalid al-Nasiri’s, account of the period, *Kitab al-Istiqsa*, served as a sort of “bible” in this respect.

\textsuperscript{56} At the moment he abdicated, after signing the Treaty of Fes, the Sultan Abd al-Hafidh had broken the parasol to symbolize the end of Moroccan sovereignty.

\textsuperscript{57} The Sultan’s request for the artillery unit to be added to his “Troupes Marocains” was granted in 1917. MAE-Nantes. Direction des Affaires Chérifien (DAC), Carton 137.
of the Sultan to foreign delegations.\(^5^8\) One of the most obvious examples of the invention of tradition under Lyautey was the adoption of an entirely new flag for Morocco. The dahir creating the flag explained the old emblem “adopted by our ancestors” could be confused with other flags (mentioning navy signals in particular), and the “progress realized by Our Sharifian Empire, in consideration of the great renown which it has required” necessitated a new symbol to distinguish Morocco from other nations. The new flag was to have a five-pointed green star on a red field. It seems likely that, for a European, like Lyautey, the traditional six or eight-pointed stars which had traditionally been used by the Sultan were too closely associated as Jewish symbols. For them, the five-pointed star, which was of Ottoman origin and had never been used in Morocco, was a more obviously Muslim symbol.\(^5^9\)

Together with inventing tradition, the French felt a keen responsibility to serve as “protectors” of Moroccan tradition, a task that was institutionalized in the creation of a Ministry of Beaux-Arts and Antiquities which was charged with conserving Morocco’s cultural and architectural patrimony. The next section of the palace was dedicated to this preservationist endeavor. The commission charged with planning the Palace wrote: “But if our economic services have been useful in transforming and exploiting the country, our artistic services have, in contrast, guarded its beauty and art. And, it is to highlight this

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\(^5^8\) MAE-Nantes. Direction des Affaires Chérifien (DAC), Carton 137. “Note au Sujet de la musique du Sultan,” (April 3, 1914). Apparently, a later director of music for the Sharifian guard, Captain Leo Morgan, either wrote another air for the hymn or took credit for this one, as he is now known as the author of the music to the Moroccan national anthem. The words for the current anthem were penned by Moulay Ali Skalli in 1969.

effort that we have, with a very wide scope, planned a hall dedicated to indigenous art."  

This hall, the Salon of Honor, was the most vast and ornate in the entire exhibit, with a vaulted ceiling in the shape of the hull of a ship and huge inset bays forty meters in length and six meters in height on the left and the right. These bays were dedicated to the two greatest Moroccan imperial cities, Fez and Marrakesh, and implicitly affirmed the “protector” role of the Ministry of Beaux Arts and Antiquities which had carried out a sort of urban “museumification” policy that, though it did keep the medinas from being destroyed, tried to freeze the Moroccan sections of cities and allowed no plans for natural growth. The left side contained a diorama of Fes presenting a panoramic view, from the perspective of the Tomb of the Merenids, of the medina and the ville nouvelle, with the Middle Atlas Mountains in the background. Small figurines depicting the different dress of city dwellers walked around scale models of the houses in the medina. The diorama of Marrakesh on the opposite side showed the souks of the medina with figures in the diorama including a blind beggar extending a hand requesting alms, a snake charmer playing the tambourine, and a Berber women from the mountains selling carpets in the famous Djemaa al-Fna square. The pink minaret of the Koutoubia rose above this scene, and the snow capped peaks of the High Atlas lined the southern horizon. On another wall, a lighted map provided a two minute lesson on Morocco’s geography with a succession of projections including information about the human and natural characteristics of the country.


61 An example of this is the zoning in Fes that prohibited any construction to the north, east, or south of the medina in order to protect sight lines for its historic walls.
In the center of the hall, a wide array of Moroccan handicrafts including rugs, embroidery, engraved metals, tanned leathers, and pottery was on display. A Parisian journalist commenting on the art displayed in the Salon of Honor observed how “in a civilization so rudimentary in many respects, an element of delicate thought is affirmed, despite the many difficulties of daily life.”62 The exhibition of these indigenous arts reinforced a construction of Morocco which buttressed France’s necessary role, “obeying its tradition to civilize without destroying, knew how to conserve, or more accurately, to save a series of Maghrebi techniques that without us would have disappeared completely.”63 These displays also represented the degree to which this active cultural conservationism on the part of the Ministry of Beaux Arts and Antiquities (to which education, or “Instruction Publique,” was added in the first decade of the Protectorate) entailed, as Hamid Irbouch has demonstrated, an industrial systemization and commodification of local arts and crafts.64

Having made it halfway through the exhibit, visitors were then welcomed to enjoy the ambience of the Salon of Honor by sitting in comfortable chairs set throughout the hall, or to take a break at the end of the hall where an octagonal space was furnished with comfortable sofas and other Moroccan furniture. This “Salon de Repos” served Moroccan mint tea and desserts, and each evening, from five to seven, an orchestra played a concert of “Moroccan” songs that had been composed for the exposition. The

décor was dedicated to “ancient Morocco,” specifically the excavations at Volubulis, a Roman city north of Meknes. Several of the impressive mosaics found during the French archaeological digs there were reproduced on the floor of the salon, including one of the “Head of a Young Berber.” A guidebook clearly echoing the Kabyle myth praised the “ancient artist” who had, in the mosaic, “synthesized, one might say, the generous traits of the autochthonous race.”

**The Newly Constructed Colonial State**

The next major section of the Palace of Morocco was dedicated to France’s successes in modernizing Morocco, particularly through developing its economic potential and exploiting its natural riches, with halls dedicated to the various ministries of the neo-makhzen that had been created since 1912 to carry out this *mise en valeur*. The first room, which opened out of the refreshment area, was dedicated to the Direction of Public Instruction and displayed information about educational reforms that had been carried out since the establishment of the Protectorate. The educational system implemented by the Protectorate reiterated the underlying order, or “philosophy of the thing,” envisioned in the French construction of Morocco. Different school systems were setup for Europeans, Muslims, and Jews. For the Muslims, there were separate Arab and Berber schools, which were further divided by class, with separate primary and educational stages.

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66 Chapter 2 takes up the educational dimension of the Berber policy in more detail, specifically with the creation of the Azrou Berber College in 1926.
secondary schools for the sons (and daughters) of notables and the lower classes. Despite the rhetoric of the civilizing mission, the dominant pedagogical goal of this educational system was to reinforce traditional roles within Moroccan society and to ensure the stable continuance of the Protectorate associationist partnership.

While planning the exhibit, the Director of Public Instruction, Henri Bruno, told his staff that the display would create a sort of “museum of the Moroccan school.” This “museum” would provide “a concrete illustration of what we said in L’enfant marocain showing visitors a synthesis of the life of our schools, at their homes, in the Qu’ranic schools, and in class.” The exhibit itself was divided into two sections arranged carefully according to the vulgate logic, with an “Arab side” and “Berber side” (a display case on the back wall was set up for Moroccan Jews.) In the center of the room, there was a table with dolls that Bruno had commissioned the handicraft workshops for girls in the major Moroccan cities to make to represent all of the indigenous Moroccan types—urban, rural, Arab, Berber, Muslim, Jew, Fassi, Marrakshi, Rabati, male, female, soldier, peasant, bourgeois, artisan, in their “typical dress.” On the walls, the various educational approaches, from traditional to modern, employed in Morocco were detailed

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67 The French envisioned creating a loyal ruling class through the écoles des fils des notables and collèges musulmans and sent the lower classes to trade and agricultural programs.
68 Spencer Segalla has investigated the educational philosophy employed by Bruno and his predecessor, Georges Hardy, in “Georges Hardy and Educational Ethnology in French Morocco, 1920-26,” French Colonial History, Vol. 4, 2003, pp. 171-190.
69 Co-written with Georges Hardy, the book analyzed the “typical” Moroccan child: L’Enfant marocain (Paris: Larose, 1925).
70 MAE-Nantes. DIP Carton 92, “Circulaire au sujet de la participation des écoles de l’enseignement musulman à l’Exposition Coloniale de 1931” from Bruno, the head of the Educational Service. Bruno also emphasized that their display would be in competition with those from education ministries in other colonies and urged them to do their very best.
71 Bruno sent out an eight page list to the directors of the schools detailing the dolls each needed to make, with specific instructions about their clothing and headgear (MAE-Nantes, DIP Carton 92, “Exposition Coloniale,” February 6, 1930).
in displays describing the Qu'ranic schools, the European and Indigenous trade schools, girls’ schools, and schools for children of notables. Another set of pictures showed the fruit of France’s efforts to modernize the educational system with pictures of graduates at work: a teacher, a bank teller, a factory worker, a gardener, an artisan, a librarian at the Qarawiyin library, a businessman, and an interpreter working alongside a Civil Controller.\(^72\)

The next room after Public Instruction was dedicated to the Administrative Services of the Protectorate including the directorates of Finance, Municipalities, and Controls. The displays in the room focused primarily on the development of Morocco’s urban centers under the Protectorate with maps, pictures, models, and films detailing the progress France had made in constructing the modern villes nouvelles.\(^73\) As discussed earlier, the Moroccan city, notably Rabat and Casablanca, served as a laboratory for French urban designers, as colonial administrators such as Lyautey sought to harness urban planning as a means of projecting colonial control.

After exiting this room, the visitor next encountered a hall dedicated to the exploitation of Morocco’s phosphate riches. While many European prospectors had speculated wildly about the substantial mineral riches Morocco was estimated to have in the lead up to the Protectorate, later surveys revealed Morocco had only limited deposits of coal, oil, lead, cobalt, and manganese, many of which were located in remote regions

\(^{72}\) MAE-Nantes, DIP Carton 92 contains all of the correspondence between the Directorate and instructors about preparations for the display at the colonial exposition. Many of the textile crafts on display in the Hall of Indigenous Arts, including embroidered pillows, carpets, tablecloths, and clothing, were created in the French-run training workshops for Muslim girls (see the section on girls’ education in Chapter 5).

\(^{73}\) MAE-Nantes, DIP Carton 92, “Participation des Services du Protectorat à l’Exposition Coloniale de Paris 1931,” from Adjunct Commissioner of Morocco for the Colonial Exposition to the Director General of Public Instruction, Beaux-Arts and Antiquities, December 21, 1929.
creating high transport costs that mitigated the profit to be made from their extraction. The one mineral it did have in abundance was phosphates, which were first discovered during World War I southeast of Casablanca. In 1920, the Office Chérifien des Phosphates (O.C.P., Sharifian Phosphate Office) was created and given a monopoly to extract and sell the natural resource, which created one of the major sources of revenue for the Protectorate government. In 1929, 1,608,150 tons of phosphates were exported through the port of Casablanca.  

The next room, dedicated to the Ministry of Public Works, was designed to impress the visitor with the incredible progress that had been made in constructing Morocco’s infrastructure. A section detailed the activities of Morocco’s non-phosphate mining industry. Other sections showed maps, charts, and photos describing the progress made in building up the country’s transportation and communications infrastructure (including roads, railroads, ports, telegraph-telephone, and post) and major projects including the Si Said Maachou dam, which was intended to supply electricity to vast areas of Morocco in addition to guaranteeing a water resource for expanded irrigation.

The creation of this infrastructure was definitely one of the most radical transformations achieved during the first two decades of the Protectorate, as it connected the country in a manner that had never been achieved before. The first decade of the French administration of the country saw a huge investment in the country’s transportation infrastructure. Due to the provisions in the 1911 Franco-German treaty, Morocco still controls more than two-thirds of the world’s phosphates reserves and the mineral has continued to bankroll the central government since independence.

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only narrow-gauge railroads were allowed to be built in the Protectorate, until the Tangier-Fes line had been completed. The first railroad completed in Morocco connected Rabat and Casablanca in 1911 (a year before the Treaty of Fes) and made what had been a two-day trip a matter of hours. With the onset of World War I, the provisions of the 1911 treaty were removed as a consideration and a huge expansion of wide-gauge railroad was undertaken. The Rabat-Kenitra-Sidi Kacem-Meknes-Fes line was completed in 1923, linking the coast to the inland Saiss plain and connecting the two large cities of the north central interior. The Tangier-Fes line was completed in 1927, Casablanca to Marrakesh in 1928, and the final link to Algeria, the Fes-Taza line (the Taza to Oujda line had been completed earlier) in 1934. By the mid-1930s, Morocco had a total of 1,600 km of railroads.

The greatest impact in the public works investment of the Residency, however, was in the construction of roads. In the initial stages of the pacification, the construction of roads was vital for the movement of troops and weapons, including heavy artillery. A vast network of primary and secondary roads were constructed to enable the military operations of the pacification campaign, and the heavy manpower needed for these projects also provided a useful outlet for the labor of tribes that had recently been subdued. Of course, the flip-side of the construction of these roads was that the tribes were now linked more closely than ever before with the lowland plains and the coasts where Morocco’s cities were located. The roads that brought soldiers into the *blad as-siba* also allowed these tribesman to quickly traverse the country, as a trip from the High Atlas, the Sous, or the Tafilet to Casablanca, Rabat, Marrakesh, or Fes could now be
done in a matter of hours rather than days or weeks. As importantly, the regional markets now became major hubs for the rural population, growing into small-sized cities.\textsuperscript{75}

In terms of ports, the French chose to develop the Atlantic coast as the primary outlet for Moroccan products, rather than the Mediterranean, to which they had little direct access, and which they did not want to entrust to the goodwill of the Spanish. Because of the large number of Europeans present in Casablanca after the landing of troops in 1907, this small fishing village of 20,000 was chosen as the primary port, despite the fact that it presented very little advantages in the way of a natural harbor and required investment in the construction of a jetty, elevators, and loading facilities. The other main ports were at Safi, which served as an outlet for the export of phosphates and later for the sardine canning industry, and Kenitra (renamed Port Lyautey), north of Rabat, which was developed as an outlet for the rich agricultural lands of the Gharb.

The final exhibit hall celebrating modern Morocco was dedicated to the twin themes of “Agricultural Colonization” and “Soil Conservation.” Though intentionally framing Morocco as a “protectorate” rather than a “colony,” one of the major goals of the Palace of Morocco at the 1931 exposition was to advertize the investment opportunities available in the country, including the agricultural colonization of Morocco’s fertile plains (which had begun first in the Chaouia, then the Doukkala and the Saiss). In addition to information about agricultural colonization, this room also contained information about the Protectorate’s efforts to maximize the soil’s fertility in Morocco by

\textsuperscript{75} Eugen Weber has, of course, highlighted the central role the expansion of roads linking isolated villages to larger highways and rail-lines played in the integration of France. The economic role of these roads, in allowing peasants to reach new markets, is also mirrored in the experience of Morocco’s bled, or countryside, from the 1920s on, as good roads and the \textit{Eugen Weber, Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France,} (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), 203-220.
developing irrigation resources and working on soil conservation. A diorama for the
Water and Forest Service (Service des Eaux et Forets) contained a progression of scenes
portraying vestiges of an ancient forest, the degradation of the soil and desertification,
and various attempts to combat this threat including soil conservation and reforestation
efforts.  

By the time of the 1931 exposition, Protectorate land tenure policies over the past
two decades had facilitated the expropriation of most of the best Moroccan land for
European (mainly French) colonization. Dahirs in 1913 and 1915 had instituted a
Torrens-type system of land registration maintained by the colonial state, requiring the
owner to produce a title to clear one’s registration and also requiring the owner to pay the
registration fees or the court adjudication expenses if the land had not been registered.
In 1914, alienable and inalienable lands were distinguished, with *habous*, *jaysh*, and
collective tribal lands declared inalienable and *melk* (private) and domanial (belonging to
the *makhzen*) lands declared open for sale to Europeans. The Residency sold off most of
the domanial lands to settlers, and much of the private *melk* lands were also quickly sold
to colons. In 1919, another round of legislation changed the inalienability of communal
lands, creating a commission to determine how much land each *douar* (or tent) was
needed and legalizing the sale of surplus tribal lands to Europeans. Because the *makhzen*
no longer needed Arab tribes to man the *makhzen* army, the *guich* (or jaysh) lands these
tribes had been given in exchange for military service were also expropriated. Though

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76 SHD-AT, Carton 3H 305. Letter from Chief of the Commerce and Industry Service to Captain Valhuy,
Etat-Major regarding “Concours pour la fourniture d’un diorama et d’une frise decorative,” (January 5,
1931).
more sensitive to dispose of, even many of the habous (or waqf) properties owned by religious foundations were also sold. Between 1913 and 1932, the number of hectares under cultivation by Europeans had grown from 73,000 to 675,000. These did not include the substantial amount of land owned by Moroccans that was rented out to Europeans, including tribal collective lands which were also legally made to be rentable in dahirs in 1926, 1931, and 1941.77

At the time of the ICE in 1931, a dualist agricultural system had been put in place in Morocco that divided the country’s agricultural sector geographically and technologically into two zones: a European zone, cultivating the best lands with advanced methods requiring substantial capital investment (which was made easily available by the colonial state), and a Moroccan zone, cultivating marginal lands with traditional methods due to a lack of expertise and lack of access to the capital investment needed for these methods.78 Moroccan farmers had been pushed to the margins of an ecological system that was already marginal in terms of agricultural production, due to the inconsistency of rainfall in most parts of Morocco. Tribes which had engaged in a mixed agricultural system of grazing and cultivating crops at alternating times of the year were forced to cultivate less productive lands. Despite the advertised efforts of soil conservation and reforestation in the display, the cumulative effect of the Residency’s agricultural colonization policy favoring European land use was that it pushed much of

78 The Sociétés Marocains de Prévoyance (S.O.M.A.P.) were founded by the Protectorate in 1917, but funding on the indigenous side remained difficult to obtain.
the country’s rural population and increased movement towards the cities because the
bled could not support them.

From this room, the visitor moved outside to the last section of the Palace of
Morocco, a long esplanade that extended out towards the Place de l’Afrique du Nord. This area created a space evoking the Andalusian-style Ouadayas garden in Rabat, with two large basins of water lined with cypresses and flowers and a fountain at the end. Along the sides, rose-covered pergolas provided shade for the small boutiques similar to those in the streets of Fes or Marrakesh that had been installed to create a Moroccan souk along the walls. Moroccan vendors had been brought in for the exposition to sell embroidery, pottery, rugs, metal wares (brass, silver, gold), and other goods in the boutiques in order to evoke “the type of curious and amusing examples of medieval life one finds in Morocco.”

The juxtaposition of these petit-bourgeoisie Moroccan vendors and the stalls of the numerous private enterprises active in Morocco (which were designated stalls just through a door off the courtyard) revealed what was becoming a pressing dilemma in the dualist colonial economy created under the Protectorate. Through the 19th century, Morocco’s local industry, comprised mainly of traditional handicrafts, had faced growing competition from the penetration of manufactured goods imported by Europeans. The

79 At the end of garden, opening out onto the plaza shared by the Tunisian and Algerian pavilions, there was a Moorish café serving mint tea, Moroccan baked goods, and the sweet nougat bonbons sold close to the Moulay Idriss shrine in Fez. In the restaurant opposite, visitors could sample bastilla, several varieties of couscous, mechoui, grilled lamb, many types of tagine, and multiple appetizers.
80 MAE-Nantes, DIP Carton 92, “Participation des Services du Protectorat à l’Exposition Coloniale de Paris 1931,” from Adjunct Commissioner of Morocco for the Colonial Exposition to the Director General of Public Instruction, Beaux-Arts and Antiquities, (December 21, 1929).
Protectorate period, however, signaled an even greater challenge, as the Protectorate
government subsidized the planning and financing of new industries but ignored the local
ones. Artisans in Fez, for example, lost markets to due economic downturns (in 1931,
the global economic crises was being felt acutely in Morocco) and due to competition
from Western products. In the 1930s, Japan began to take over what had been traditional
Moroccan export markets for shoes and clothes in Egypt and the Far East (the Japanese
could make cheaper babouches). Though the Protectorate did create a special branch to
control quality in the handicraft industry and provide training (Prosper Ricard was
appointed head of this Service des Métiers et Arts Indigènes by Lyautey in 1918 and
headed it for thirty years), consumer preference within and without Morocco had
switched to Western styles and negatively impacted these groups in Moroccan society. In
addition, the urban cooperatives and guilds, which had historically provided social and
economic ties within medina society, had their prerogatives in the marketplace (including
the regulatory function of the mouhtasseb) taken over by the municipalities and the above
mentioned Service des Métiers et Arts Indigènes. This destabilization of the traditional
socio-economic structure in the medinas created a crisis among the artisan class,
particularly in Fes, which fed into the nationalist efforts to mobilize protest beginning in
the 1930s.

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82 See the discussion in Charles Stewart, The Economy of Morocco, 135.
Conclusion

After completing this tour of the French construction of Morocco during his visit on August 7, 1931, the Moroccan Sultan performed Friday prayers at the Paris Mosque and then returned to the Exposition that night for an evening of entertainment including dinner at the Museum of the Colonies, a cruise on Lake Daumesnil to view the nightly fountain and light show, and a walk past the lighted Angkor Wat temple before getting a car to return to his lodgings. In subsequent days, the Moroccan pavilion served as the site of another reception given for the Sultan by Lucien Saint, the Resident General; the Moroccan delegation held a gala, presided over by the Sultan, in honor of Maréchal Lyautey. Over the course of the month, the Sultan and his entourage visited sites in eastern France including Verdun, Metz, and Strasbourg before heading south through Nancy, Dijon, Evian, Aix-les-Bain, Grenoble, and Nice on their way back to Marseille. The delegation re-boarded the Colbert and returned to Casablanca on August 29th, to the “real” version of the Morocco they had seen on display in Paris.

Having analyzed the idealized construction of Morocco presented at the International Colonial Exposition, the next chapters consider Moroccan responses to this colonial “philosophy of the thing” used to legitimize French dominance of the reinvented, and greatly expanded, Franco-Moroccan makhzen. Later chapters focus on efforts by the urban nationalist elites and the Sultan to contest the “reinvention” of the makhzen that privileged a French role in the Protectorate nation-building project. The next chapter, however, begins with a Moroccan response to the “expansion” of that state in the first

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83 SHD-AT. Carton 3H 304. “Voyage en France de Sa Majesté Sidi Mohamed Ben Youssef, Sultan de Maroc, Programme du Voyage du 2 au 31 aout 1931.”
two decades of the Protectorate: the intense resistance waged by tribal groups against the Franco-Moroccan makhzen and how the course of the “Pacification” directly contributed to later struggles over Moroccan national identity.
CHAPTER II

LA MONTAGNE BERBÈRE: PACIFICATION, DISSIDENCE, AND SUBMISSION IN THE ATLAS MOUNTAINS

The Arab-Berber dichotomy was a basic component of the French construction of Morocco that was explored in the previous chapter. As described at the beginning of the Introduction, the Moroccan nationalist movement was born in protest against this Arab-Berber ethnic bifurcation (which was overlaid with a religious dimension due to Catholic aspirations to convert the Berbers) which the “Berber dahir” threatened to solidify by formalizing separate administrations for Morocco’s “Arab” and “Berber” populations. The question of Berber identity became a central front in the struggle to define the Moroccan nation from that point forward, as both the French and Moroccan Arab nationalists sought to buttress rival claims to control the definition of a national “imagined community”\(^1\) in Morocco.

This chapter explores the background to the “Berber question” and how it was tied to one of the central pillars of the Franco-Moroccan Protectorate partnership, the “pacification” of the so-called blad as-siba on behalf of the Moroccan Sultan by the French military. The first section of this chapter outlines the French construction of “Berber Morocco” or “la montagne berbère,”\(^2\) which the nationalists implicitly and explicitly rejected in their protest against the 1930 Berber Dahir. Building off of 19th century

\(^{1}\) Of course, the other major player in this contest was the Sultan, who beginning in the 1940s, began to take a much more prominent role in trying to control this definition. The final chapter is devoted to his story.

\(^{2}\) The “Berber mountain” was widely-used as a metonym for an entire side of the “Two Moroccos” vulgate—siba, Berber, mountains, etc. For example, this was the title of the first book published by Abdellah Guennoun, a Kabyle A.I. officer who was posted among the Ait Oumalou and Zaian tribes: La montagne Berbère : les Aï Oumalou et le pays Zaïan, (Rabat: Editions Omnia, 1933). The ninth annual congress of the Institut des Hautes-Etudes Marocaines in Rabat in 1937 was dedicated to “la Montagne marocaine,” and, it is worth nothing, provoked a protest demonstration by nationalists.
century French scholarship on Kabylie in Algeria, a Moroccan school of French Berber experts emerged to articulate what developed into the Residency’s “Berber policy” in the first two decades of the “pacification.” By the late 1920s, this policy had evolved into an attempt to create, as Jacques Berque described it, “a Berber reserve, a sort of national park which was to be sheltered from the ideologies of the plain, whether Arab or French.”

This divide-and-rule attempt to maintain a loyal “Berber bloc” in the former blad as-siba was implemented in the creation of separate legislative, educational, and administrative structures in so-called areas of Berber custom. It was the 1930 attempt to formalize a cornerstone of this policy, the use of Berber customary law within designated areas of la montagne berbère, that the nationalists viewed as a fundamental assault on Moroccan national unity and sovereignty, as expressed through the Sultan’s right to administer Islamic law in the entirety of Moroccan territory “pacified” on his behalf by the Franco-Moroccan makhzen forces.

The second part of this chapter addresses a much-less analyzed question: how the Berbers, who were at the center of this fundamental controversy over how the Morocco nation would be defined, understood notions of communal identity during this period themselves. In the conflict between rival colonialist and nationalist definitions of Moroccan identity, the French downplayed any historically strong sense of national identity (based on an over-emphasized makhzen-siba distinction) and the nationalists argued the opposite. What is lacking in our historical understanding of this colonial

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3 Tracing back to the grandfather of French Berber specialists, Adolphe Hanoteau, who published extensively on Berber language, customs, and culture, culminating in his classic La Kabylie et les coutumes Kabyles (Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1872), which he co-authored with Aristide Letourneaux.

struggle to define Morocco is the perspective on national identity of the Berbers themselves. Did the Berbers have any sense of belonging to a greater “Moroccan” national entity? If yes, in what sense? How did the so-called blad as-siba understand and relate to the makhzen? What were attitudes towards the Sultan? What were attitudes towards the French presence and the brutal pacification of their homelands?

Relying on a large archived body of poetry collected throughout the Middle and High Atlas (the regions affected by the Berber Dahir described above), it is possible to begin tracing out this almost totally unexplored Berber side of the history of this period. These sources offer a window into how this population understood corporate identity in two stages of their experience of the “pacification” campaign against them: dissidence, or “insurgency” against the central (colonial, in this case) government; and submission, the voluntary or forced acceptance of the Franco-Moroccan makhzen’s control. On a theoretical level, this study of how an almost totally illiterate, largely transhumant, population “imagined” their community (or more accurately “imagined” multiple communities on multiple levels) is highly relevant to broader discussions of nationalism, specifically Anderson’s thesis\(^5\) that nationalism is intimately tied to the rise of mass literacy and the spread of print capitalism in the “modern” era. The multi-faceted ways Morocco’s rural, illiterate, and uneducated tribal populations understood national “identity” during Morocco’s first stage\(^6\) of anti-colonial resistance to the growing leviathan of a bureaucratic state is fundamentally important to our historical

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\(^6\) Chapter 3 focuses on the Arabo-Islamic nationalist movement’s “urban siba” and Chapter 6 addresses the Sultan-cum-King’s challenge to French control in the Protectorate arrangement.
understanding of how Morocco was constructed during the colonial period and contributes valuable empirical depth to the broader theoretical discussion of nationalism.

**Constructing La montagne berbère in French “Berber Policy”**

The central controversy in the 1930 protests against the Berber Dahir in Morocco ultimately concerned two rival versions of “imagined communities:” one which emphasized Morocco as perennially and comprehensively fragmented, primarily because of Berber dissidence against the central state, until it was brought together by the “French Protector” and the other which argued Morocco was a unified religious and political community which had steadfastly resisted foreign (Christian) attempts at conquest. The Berbers were at the center of controversy between these divergent framings of Moroccan history. As discussed earlier in Chapter 1, in the French colonial vision, which took direct inspiration from Ibn Khaldun’s model (De Slane’s French translation had been available since the 1850s), Morocco could be understood according to a set of interrelated dichotomies: *blad al-makhzen* (Arab, urban, and plains) and *blad as-siba* (Berber, rural, mountains). According to the celebrated French historian of Morocco, Henri Terrasse, Morocco history was essentially the struggle between the urban, Arabo-Muslim *blad al-makhzen* of the plains and the Berber, rural *blad as-siba* of the mountains. This idea of “Two Moroccos” was defined by the first Resident General of the Protectorate, Hubert Lyautey, in 1912 as,

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The one we occupy, which is militarily weak and governed by a Makhzen without force or prestige, and the other, much more important, which is comprised of Berber masses who are deeply agitated, fanaticized, and militarily strong, and who, under influences beyond our control, stand united against us.9

The basic paradigm for French policy in Morocco was bringing together the “two Moroccos” through the subjugation, ostensibly on behalf of the Sultan’s Makhzen, of the blad as-siba. For the French, however, the underlying premise of the Protectorate formula was that they would continue indefinitely as the ultimate guarantor or Moroccan unity by positioning themselves over the “Two Moroccos.”

According to this paradigm, influenced by the “Kabyle myth” that had taken root during the French colonization of Algeria,10 the Berbers would play a crucial role in this latter goal, as they were viewed as a “natural” ally of the French against the “Arabs” of the cities and plains.11 In the process of the pacification of the Berberophone Middle and High Atlas mountain regions, this basic orientation, expressed initially in ad hoc decisions about the administration of these tribal areas, developed by the late 1920s into an intentional policy aimed at preserving Berber language and traditional culture through the creation of unique juridical, administrative, and educational structures which sought to minimize the “Arabization” and “Islamization” of these areas. The origins of this

11 One of the most blatant statements (which the Moroccan nationalists loved to quote in their campaign against the French “Berber policy) of a racialized berberophilia was by the educational administrator, Roger Gaudefroy-Demombynes, who, in 1928, stated, “It is dangerous to allow the formation of a united phalanx of Moroccans having one language. We must utilize to our advantage the old dictum ‘divide and rule.’ The presence of a Berber race is a useful instrument for counteracting the Arab race; we may even use it against the Makhzen itself.” in *L’Œuvre française en matière d’enseignement au Maroc* (Paris : P.Geuthner, 1928), p. 119, quoted in Halstead, *Rebirth of a Nation : The Origins and Rise of Moroccan Nationalism, 1912-1944*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), p. 72.
policy can be traced back to campaigns in 1913 and 1914 against the Middle Atlas tribes bordering the vital Rabat-Meknes-Fes-Taza corridor.

These tribes refused to submit to the Makhzen because this entailed submitting to a judicial structure of qails, qadis, and shari’a which they felt threatened the traditional structures of their society.12 The solution was to ask the tribes to submit instead to the more neutral dawlah, or state (i.e. the French), which, in return, guaranteed the free exercise of the tribes’ customary laws and traditions. As more Berber areas were brought under French control during the course of the pacification of the Middle and Central High Atlas, this arrangement was extended over what were labeled areas of “coutume berbère,” or Berber custom.13 French Indigenous Affairs officers were assigned to posts in la montagne berbère to study tribal customary law and supervise the jemaas, or local tribal councils. To “protect” Berber customs, the jemaas were increasingly invested with extensive judicial functions, implementing izref, or customary law. By 1923, the French had generalized the use of judicial jemaas and divided Berber areas into specific tribal jurisdictions.14 The jemaa secretaries, who were charged with recording the oral deliberations of the councils, became the de facto presidents of these bodies. Also, in order to prevent Arabization, all records were kept in French not Arabic.15

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13 It is important to note that this was not a blanket “Berber policy,” as large Berber-speaking regions in the High Atlas south of Marrakesh were not under tribal customary law. From the early years of the Protectorate, the subjection and administration (ostensibly under Islamic law) was basically subcontracted out to Grand Qaids—the Mtouggi, the Gandafi, and the Glaouis (who ultimately monopolized control as Thami Glaoui later became the qaid of the entire Marrakesh region)—who treated these areas more as personal fiefdoms.
15 The French officers clearly did not mind any Francophone assimilation in Berber-speaking areas.
The other cornerstone of French Berber policy was a decision taken in 1919 to institute a separate educational system in Berber areas. The goal of these Franco-Berber schools, like that of the judicial system, was to preserve Berber culture, but at the same time to move towards Francophone assimilation. The Algerian system was used as a model, with instruction tending towards professional, primarily agricultural, training. Though similar schools were established in Arab areas, the crucial difference with the Franco-Berber schools was that Arabic language instruction was forbidden while French was mandatory. In a 1921 memorandum, Maurice Le Glay explained the intentional Francophone orientation of the system,

> The deep and legitimate concern expressed in our cause demands that the evolution of the mountain populations take place in the French language, the vehicle of our thoughts. The Berber population will learn French and be administered in French. This leads us to this tremendous effort to cover the Berber world with French schools as soon as possible. It is not longer Franco-Arabs schools, and it is intentional that we have written French schools *tout court*.”

Also, these schools were strictly secular in order to prevent Islamization. In a 1943 report about nationalist activity at the Berber college in Azrou, Lucien Paye summarized the political goal of the separate system, “As we know, the particular orientation of education in Berber country was determined by the idea that it was possible to establish and maintain a Berber bloc against the Arab populations and, notably by the activity of the school, to reduce the Islamization that has been observed.”

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By the mid-1920s, this collection of related policies regarding the Berber areas of the country had coalesced into a recognizable “Berber policy;” the French were committed to maintaining “two Moroccos” by reviving and preserving a Berber “nation” to counteract the hegemony of the Arab-Islamic element in the country. They were not, however, ignorant of their own role in facilitating, through “pacification” and investment in transportation and communications infrastructure that brought the country together more than ever before, the Arabization and Islamization of the very Berber areas of which they were striving to maintain the pristine integrity. Georges Surdon, a former interpreter in the French colonial army, and commissioner of the Sharifian government, observed in 1928:

Unfortunately, it seems that the Arabization of the Berber country is in danger of being rapidly accomplished, for various reasons which it would take too long to develop here. One can, however, state that to Arabize is, for the Berber, a manner of self-defense against us and, above all, that we are the vehicles for Arabization by obliging the Berbers to express themselves, in their dealings with us, in Arabic. If we do not take caution, we will have broken our promises and created an impassable abyss between the Berbers and us.18

Under the Resident General Lucien Saint, the Protectorate recognized the need to systematize the implementation of the Berber policy. Between February and March 1930, a special commission in the Direction des Affaires Indigènes drafted a new decree that created Berber customary tribunals and courts of appeal and established French tribunals for cases in which Europeans were involved.19 The Makhzen, according to

18 Georges Surdon, Esquisses de Droit Coutumier Berbère Marocain, (Rabat, 1928), p. 10. Surdon is lamenting a lack of Berber-speaking French officers, which posed a perennial problem for the administration, as most had much better Arabic skills.
19 Numerous studies of customary law were undertaken by A.I. officers in the field and experts in the I.H.E.M., including a voluminous work by Henri Hersé, Le Statut Judiciaire des Tribus de Coutume Berbère du Maroc, (Thèse pour le doctorat, Université de Rennes, Faculté de droit, 1935), p. 17.
official records, made no objections to the decree, though the Grand Vizier El Mokri was reported as saying, “this is nothing less than the demolition of Islam among the Berbers.” Nevertheless, the young new Sultan, Sidi Mohamed V (who had replaced his father Moulay Youssef upon his death in 1927), dutifully signed the Dahir on May 16.

By trying to give the “Berber policy” complete official sanction, particularly in formalizing the distinct Berber justice system and channeling it towards French courts by putting criminal cases under their jurisdiction, the “Berber Dahir” crystallized the basic contradictions of the Protectorate relationship, bringing a blatant “divide and rule” policy of “two Moroccos” into the open and undermining the credibility of the “partnership” with the legitimate Moroccan government, the Sultan and Makhzen. The 1930 dahir about *la montagne berbère* provoked an intense reaction in the so-called *blad al-makhzen*. Against the French construction of “Two Moroccos,” urban, Arab young nationalist activists pitted an alternative version of a single Moroccan nation unified by Islam, Arab culture, the Sharifian dynasty, and a historical patrimony (what Renan would refer to as the nation’s shared “glorious past”) of resisting any outside attempt to subjugate the country.

In fact, these two rival definitions of the nation in Morocco—the colonialist and the nationalist—both obscured the complex reality that Morocco had neither been totally fragmented and anarchic, nor had it been totally unified by any means on a national level,

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20 Ageron, *Politique Coloniale*, 137.
21 In his famous “What is a Nation?” speech in 1882, Ernst Renan explains, “A heroic past, great men, glory (by which I understand genuine glory), this is the social capital upon which one bases a national idea. To have common glories in the past and to have a common will in the present; to have performed great deeds together, to wish to perform still more - these are the essential conditions for being a people.” Translated and annotated by Martin Thom, in Homi Bhabha (ed.), *Nationalism and Narration*, (London: Routledge, 1990), 53.
before the French came. While one perspective reified an ethnic division between Arab and Berber in a rigid *blad al-makhzen/blad as-siba* dichotomy, the other glossed over the cultural and linguistic diversity of Morocco’s population under the rubric of religious unity. Both of these definitions stumbled over the Berber element in the country, overemphasizing or denying its distinctive identity, and ignoring tribal Morocco’s complex relationship to the rest of the nation.

In reality, as Morocco’s cities were in an uproar in the summer of 1930 over a French “plan” to irrevocably split off the Berbers from the nation, several of these Berber tribes in the mountains of the Atlas and Jbel Sahro were fiercely putting up their final resistance to a Franco-Moroccan army (ironically composed mainly of soldiers drawn from previously subjected Berber tribes) attempting to subject them, at least nominally, to the authority of the Moroccan Sultan. How these Berber communities processed the profound transformations generated during the twenty-four years of the colonial “pacification” and how they imagined communal identity after forcibly being brought under the auspices of a modern bureaucratic state was much more complicated than the picture of Moroccan identity defined by either the French colonialists or Moroccan nationalists.
Imagined Communities in Amazigh Poetry (1914-1943)

If only one possessed all the couplets, with their political and social commentary, invented and sung since the start of the century or earlier, one would have a most vivid account of the social history of the Atlas imaginable.  

The reasons why the Berber side of Morocco’s history has hardly been explored are understandable. History tends to be written mainly by the victors (in this case, colonial or nationalist) and mainly based on accessible written texts (in this case, either in French, Spanish, or Arabic). The dearth of documentation on rural and tribal peoples, especially first-hand sources from largely illiterate populations, often creates an unavoidable practical bias towards elite history. The lament quoted above is in a footnote in Ernest Gellner’s ethnography of the hereditary saints of the Ahansal religious lodge in Morocco’s High Atlas. He wrote it after hearing an Ait Hadiddou (another High Atlas Berber tribe) poet’s analysis of the exploits of the nationalists in the 1950s, “who had so suddenly and surprisingly brought a change of regime to these distant valleys.”

As in many oral cultures, Berber poetry served (and continues to serve) as a critical arena of public discourse in which, as Gellner observed, “political and social commentary” on current events is disseminated throughout the community. The problem, of course, is that unlike newspapers, journals, books, tracts, petitions, and other forms of print discourse, this type of poetic text is not normally conveniently preserved for the use of future historians. Anthropologists have focused on poetry in ethnographic field work, but, by the nature of their discipline, these studies have predominantly been

23 Ibid.
focused on the present (rather than historical) socio-cultural\textsuperscript{24} and sometimes even political\textsuperscript{25} insights this type of source can provide. Even when Berber poetry from the Protectorate period has been preserved through memorization, this type of oral history provides more insight into present memory than into the time period in which it was composed.\textsuperscript{26}

While Gellner understood the tremendous possibilities for writing the social history of the peoples of Morocco’s Atlas mountains from the ubiquitous Berber poetry of the region, what he did not know is that a tremendous trove of this oral literature had been collected, transcribed, and translated by French Berberists and their Moroccan interlocutors over a span of more than forty years during the Protectorate (1914-early 1950s). While some of these were published in French translation in the 1930s and 1940s,\textsuperscript{27} the most extensive collection is archived in the \textit{Fond Roux} at the \textit{Institut de Recherches et d’Etudes sur le Monde Arabe et Musulman} in Aix-en-Provence, France, and has only recently begun to be published.\textsuperscript{28} This remarkably comprehensive historical

\textsuperscript{24} An excellent example of this type of approach is Lila Abu-Lughod’s exploration of gender relations among Bedouins in Egypt through their oral lyric poetry, \textit{Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society}, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

\textsuperscript{25} One of the first and only studies to examine the use of poetry as political discourse remains Steven Caton’s ground-breaking work on Yemeni tribal poetry, \textit{Peaks of Yemen I Summon: Poetry as Cultural Practice in a North Yemeni Tribe} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

\textsuperscript{26} In December 2006, I interviewed several poets in their 80s and 90s from the Ait Sokhman and Ait Hadiddou tribes who did remember poems from their childhood during the French Protectorate. These provided fascinating insight into the continuing role of poetry in the community and into the living memory of this period resistance (specifically in poems by two famous female bards, Taougrat and Tawtawlkh). But, often, these men could only recite fragments, or even when they knew complete works, did not know the exact historical context of the poems.

\textsuperscript{27} These display a strong berberophilia for the most part. See Paul Reynier’s \textit{Taougrat, ou les Berbères raconté par eux-mêmes}, (Paris: Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1930) and Lucie Paul-Margueritte’s \textit{Chants berbères du Maroc}; (Paris : Editions Berger-Levrault, 1935) is a collection of translated poems the author collected in Azrou and the surrounding area in the early 1930s.

\textsuperscript{28} Harry Stroomer and Michael Peyron published an invaluable catalog of the oral poetry in the archive (Catalogue des archives berbères du Fond Arsène Roux, \textit{Berber Studies Volume 6}, (Leiden, Rudiger Koppe
oral record offers fascinating insight into how this community processed the conquest and imposition of colonial control, making it possible to trace the evolution of how they imagined corporate identities in the process of being integrated into a “nation-sized” political and economic unit.

The Performance Context of Berber Poetry

The person responsible for gathering this archive was a French soldier, Arsène Roux, who was re-assigned from Algeria to serve as an interpreter during the early conquest of central Morocco between 1913 and 1919, after which he taught Arabic and Berber at the military school the French set up in Meknes to train indigenous officers. In 1927, he was responsible for creating the Berber College in Azrou where he served as director until 1935, then was assigned to other duties in the Protectorate, including directing the elite Collège Moulay Youssef in Rabat in the 1940s. During this period, Roux’s personal project was the collection of Berber poetry, both in the Tashelhit and Tamazight dialects, from the Souss and from the Middle Atlas; Roux transcribed much of this poetry himself but also sent his Berberophone students out to gather songs during their school holidays. The fruit of this work forms a remarkably comprehensive archive in terms of its geographic breadth, covering most of the Berber speaking areas of Morocco (with the notable exception of the Rif mountains in the Spanish zone in the

Verlag Koln, 2003). Some of these were published, see Arsène Roux, Poésies Berbères de l’époque héroïque Maroc central (1908-1932), ed. by Michael Peyron, (Aix-en-Provence: Institut de Recherches et d’Etudes sur le monde arabe et musulman, 2002).
north), and chronological span, which extends from the very beginning of the French conquest in 1907 up through the early 1950s.\(^{29}\)

One of the most fascinating aspects of this poetry is the scope of its content—from highly intimate to social, political, and theological matters—and its vital function within Moroccan Berber society as a shared discursive space (where no print media existed) at a local and regional level. On the local level, poems would be chanted or sung (I will use poem and song interchangeably as all the poems were sung or chanted) in the course of everyday activities; for example, the *ahellel* is a specific genre of songs women composed while performing routine chores such as grinding grain. Poems would also be performed within a wide range of group contexts, often in a lyrical gamesmanship during celebrations such as weddings and feasts. In many communities, local poets (*inššaden*) would be prominent at these gatherings which often concluded with a large *ahidous* circle in which men and women dancers would respond in a chorus to a poet’s lines. In the late 1920s, these local poets, with the increased security and ease of travel following the French pacification of the Middle Atlas, began more and more to circulate among neighboring tribes.\(^{30}\)

Poems were also disseminated far beyond the local level through the activities of the *imdyazen* (*sing. amdyaz*), wandering bards that traversed the Atlas as professional entertainers. These troubadours, whom one scholar has labeled the “rural intellectuals”\(^{31}\)

\(^{29}\) Even after independence, Roux kept in correspondence with former students, would make return trips to Morocco, and continued to work on his collection of poetry, translating and re-transcribing, in retirement.

\(^{30}\) Roux reports, for example, that, in 1927, poets of the Beni Mtir were traveling among the Ait Youssi and Beni Mguild tribes.

\(^{31}\) See Hassan Jouad’s “Les Imdyazen, une voix de l’intellectualité rurale,” in *REM MM*—“Les Prédicateurs Profanes au Maghreb,” January 1989, 100-110. On the continuing role of *imdyazen* see Michael Peyron’s
of the Atlas, performed a vital role in the spread of news in a circuit that extended from Meknes and Fes in the north down to the oases of the Tafilelt in the Sahara south of the High Atlas. The tradition of the imdyazen profession originated in the Ait Yahya tribe of the eastern High Atlas mountains in the zawiya (religious lodge) of Sidi Hamza, and spread among the other tribes of the Ait Yafelman confederation in the High Atlas (particularly the Ait Hadiddou, Ait Izdeb, Ait Merghad) who also had noted imdyazen in the early 20th century. The most complete study of the imdyazen remains one by Arsène Roux himself, who began interviewing and studying these poets when he was stationed during World War I in El Hajeb (the market town south of Meknes at the foothills of the Middle Atlas mountains mentioned earlier) between 1914-1918. 32

According to Roux’s informants, the imdyazen would travel to perform in Berber camps during the spring and early summer before returning to their homes to finish the work of harvesting. A troop typically contained three key components: the amgar imdyazen, the leader who composed poems, served as the troop’s impresario, and often played a flute, called a ta’awwadit, or a stringed instrument (traditionally an ‘ud er-rbab, but commonly a European violin by the 1920s, which was played on the knees); the buğanim, who served as a comic foil to the leader and played an oboe-like reed instrument, called an aganim; and the ireddaden (sing. areddad), who sang as a chorus for the leader and played hand drums. Traditionally, a troop would also have a shepherd

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32 “Légendes sur origines des aèdes,” Fond Roux, Carton 54.2.1; “Le répertoire des imdyazen,” Fond Roux, 53.3. Roux synthesized much of his work from 1914 up through the mid-1920s (when he helped found the Berber College in Azrou) on the imdyazen in what is still the most extensive work on the subject, “Les ‘Imdyazen’ ou aèdes berbères du groupe linguistique beraber,” Hespéris, Tome VIII, 1928, pp. 231-251.
who took care of the flock the troop gathered as payment, though, by the early 1920s, the
imdyazen were usually paid in paper or silver currency. The troops normally set out from
their home village, most which were in the eastern High Atlas, when the snows had
begun to clear, bringing nothing but the clothes they wore (no weapons were needed as
they were welcomed where they went, or they would pay for protection with a song).
Following the imposition of the Protectorate and the beginning of the “pacification,”
these poets, almost all of whom were from regions not yet conquered and brought under
the Protectorate administration, would have to apply for a travel permit, which was
usually granted, by the French Bureau des Renseignements in a neighboring
administrative circle.

The itineraries taken by a troupe would vary depending on a variety of
circumstances including the state of the routes (if blocked by snow or if secure), the state
of herds and crops in a given region, and the itineraries taken by competing groups of
imdyazen. By examining these itineraries, one can assess the vital role of the imdyazen in
linking the widely disparate tribal groupings in this large Berberophone region. For
example, in 1915, the amdyaiz, Sheikh Moulay ‘Omar, left Tazrouft at the end of winter
and traveled west through the lands of the Ait Sokhman, the Ait Ihand, the Ait ‘Abdi,
until he reached Marrakech, where he visited the tomb of Moulay Brahim, before
returning via Demnat, Midelt, and the Ait Hadiddou lands back to Tazrouft. This route
was actually exceptional in its western orientation, probably due to competition to the
north in the Middle Atlas, a desire on the amdyaiz’s part to visit the saint’s tomb, and
perhaps a political mission as an emissary of the shurafa of Tazrouft to ask for more
support from the zawiya of Sidi Hamza for support. A more typical itinerary was that related by Sheikh Lahsen ou ‘Ali of the Ait Sliman fraction of the Ait Yahya tribe. In 1922, he stopped at Midelt to get a travel permit from the intelligence bureau, then traveled over the ancient Sultan’s road through the Ait Youssi tribe to Sefrou, and then on to Fes, where he stayed four days. Around Fes, he performed among the Ait Ayyach and Beni Mtir tribes, before turning back south through Sefrou to the Ait Youssi. From Taghzout, he turned west to Timhadit of the Beni Mguild tribe, then to Itzer and back to the Ait Sliman. This trip began in January and concluded in March.

The itinerary of another amdyaz, Sheikh Lahsen of the Ait Hadiddou, also helps delineate this Berberophone community linked by a shared popular oral culture. Sheikh Lahsen reported to Roux that he made the following tour with his buganim Bassou, in the year of the occupation of Beni Mellal (1913): beginning in Tounfit, they traveled west to Aghbala of the Ait Sokhman tribe, north among the Ait Ouirra up to Beni Mellal, Tadla, Moulay Bouazza, and Oulmes. They continued north up to the Guerrouan tribe surrounding Meknes, then turned back south through El Hajeb to Azrou, Guigou, and down to village of Taghzout among the Ait Youssi. Next, they turned east to El Mers of the Ait Seghrouchen, performed among the Marmoucha, the Ait Tayda of the Beni Ouarain, and the Beni Alihem before returning back through Almis to Midelt. Significantly, Sheikh Lahsen reported that, among the Marmoucha (a tribe close to city of Taza to the east of Fes), his audiences began having a difficult time understanding his dialect, and that he usually did not pass further northeast than the Ait Segrouchen and Marmoucha for this reason. In the autumn, however, he mentioned his troupe traveled to
the south over the passes of the High Atlas to the Tafilalet region to perform for Berber tribes of the Sahara during the date harvest (the Ait Melghad, Ait Hadiddou, Ait Atta and the Ksours of Ghéris, Retb, Tizimi, Guir, Ziz, Draa).

What these itineraries reveal is that a loosely unified linguistic grouping of Tamazight speakers (a general label for the Berber dialect in this region) extended from the oases in the Saharan south up over the Atlas Mountains north to the plains around Meknes and Fes (see Figure 1 below). The imdyazen, and the local poets (the inššaden), used a poetic *lingua franca* that preserved a level of linguistic unity; they also helped sustain this grouping’s awareness of a common identity by disseminating a shared repertoire of poetic literature and awareness of what was happening elsewhere in Morocco. In the course of their travels, the *imdyazen* brought news from other regions about the state of crops, herds, and most significantly, after 1907, news of the war against the *irumin*, the Berber word used for Christians invading the country. In addition to linking the Tamazight speaking rural regions of Morocco, these professional poets also served as a crucial connection between city and countryside, as their itineraries usually took them from the mountains to the great urban Moroccan centers of Marrakesh, Meknes, and Fes. In addition, some of the professional poets from the High Atlas, both *imdyazen* and *buganim*, even established winter residences in the cities of the central

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33 Roux writes, “This common language exercises a profound influence on the dialects of the Berber linguistic group. Spread widely by the Imdyazen over the vast area that we have defined, it helps maintain a certain unity in the Berber linguistic groups, and preserves a living consciousness of this unity among the Berbers of this group.” *Ibid.*, 241.
plains, Meknes or Fes, and would then travel among the Berber-speaking tribes to the
south in the spring.\textsuperscript{34}

Having established where the \textit{imdyazen} performed, it is now necessary to briefly
describe their repertoire and the context in which it was performed. The typical routine
for a troupe of \textit{imdyazen} was to arrive at an encampment with songs and drumbeats,
circulate among the tents, decide on one (perceived to be the most generous) in which to
perform that night, and then settle in for a feast with their host. During the meal, the
troupe would talk about their voyage, adventures on the road, the generosity or stinginess
of previous hosts, the successes and reverses of battles against the Christians, news of the
crops, and reports on the state of herds: essentially the troupes played the role of a
modern newspaper.\textsuperscript{35} Then, the troupe would launch into their repertoire, beginning with
a customary invocation to God and his saints, moving on to a comic interplay between
the \textit{amdyaz} and the \textit{buganim}, and concluding with the longer \textit{tayffart} (pl. \textit{tiyffrin}) poems
about love, war, generosity, and fate. The final event of the night would be the \textit{ahidous}, a
dance in which men and women line up forming a circle, drums are played, and the
leader sings out verses while the group picks up the refrain as a chorus. The \textit{ahidous}
would continue late into the night, even after the \textit{imdyazen} performers retired; the next
morning the troupe slipped out of the camp early to continue their tour.

In its production and performance, Berber poetry constitutes a highly public
discourse—sometimes even an “interactive” discourse between the audience and the

\textsuperscript{34} Sheikh Mohand ‘Ajmi from the Ait Izdeg was one such \textit{amdyaz} as was his \textit{buganim}, Sheikh Mohand,
both of whom Roux interviewed.
\textsuperscript{35} Roux, ”Les Imdyazen,” pp. 245-246.
amdyaz—a dimension which makes this source so important for investigating questions of public perception and opinion.36 In a discussion of Arabic poetry based on his field work in Sefrou, a town in the transition zone between the urban center of Fes and the Berber highland tribal areas of the Atlas Mountains, Clifford Geertz notes how the performance context of popular poetry generates its remarkable power in Moroccan society:

The performance frame of poetry, its character as a collective speech act, only reinforces this betwixt and between quality of it—half ritual song, half plain talk—because if its formal, quasi-liturgical dimensions cause it to resemble Qu’ranic chanting, its rhetorical, quasi-social ones cause it to resemble everyday speech.37

In the Berber poetry collected from this period, this mixture also creates a strong editorial dimension to many of the poems as they process, interpret, and didactically comment on their society and the current events of their times. With an “agonistic spirit,” to use Geertz’s term, the poet targets a wide range of social issues including “the shallowness of merchants, the knavery of merchants, the perfidy of women, the miserliness of the rich, the treachery of politicians and the hypocrisy of moralists” but also, and this is a dimension that makes this genre particularly intriguing, the poet often directs his barbs at a member present in his, or her, audience. 38

36 In an article about the *imusnawen*, a type of professional prose and poetic master in more sedentary Kabyle society in Algeria (related to but not exactly like the *imdyazen* among Morocco’s more transhumant population), Mouloud Mammeri explains the role as a spokesperson for the group who helps crystallize the sentiments of the group. See Mouloud Mammeri and Pierre Bourdieu, “Dialogue on oral poetry,” *Ethnography* 2004, 5, pp. 511-551, trans. by Richard Nice and Loïc Wacquant. This article is translated from a dialogue which was first published as “Dialogue sur la poésie en Kabylie: Entretien avec Mouloud Mammeri.” Acte de la Recherche en Science Sociales, no. 23, pp. 55-66.


38 Ibid.
In light of this discussion of the performance context of the various genres of Berber poetry, the local and regional roles of poets in producing and disseminating this oral literature, and the function of this source as a shared text for a population reaching from the plains surrounding Fes south to the date palm oases in the Sahara, we turn now to the poetry itself. The following discussion is broken into three sections, roughly following the chronology of the “pacification” of la montagne berbère. The first section deals with the initial period of resistance to the French conquest and occupation of the Morocco (from their arrival in 1907 to the consolidation of gains in the Atlas mountains by the early 1920s); the second section covers the major push to finish the “pacification” of rebellious tribal areas in the High Atlas and the Jbel Sahro by the French army which began in the late 1920s and was completed in 1934; and the final section analyzes poetry composed following the pacification about life under the Protectorate administration up to the onset of World War II. Because this was an uneven process, with some tribes coming under French control much earlier than others, the poems in this last section range in their dates of composition from 1914-1939.

**Pacification, Dissidence, and Submission**

In the first years of the Protectorate, the first priority for the French military was to secure its hold over Morocco’s major urban and agricultural areas, including the critical lateral corridor joining the coastal plain (Casablanca and Rabat) east through Meknes and Fes to Oujda, on the border with French-controlled Algeria. This vital axis of communication was threatened at two points by rebellious Berber tribes; at the Taza
gap, where the Beni Snassen sheltered in nearby mountains, and from tribes south of Meknes and Fes, who also took refuge in nearby mountains. Operations in 1913, therefore, focused on subduing the tribes close to Meknes and Fes, including the Guerrouan and Beni Mtit, and later operations were directed at the rebellious tribes near Taza. The second priority was to secure the route northeast from Marrakech to Fes. This required establishing control over the Tadla plain and subjugating the Zaian, whose capital was Khenifra, and the Beni Mguild around Azrou. Following the completion of this task, the French established a vertical corridor from Meknes south to the Tafilalet, establishing outposts such as Midelt and Rich, in an effort to split the Atlas in two, cutting the tribes close to Taza off from those in the eastern High Atlas. Though delayed by World War I, when most of France’s troops were recalled to the Western front (including many of their North African colonial troops), these three tasks were completed by the early 1920s.
The man responsible for coordinating the gathering of this body of Berber poetry, Arsène Roux, began his career in Morocco assigned as an interpreter with the forces charged in 1913 with subduing the tribes of the Middle Atlas threatening Meknes and Fes. Between 1914-1918, he was stationed in El Hajeb, the town which, in the last chapter, we saw described in the diorama in the “Hall of the Pacification” at the 1931 International Colonial Exposition. As mentioned earlier, El Hajeb controlled a critical transition zone between the settled plains around Meknes and Fes and the Middle Atlas Mountains to the south. It was one of the first Berber areas to be subdued and was set up as an administrative center for the Middle Atlas and a market center that would draw tribes to the south into contact with the Protectorate administration with hopes they would peacefully submit to state. These factors made it an ideal place for Roux to gather poetry from the tribes of the plains (the Guerrouan and the Beni Mtir) which were the
first to be conquered and brought under the state’s control, as well as that of rebellious tribes to the south such as the Beni Mguild and the Zaian. Roux also conducted many interviews with the *imdyazen*, who were from much further south in the High Atlas, well outside the control of the Protectorate in the early years of the pacification. In Roux’s collection, therefore, we see a marvelous breadth of perspective from different regions in the Middle and Central High Atlas, both pacified and not.

In analyzing this varied collection of poetry from the initial period of colonial conquest, there are two major elements that emerge of direct relevance to the question of how this population “imagined” communities and, specifically, to what extent a “Moroccan nation” was imagined: first, how physical space, or territory, was defined and, second, how social groupings, or corporate identities, were conceived. In the poems, multiple conceptual divisions of space and social reality are employed, which are central to how these Amazigh communities understood notions of collective identity at local and wider regional levels.

Some of the clearest indications of the territorial awareness shared by these groups in the supposed *blad as-siba* are in poems discussing how the *blad al-makhzen* areas were under attack from France’s colonial advances onto Moroccan territory beginning in 1907. The following poem from the earliest stages of the French conquest reveals the Middle Atlas-based poet’s clear awareness of the encroaching invasion from the Atlantic coast to the west and the occupation of Fes, to the poet’s north.

The Christian (*rumi*)³⁹ is coming;

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³⁹ In Berber (and Moroccan Arabic), the word *rumi* is used to refer to “Christian,” usually in reference to enemies from the northern coast of the Mediterranean (Portuguese, Spanish, and lastly, French).
He has built outposts in the middle of Zaer country;\textsuperscript{40}
He has planted his flags over the city of Fes, and he has stretched out his hands to conquer other territories and other riches.\textsuperscript{41}

In another poem collected while Roux was in El Hajeb, the poet cries out:

\begin{quote}
O red city!\textsuperscript{42} O Dar Debbibagh!\textsuperscript{43} The Makhzen is no more!
The Christians (\textit{irumin}) strut about there with total impunity
Cry for the fate of our cities: Fes, Meknes, Agourai, Sefrou, and Tabadout!\textsuperscript{44}
Surely the Christians are the cause of our fall!
Fes and Meknes are lost, not to mention Sefrou and Casa (\textit{Ibeida}),
Can one not make the crow of the mountains white?\textsuperscript{45}
\end{quote}

These poems reveal that the poet identifies strongly with a territorial entity including Morocco’s cities and the plains below the poet’s own tribal territory in the mountains.

The encroaching “Christian” army is rising from the plains towards the poet’s base in these mountains:

\begin{quote}
The French (Fransis) remind me of a fog that rises and invades the mountain.
He did not delay in subjecting me. I have stopped throwing out horse kicks at him.\textsuperscript{46}
\end{quote}

Though the distinction between mountain and plains is clear, this division does not indicate that the Berber poet or the audience felt no connection to the \textit{makhzen} lands.

\begin{flushright}
Etymologically, it traces back to the Arabic word for Rome, which came to correspond to the Christian lands and populations formerly part of the empire. The use of this collective term is discussed further below.
\textsuperscript{40} The Zaer region is northeast of Rabat.
\textsuperscript{41} Fond Roux, IREMAM, Carton 50.2.10. Recorded by Arsène Roux in El Hajeb, 1914-1918. In the archive, poems are transcribed (Berber written with Latin character) and some have been translated by Roux and assistants into French.
\textsuperscript{42} Referring here to the red \textit{piste} walls of Marrakesh.
\textsuperscript{43} The area to the west of Fes l-Jdid, where the French army camped and where the \textit{ville nouvelle} was later constructed.
\textsuperscript{44} Fes and Meknes were down on the Saiss plains below the poet. Sefrou is located on the Sultan’s Road (\textit{Tariq al-Sultan}) to the Tafilelt, where the Saiss plain reaches the Middle Atlas, and served as a key trade center. Agourai and Tabadout were Berber centers south of Meknes in the Middle Atlas.
\textsuperscript{45} Arsène Roux, \textit{Poésies Berbères de l’époque héroïque Maroc central (1908-1932)}, ed. by Michael Peyron, (Aix-en-Provence: Institut de Recherches et d’Etudes sur le monde arabe et musulman, 2002), p. 91. See Peyron’s editorial comment about the “Legend of the Crow.” According to legend, the crow was white but was blackened by God after having performed the sacred task he had been conferred. The expression signifies a desire to change the fate of things.
\end{flushright}
below them. In fact, the fall of these areas is greatly mourned in the following ahellel poem from an amdyaz of the Ait Youssi (whose territory stretch up in the Middle Atlas mountains above Sefrou south of Fes), lamenting the fall of Fes to the Rumi:

The Christians have fallen upon the chiefs as the sheep are fallen upon in the cities;  
Lift up your grief, O Gate of Bab-Ftuh, Lift up your grief, O Bab-Guissa!;\(^{47}\)  
Next to you the sons of pigs have come to wash their coats.\(^{48}\)

Likewise, in an aferdi poem by El Haj Asusi, a strong identification is made linking the Berbers to Meknes:

Meknes is no more, O Berbers (Imazighen), the Meknes you knew no longer belongs to us.  
It is to the Christian that it has gone  
As for me, I have given it up. Everywhere there was a nice place to live has been snatched up by the Christian.  
He has pillaged the treasury of the Sultans and my own is also empty.\(^{49}\)

In light of the prominence of the blad al-makhzen / blad as-siba dichotomy in the French construction of Morocco, these sentiments, arising in the midst of the historical lands of “dissidence,” demonstrate that the lands of dissidence had a much more complex identification with the larger, “national,” entity.

At the same time, these poets also draw a clear distinction between themselves and the rest of that larger community. The following tamawayt is by a poet from Guigou, high up in the Middle Atlas, who fears the approaching French occupation:

The General inherited the Gharb (lgerb) region; God favors him.  
If he is able, he will go all the way to the pass of Tizi Larays,  
Up to the valley of the Moulouya, all the way to the country of the Ou Sidi-‘Ali.  
Then the people of the mountains will submit to him and kiss his hands.\(^{50}\)

\(^{47}\) Two of Fes principal gates, outside of which the French must have done their wash in the water of the rivers flowing through wadis.  
\(^{48}\) Fond Roux, IREMAM, Carton 52.5. The word used for coats, elkhabudät, is a Berberization of the French word, capotes.  
In this case, the poet uses the key word *lgerb*, a Berberized form of the Arabic word *(gharb)*, meaning “west” or the “sunset,” which refers in this case to the coastal lowland plain in northwestern Morocco. This area, one of the first to fall to the French, is opposed to the mountainous areas referred to in the rest of the poem. The poet foresees that the “General,” presumably General Hubert Lyautey, will inherit the entire land, including the poet’s own “people of the mountains.” Though the mountain / plains binary is clearly present, there is also a sense of a shared destiny between the two areas.

This is also the message of another poem from the Beni Mtir tribe:

> The French (*fransis*) have received the whole country (*tamazirt*) as an inheritance. Everywhere they have built their military posts and over them they have hung their flags as a sign of victory.\(^{51}\)

Note the use of the word *fransis* in place of *irumim*, which implies the poet is, as the pacification campaign proceeds, more familiar with the invading enemy. The presence of military and indigenous affairs administrative posts, in addition to the French *tricolore*, are visual symbols creating dread on the poet’s part, who pessimistically envisions their total control over *tamazight*, the generic Berber term for his country, or *patrie*. Another poet grieves that the Christians have defiled this country by their conquest, interpreting the conquest within a religious framework:

> What sorts of prayers are left? The Koran is mishandled, and the Christians, wearing their kepis, trample on our sanctuaries.\(^{52}\)

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52 Fond Roux, IREMAM, Carton 52.5.
In these verses, the loss of sovereignty to the Christian invader in Morocco is poignantly mourned on both a political and religious level.

The word *lgerb*, used in the poem earlier, provides important insight into how Berber tribes in the *siba* conceived the larger territorial entity now falling to the Christian enemy. The word itself demonstrates an inherent ambiguity, sometimes referring to the designated lowland area to the northwest of the author and sometimes referring to a larger entity that seems to encompass much of what is now modern Morocco. The Arabic word, *al-Maghreb*, is also rather ambiguous, referring to the “west” in general, to the west of the Muslim world (North Africa), and at times specifically to Morocco itself, “the farthest west,” *al-Maghreb al-aqsa*. Though it would be anachronistic to assume the Berber usage of *lgerb* referred exactly to the modern territorially borders of the Moroccan state (especially before French cartographers drew these), there is a clear sense that a separate *Maghreb* or *lgerb* (what we would call Moroccan) entity was one of the territorial units understood within the Berber-speaking tribes.

The following poem about the invading French army demonstrates the distinction Berbers made between their own *lgerb* and the rest of the *maghreb*:

We have seen the Christian chief who commands them, the Senegalese tirailleurs (*saligän*), the Arab troops of Algeria. There are even Jewish porters carrying their black coats.

The key line is the one about the Arab troops of Algeria. The exact phrase translated as “Algeria” here is *lgerb el-wasta*, a Berberized form of the Arabic phrase meaning “the middle west.” Thus, the “middle west” was distinguished from their own territory, which

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53 Fond Roux, IREMAM, Carton 52.5. Songs of the Ait Youssi, recorded by Roux’s students.
is simply the “west,” or ḳerb.$^{54}$ Among Berber tribes in Morocco, therefore, there was a meaningful awareness of Morocco, as a distinct territorial entity.

The dual process of identifying with and distinguishing themselves from a larger entity, which is clear in the way that physical space was mapped out in the Berber imagination, is also evident in how these Berber poets define, identify with, and distinguish themselves from “others.” How they categorize social groups clearly reveals a system of mapping various communities within the territorial entities described in the section of above. Given that this body of literature was collected following the initial French conquest, perhaps the most pervasive distinction between “us” and “them” is in the pervasive references to irumin, which translates as the “Christians.” This word, the plural Berberized form of the Arabic rumi, was originally an adjectival form for those from “Rome,” then to the Byzantines, and later generically to all European Christian foreigners. At times, the word fransis is also used, demonstrating an awareness of the specific “French” identity of these Christian invaders. Though there does not seem to be a semantic difference implied when fransis is used in a given song, it does seem the word is only used by poets who have been subjugated by the French and were perhaps more familiar with them. Regardless, the primary opposition in the poems is clearly between the Christians and Muslims, with some Muslims fighting the Christians and some surrendering to them.

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$^{54}$ One could then ask “when” this sense of a “middle west” formed. This is pure supposition, but it could be related to the Ottoman incursion into eastern Morocco in the 16$^{th}$ century that was turned back in the 17$^{th}$.
This point is critical in developing a truer understanding of the dynamics at work under the simplistic distinction made between the “land of the Makhzen” and the “land of dissidence.” While the French paradigm of “Two Moroccos” claimed their revolt demonstrated the “Berber spirit’s” historic love of freedom and aversion to being under the control of the state, it ignored the fact that, in the pacification, the Berber tribes ultimately felt themselves the only remaining defenders of the Muslim community, that their resistance was a sign not of antinomian autonomy but of religious duty. This is particularly relevant in terms of the complicated relationship between these tribes and the Alawite Sultans who have ruled Morocco for more than four hundred years.

In the earliest collection of poetry gathered in 1914-1918, the memory of the civil war (1907-1908) which occurred with the destabilization created by the encroachment of French troops from Algeria and from the Atlantic coast is particularly vivid. In the civil war, the Sultan ‘Abd Al-‘Aziz was overthrown by his brother, ‘Abd al-Hafidh, who vowed to fight a jihad against the Christian (French) economic, political, and military invasion. Moulay Hafidh’s failure in this resistance, and his ultimate capitulation in signing the Treaty of Fes in 1912, created an intense disappointment among the Berber tribes of the Middle Atlas, as expressed in the following poem by Lyazid u Lahsen, of the Beni Mtir tribe (which was one of the tribes that had besieged Fez in 1911):

Moulay Hafidh came and we welcomed him. He promised us that once he arrived in Fes, he would call on the Muslims for help. But, when he settled in, he called on the chiefs of the Haouz\(^{55}\) to be his counselors. O Morocco (lgerb)! He had already sold you to the Christians (irumin)!\(^{56}\)

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\(^{55}\) The Haouz is located just north of Marrakesh, the second capital of Morocco, where Abd al-Hafidh served as governor before the civil war. In this case, the Beni Mtir poet is expressing a regionalist antagonism against his southern rivals.
It is clear that the poet felt a sense of identification with the Sultan, but his allegiance was conditioned on the Sultan fulfilling his obligations as a Muslim leader in fighting off the Christian invaders. The indictment against the Sultan for selling off the country is expressed in another poem:

The Christians have formed their columns and have risen against us from the places they occupy.
The Sultan sold them the plains of the west under the condition that they come subdue them.
We have fought them beautifully.
They stated the conditions of their act of purchase; they cited the justness of their claim that they had bought us and were within their rights.57

Aferdig poem by L-Haj Asusi

In this case, the poet interprets the Treaty of Fes as a type of jaysh agreement in which the Sultan sells off his rights to lands in the fertile western plains to the French, as had been done typically to Arab tribes, in exchange for their help in subduing the troublesome mountainous tribes.

Another poet pities the Sultan who has been forced to accept the “protection” of the Christian French:

Yes Hafidh, you are miserable as we are miserable.
But your misery is greater than ours, for you live in the vicinity and under the protection of the Christian.58

Notice the distinction he makes between the Sultan, living close by and under the French “Protector,” and himself, who is not yet that close to the Christian and not yet “protected” by him. This last point is one of the most important distinctions that is made within the

57 Ibid.
Berber imagination during this period of conquest: between those who have “submitted”
to or been “subjugated” by the Christian (irumin), and those that continue to fight the
resistance, or jihad, against the French. In a poem calling out to the notables of the Beni
Mtir tribe, this obligation to a holy defensive war against the irumin is affirmed:

Here is a letter, O messenger! Take it to Driss, to Bougrin, to Moha ou Said, the chiefs.
Gather around her Adjammou, Lghazi ou Gessou, as wells as Imeloui and El-Mouradi ou
Mansour. Get Ou-Abli too!
And tell them: The Christian (rumi), is it not he that, during his life, the Prophet
commanded us to fight? 59

Another poet also chides the Muslims for failing to fight and urges them to keep fighting:

Let’s go! Rise up, O Cowards, and join the Jews (udäyn)!
Stand up, O Muslims against the Christians (irumin)! Are you already dead? 60

In these exhortations, the Muslim community is urged to fight, with the cowards being
disparaged as “Jews”:

In the desperation embedded in these exhortations to jihad, there is an intense
dilemma over the question of submitting to the invader. The question of “submission”—
conceding defeat, giving over weapons, and signing the registers of the French officer—
is one of the major issues being confronted by this community. For many, the idea of
submission was inconceivable:

To submit is impossible;
Of submission there is no question;
We will fight; if victory eludes us, we will strike our tents, and we will go from country
to country. 61

The division between dissidence (or, as they understood it, jihad) and submission was the
most emotional and intense topic addressed in the songs. In fact, some of the most

59 Fond Roux, IREMAM, Carton 50.3.1. Tamawayt recorded by Arsène Roux in El Hajeb, 1914-1918.
60 Fond Roux, IREMAM, Carton 50.2.10. Recorded by Arsène Roux in El Hajeb, 1914-1918.
61 Ibid.
fascinating poems Roux recorded in El Hajeb are duels between two poets, one who has already submitted and the other who remains in rebellion.

The following exchange is between two such poets from the same tribe. In this exchange, the poet ‘Abid, who has submitted and lives close to the French post in El Hajeb, and the poet ‘Alla, who remains in rebellion fighting the French, spar back and forth about their respective positions. Mocking the physical deprivations the rebels are going to face when they have to winter in the cold and snow up in the mountains, ‘Abid tells ‘Alla:

O combatants of the jihad!
I fear you are waiting until January and that you are saying: Let’s go submit, though the Christian is harsh in his blows!”
I fear, O ‘Alla that your sandals will not patch over your feet.

In another poem, ‘Abid teases ‘Alla further about his lack of supplies:

Go then and graze on the \textit{ifsi} plant,
When the long rains fall,
When the persistent rains come,
Nourish yourself with the grass of the gazelles.

‘Alla, however, is not fazed and remains firm in his belief that his cause is noble:

Yes, we will graze on the \textit{ifsi} plant,
Yes we will eat the grass of the field.
Yes we will even eat the earth.
But we will never accept shameful submission to the Christian (\textit{irumi})!

‘Alla then derides the subservience of ‘Abid to the Christian \textit{irumin}, saying:

I have not, as you have, committed evil actions in order to merit punishment.
But you, after having been struck,
You return right back to him who struck you.\footnote{Roux notes that this refers to ‘Alla n ‘Aicha Hmad, a poet of the fraction of the Beni Mtit that was still in dissidence.}

\footnote{The following poems are found in Fond Roux, IREMAM, Carton 50.3.1. Recorded by Arsène Roux in El Hajeb, 1914-1918.}

\footnote{Roux notes that this refers to the lashes ‘Abid received at the whipping post by the French commander.}
In response, ‘Abid denigrates the futility of ‘Alla’s fight:

O ‘Alla, did not the Christian break your jaw and pull out your teeth?
That is the compensation for your jihad.

In his last couplets, ‘Alla attacks ‘Abid’s sacrilege in giving up the jihad, saying:

Your word is without weight, O you who have renounced Islam.
Do they not say that ‘Abid killed his offender and drew the vengeance of the lashes that
he received in the middle of the camp in the presence of the soldiers?65

That fact that this exchange was well-known in El-Hajeb and brought to Roux to write
down demonstrates the extent to which the tension between the two poets correlated to
the intense moral and practical dilemma the whole community faced in the choice
between submitting to the colonial state (referred to as the dula, the Maghribi form of the
classical Arabic dawlah) or remaining in armed rebellion against it.

In another of these exchanges between a poet who had submitted to state and one
who remains in rebellion against it, it is two women of the Beni Mtir who are dueling.
One of the women, ‘Aicha Uqessur, was the wife of a qaid, Driss, who had recently led
his fraction of the Beni Mtir to submit to the French at El Hajeb. On the other side was
Tabašnut, the wife of ‘Alla ou Driss, who remained in dissidence, still resisting the
pacification and continuing the jihad.66

In her first lines, Tabašnut taunts ‘Aicha’s husband, implying that he lets the
French officer have his way with his wife:

65 Again referring to the lashing ‘Abid received upon submitting.
66 This exchange of poems is found in Fond Roux, IREMAM, Carton 59.2. Songs of Beni Mtir. Recorded
by Roux in El Hajeb, 1914-1918. I have not confirmed whether her husband, ‘Alla, is the author of the
earlier poems or not, but it is likely.
What happens in your heart, O Qaid Driss, when the French chief orders you to leave your tent so he can enter in?67

‘Aicha parries this insult to her sexual honor (and her husband’s) by reveling in the ease of her present life under the French administration, compared to the hardships faced by Tabašnut and other dissidents:

I use the mules to transport the great water skins.
I can, O senseless rebels, choose among the springs of the country.
You, on the other hand, have been overtaken by misfortune.
Your harvest is lost and you fight in vain!

Tabašnut returns the insult back to ‘Aicha, drawing an equivalent between submission and prostituting oneself to the French:

I give up the springs of the country (tmazight) and I leave you to Roux, O Aicha!
Share your bed also with Pisani.68

Then she attacks ‘Aicha’s submission to the French, declaring it constitutes collaboration with the irumin that injures those trying to fight the jihad against the Christians:

The large water skins in which you are going to draw water and then carry it
Are drying up the thirst of the holy warriors (imjuhād),
O Aicha, who curses me while you prepare your tent
To let the French chief spend the night in!

In these passionate poems, there is a profound tension between tribes, or in this case within a tribe, over submitting or continuing to resist. This division between those who have submitted and those who have not is one of the dominant themes within this body of literature.

While the major social groupings delineated in the poems oppose Christians versus Muslim and those that have submitted versus those that continue to resist, there

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67 While in this case the poet might have simply been slandering her opponent, there were numerous instances of A.I. officers taking Berber mistresses.
68 Roux includes a note with this poem that he and Pisani were the two French non-commissioned officers assigned as instructors to the Sharifian column (mahalla) stationed in El Hajeb.
are several other groups which are highly visible in this set of poems produced during
this first phase of the “pacification.” The poets distinguish between Berbers (imazighen),
Arabs (a’araben), French (irumin or fransis), Senegalese (saligan), and Jews (udayn). In
the tamawayt from the Ait Youssi tribe discussed above, the foreign French army is
broken down into the French, the Senegalese, the Algerian Arabs, and Jews.

    We have seen the Christian chief (hakem) who commands them, the Senegalese
tirailleurs (Saligän), the troops of the Algerian Arabs (Igerb el-wasta).
There are even Jewish porters carrying their black coats.69

Within the imazighen, the Berbers themselves, further distinctions are made between
different tribes; for example, the Zaian are lauded in their fight against the French, the
Guerrouane are cursed for their treachery in abandoning the Berber coalition fighting the
French in 1911,70 and the Ait Ayyach are despised for their weakness and need to be
protected by someone, either the Sultan or the French. In the next group of poetry,
composed during the final resistance to the French conquest in the High Atlas, this
intertribal dimension is also very pronounced, particularly because the last tribes holding
out in the siba (or the jihad in their understanding) are finally defeated by a French
colonial army largely composed of other Berber tribesmen who had submitted.

69 Fond Roux, IREMAM, Carton 52. 5, gathered in El Hajeb, 1914-1918.
70 The following poem by a Beni Mtit poet chastises the Guerrouane tribe and implicates Sultan Moulay
Hafidh in their treachery by bribing them to submit:
    It is you, O tribe of the Guerrouane, who deserves the blame.
    We occupied the same camp and did not dare to believe you would quit the army.
    Yet, it is good you left at night.
    But the curse of the tribes follows you.
    The Guerrouan have become for them the traitors.
    It was enough that the Sultan made the fool’s gold sparkle before their eyes.
Zedday poem of Lyazid u Lahsen, Fond Roux, IREMAM, Carton 52.5, 1914-1918.
Apocalypse, Jihad, and the Last Stand

Following the conclusion of the Rif War, in which France intervened to aid the Spanish against the expansion of the “Republic of the Rif,” established by ‘Abd al-Krim (France was involved between 1925-26), the French military command prioritized completing the colonial pacification operations in North Africa in order to free up French and Moroccan colonial troops to be re-stationed back in the metropole in order to defend against the rising German threat in the 1930s. A large volume of poetry was composed in the midst of this final push against the Atlas, the last chapter of what Michael Peyron calls the “heroic epoch” of the Atlas Berbers, by those fighting against the Franco-Moroccan makhzen and by those who had joined the makhzen army to finish the pacification. The commemoration of this final gasp of Berber “heroic” resistance is significant in the apocalyptic tone of much of the poetry, the despair and terror in the face of the onslaught of France’s technical military superiority, and the resignation of these groups as the last remaining areas of dissidence, the “free” Imazighen, were finally brought into submission.

In 1927, Roux himself had been sent to Azrou to set up a school to train the children of the rural Berber notables, the Berber College, where he remained director until 1935. During this time, Roux sent his students, who were being taught how to write Berber in Latin script, out into the field to gather poetry, legends, stories, information on

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local customs, and other information about Berber society during their school holidays. The period in which his students were sent out to collect poetry serendipitously coincided with this pivotal point in the history of Morocco’s Atlas regions. At the Zawiya of Ait Ishaq, in Kebab, in Khenifra, in Azrou, and in Midelt, Roux’s assistants collected the poems which were circulating about this struggle, about the trauma of the war and of submission, and about the conflicting emotions of tribesman fighting on the side of the French. This body of poems, needless to say, provides fascinating insight into how this moment in their history was interpreted.  

In this last stand against the pacification, one of the most intense dilemmas that is reflected in this poetry is how these Berber groups processed the cataclysm of falling under the control of the Christians. After having just surrendered and submitted at a French post at Kebaa, the poet Sidi Mohand of the Ait Sidi Buali fraction, frames submission as a question of apostasy:

Can he that has passed in front of the office (lbiro)  
And has been registered by the Christian (urummi)  
Become a Muslim again?  
Is the office better than Islam  
In the eyes of the subjugated,  
Who have forgotten the Prophet for the French?  

The technological superiority of the French army faced by the Berber imjuhad (those engaged in jihad) also generated a religious crisis for many of those holding out. An izli

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73 The Fond Roux at the IREMAM library in Aix-en-Provence contains the student’s workbooks from the College Berbère.

74 Berbers called the A.I. office “lbiro,” after the French bureau. In 2007, when I asked about the A.I. post in a small village in the High Atlas close to the town of Aghbala, my Moroccan colleague said, “Oh yes, the biro arabe (Arab bureau) was over there,’ which presented an interesting insight into the continuities between the Indigenous Affairs service in Morocco and its Algerian predecessor.

(two line poem) from the Ait Hadiddou of the Assif Melloul, who were subdued in the summer of 1932, expresses the despair of these troops, facing the impossibility of overcoming the superior French military:

If the Prophet had had to defend against machines like those that are attacking me,  
It would have been a long time ago  
That the Muslims would have been conquered by the Christians  
And that they would have broken their pacts of mutual support.  
Izli of the Ait Hadiddou, Kebab, end of 1932.76

The poet ties his own crisis of a Muslim defeat to a Christian invader to the broader context of the universal Muslim umma, or community, with reference to the Prophet Mohammed and intra-Muslim defense alliances against a common enemy. The “machines,” or the modern technology the warrior faces, demonstrate the failure of his religious community: “even Mohammed would not have been able to defeat this foe.” This disillusionment extended to the religious leaders, murabitin (marabouts) and charismatic chiefs among the High Atlas tribes that had galvanized the tribes with mahdist promises of deliverance in their continuance of jihad. For many, the juxtaposition of their own meager resources versus the arsenal of their enemy led to a sense of betrayal in light of the promises of one of these religious leaders, Sidi Ali:

Who among our saints would know how make an automobile or build a plane?  
Who among them would be capable of setting it on its way, flying it, and flying over you,  
O Sidi Ali?  
Lmayt, Ait Sidi Yahya ou Youssef, Azrou, beginning of 1933.77

Seeing no deliverance in sight, as their flocks, fields, and families were destroyed in the warfare, these tribesmen were overwhelmed by the inevitability of their defeat:

I look at the land; it is covered with automobiles.

76 Ibid.  
77 Poésies Berbères, 171.
I look at the sky, it is full of planes. Where then will the Muslim go who asks himself: “What have I to do in the territories governed by the Christian?”

The last wave of resistance in the late 1920s and early 1930s was directed, to a large degree, by these igurramen (the plural for the Berber agurram, or maraboutic saint), who interpreted the pacification within an apocalyptic framework, sometimes claiming mahdist credentials as “masters of the hour.” Among the Beni Mguild, Ait Ihand, and Iskkern tribes, a marabout recalled prophecies from the 19th century of the Imhiwash maraboutic family about the coming rumi invasion. Among the Ait Sokhman, the legendary 1932 battle of Tazizaout demonstrates the complexities of the disappointment created in the final failure of the jihad. A group of a thousand, mainly Ait Sokhman and Ait Hadiddou, Berber warriors plus their families were led to this stronghold to the east of Imilchil by Sidi Lmekki, one of the igurramen whose millenarian rhetoric encouraged the last pockets of resistance. While this group heroically held out for more than a month against three French army columns sent against them, Sidi Lmekki negotiated a surrender in late September. Lmekki was despised by many of his former followers when, in 1935, his deal-making with the French led to his appointment as a qaid over the Ait Sokhman.

The terrors of modern warfare, perfected during World War I and unleashed on the Berbers during this last phase of colonial conquest in Africa, contributed to a

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78 Ibid.  
81 See Michael Peyron’s fascinating work on the “legend of Tazizaout” including the following papers: “De- and re-construction of an Atlas Berber epic: Tazizaout (Central Morocco: Summer 1932);”; “Oralité et résistance: dits poétiques et non-poétiques ayant pour thème le siège du Tazizaout (Haut Atlas marocain, 1932);” and “Tazizaout : une bataille oubliée.”
widespread apocalyptic theme in poetry composed for a population trying to process the
devastation wrought by artillery, airplane bombardment, and machine gun fire. The use
of an air campaign to quell tribal resistance was perhaps the most traumatic of the
pacification strategies. Airplanes that would swoop over a ridge of the mountains and
then drop bombs on unsuspecting villages, wreaking devastation on their families and
their livestock, were among the most dreaded features of this conquest:

When it passes over me with its sound of a mill,
My insides were shaken like the henna being made into a paste with which to dye.
Izli of the Ait Merghad, Azrou, end of 1932

Another poet asks the Ait Hadiddou if the airplanes have reached their mountain
fastnesses:

Question the pilot, O man of the Ait Hadiddou, and ask him if he is coming to bomb.
Has he reached all the way to the Ait Hadiddou? Has he succeeded in subduing them?
Lmayt, Azrou, October 1932

This last poem reveals the variety of perspectives in play within the poetic commentary
on the pacification circulating across the “line of dissidence” among “rebels” and
“submitted” within the Tamazight speaking community of the Atlas. Here the poet longs
to know the outcome of battles in the last holdouts of the Ait Hadiddou tribe at the higher
elevations of the Central Atlas. Even among the tribes that had been subdued, some of
them almost twenty years earlier, there was a keen interest in news about their
neighboring tribes who still held out.

The irony of this last push of the pacification in the early 1930s was that, by this
point, much of the army deployed against the remaining rebel Berber tribes was

82 Arsène Roux, “Quelques chants berbères sur les opérations de 1931-32 dans le Maroc Central,” Etudes et
Documents Berbères, No. 9, 1992, p. 172.
83 Poésies Berbères, 171.
composed of these Berbers who had been subdued earlier. The campaigns into the
Central High Atlas to subdue the tribes of the Upper Moulouya and the Assif Melloul,
relied heavily on Zaian troops, who had fought French so fiercely around Khenifra the
decade before. Some of these partisans were conflicted, though, as they set out to fight
neighboring Berber tribes to their south. Their poetry was also widespread in the early
1930s when Roux’s students were sent out to collect songs. A partisan called up to fight
for the French in 1931 expressed his reluctance to go out on the campaign:

When they gave us our turbans (for our uniform),
I understood that we were close to departing for the operation.
I was hoping that he would discharge us back to our tents.84

Another soldier asks probing questions about the morality of participating in the fight:

Why should I attack the zawiya of Sidi Yahya ou Youssef? Why should I curse the poor
people I oppress?85

Among the submitted tribes, there was also a hope mixed with an expectation of doom
about the fate of these last bastions of the “free men” (literally imazighen, their own word
for themselves) holding out against the military:

The Berbers (Imaziĝen) hope that the Saint Sidi Yahya ou Youssef will turn back the
Christians.
But then, look, the Senegalese are camping close to the sanctuary.86

As news about French victories in the High Atlas spread, intense disappointment and
sense of anxiety was expressed in the poems in the lower regions:

O Tounfit! The damned Senegalese (saligan) have arrived just above you.
They are working to install a telegraph line that will permit them to come all the way to
you.87

84 Fond Roux, IREMAM, Carton 56.3.4. Recorded by Houssa ou Moha in Oumes, 1932.
85 Ibid.
86 Ibid.
87 Ibid.
This last poem highlights the awareness of the Berbers of the Atlas of the encroachments of the modern state, symbolized by the extension of telegraph lines far into Berber country, and the advantage this brought the makhzen. The poets identify these tools as the reason for their own fall. By the end of 1934, as all of the Berber speaking regions had been brought under the control of the colonial state, their poetry began more and more to address the realities of living under the Protectorate administration.

Living under the Rumi

The Roux collection also contains a substantial amount of material processing the experience of the imazighen, the Middle and High Atlas Berbers, after their submission to the Franco-Moroccan makhzen. These poems express commentary on the growing connectedness of Morocco; the transportation and communications revolutions signified with the increase of roads, railroads, and telegraphs; and the ways these developments transformed the daily realities of life for these Berber communities. In the midst of these changes, layers of communal identities also continued to be imagined in old and new ways.

One of the notable features of these poems is the ambiguity with which the administration was viewed. On the one hand, it was attacked as an unwelcome imposition:

I am going again on the route without being granted a travel permit.  
Today the Christians were without pity and gave me a fine.  

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88 Fond Roux, IREMAM, Carton 52.5. Songs of the Ait Youssi.
But it is also appreciated for the security it brought the countryside: even if one had to get a travel permit, at least the roads were safe. The following laudatory lines of a song were composed by an amdyaz, Sma’il n-Hammami, and recorded by El Ghazi n ‘Umar in El Hajeb in 1939:

From now on, fear is unknown.  
The French authorities have banished it.  
Go then, O travelers, follow your route without any shred of fear.  
No one will question you,  
The paths will be without obstacle for you.89

This ambiguity is also expressed in attitudes towards the fairness of the justice system administered by the French in the Protectorate. On the positive side, some applauded them for protecting the lowly in society. One anonymous poet declares:

I tell you, the Christians (Irumin) are good;  
Without them, the rights of orphans and widows will be trampled by injustice.90

In a tamawayt poem, one of Beni Mtir’s amateur poets, El Buhali l-Bourezzouni el Mtiri, lauds the French as an improvement over the Sultan:

The French are worth more than our Sultan  
They do not love injustice,  
They follow a straight path and do not turn from it. 91

However, the benefits under the new administration were not without a cost. In a continuation of the verses of the zedday poem from above, El Buhali describes what had been lost in the new order the French have established:

There are no more murderous fights,  
And no one is killed by the thrusts of the dagger.  
There is nothing that works today

89 Fond Roux, IREMAM, Carton 52.1.3. There are four folders (52.1.1-4) which Roux collected poems he used in a presentation to the “Congrès de la musique marocaine” in Fes in 1939.  
90 Fond Roux, IREMAM, Carton 50.2.10. Recorded by Arsène Roux in El Hajeb, 1914-1918  
But the arguments one advances in the course of court case.
But watch out for lies or for excessive language.
Today it is no longer violence that can get you,
It is the tongue that has taken its place.
The battles of days gone by have now been taken to the office.
The blows the tongue carries are more effective today
Than the shots of the rifle of yesteryear.
That is now the lot Berbers, but it is also the general lot of everyone. 92

The last two lines are a poignant reflection of the bard’s awareness of the new reality in
which the Berbers have ceded a Weberian monopoly on violence to the state. The
pacification entailed a massive paradigm shift, which the poet is fully aware of, and now
these tribes will have to adjust to a world in which “words” take the place of “bullets.”

In other poems, Buhali realizes that the word of the tongue, his oral medium, is
also losing ground in a bureaucratizing process that increasingly privileges the written
word. Given the theoretical importance ascribed by Benedict Anderson to literacy in the
development of nationalism, the following lines of poetry are especially intriguing. They
are from a tamawayt, in which the poet, El Buhali, uses a numerical device of counting
numbers to structure his poem:

It is in the spoken word that I will write the number two,
I have no notebooks and, even more, I am illiterate.
But it is in my memory that I inscribe my reports. 93

The amdyaz is highly sensitive to the profound shifts that have transpired with the advent
of the modern state among his people, pitting the oral culture of which he is a part against
the hegemony of the written word in the new system. In another poem, El Buhali marks
the encroachment of this bureaucratic system with the following ambivalent lines:

The Christian chief registered the women in his log.

92 Ibid.
93 Fond Roux, IREMAM, Carton 59.1. Songs of amateur poets of Beni Mtit. Recorded by Roux in El
Hajeb, 1914-1918.
I attended the operation.  
It was my lawful wife who was at the head of the line.\(^{94}\)

The census-taking operations of the Christian chief, the Indigenous Affairs officer 
assigned to the local post, in registering births, marriages, divorces, and deaths, reflected 
the deeper bureaucratic organization of society in Berber tribal areas that was felt within 
this community and commented on. In their poetry, this taming of society, an imposition 
of a new “modern order” is something of which the Berbers were very aware. One poet, 
having been put through a series of military drills,\(^ {95}\) exclaims:

> Where could I have learned to do this drill? 
> What do these orders mean – “At arms!” “At ease!” or “To the right!” 
> Is it not true that the Christians break us like one breaks an ox with a yoke to train it for 
> the plough?\(^ {96}\)

The poet Lyazid u Lahsen, in a \textit{zedday} poem, also laments the forced submission to a 
new system of order under the French with the image of the yoke and the plow:

> In the past, the mosquito himself did not dare attack our teams of horses. 
> No one dared approach my herd of cows. 
> Today, we ourselves have been harnessed to the plow; 
> The yoke has been made to our measure; 
> And the spur is pressed on our flanks. 
> Us? We are subdued!\(^ {97}\)

This increased state control over their lives is even lamented in the area of morality and 
romantic love. El Buhali again exhorts his listeners:

> O you who hear me! Study the rules which are being enacted by the French leader. 
> He is going to make you follow the straight path,

\(^{94}\) Fond Roux, IREMAM, Carton 59.1. Songs of amateur poets of Beni Mtit. Recorded by Roux in El 
Hajeb, 1914-1918.  
\(^{95}\) The importance of the military in regulating, modernizing, and homogenizing society has been noted by 
multiple authors from Eugen Weber work on rural France, \textit{Peasants into Frenchmen} (1976), to Timothy 
Mitchell’s chapters on the modernization of the Egyptian military under Mohamed ‘Ali, in \textit{Colonising 
Egypt}.  
\(^{96}\) Fond Roux, IREMAM, Carton 52.5.  
\(^{97}\) Fond Roux, IREMAM, Carton 59.1. Songs of amateur poets of Beni Mtit. Recorded by Roux in El 
Hajeb, 1914-1918.
No one can lie any longer, the mouths will be sown shut and the hands held back. And there is our misfortune: Proposals of love themselves must disappear! 98

One poet even decried the unfairness of a decree forbidding adultery, with the following explicit lamentation:

How can I do it? My hand is used to feeling breasts! And the Christian threatens to sentence those who get near them to garbage duty! 99

However, on the other side, another poet wishes he could have access to a French telephone in order to sweet-talk his lover on a secure line:

Ah! If I could just install a telephone line between me and my girlfriend, With its line, its posts, and its jars, Each time I would want to speak with my lover, I would confer my declarations of love to the telephone, Which would ensure they reach you. 100

The telegraphs and telephones which had been cursed because of how they had helped the French prevail in the pacification struggle could also be seen as modern conveniences, conferring advantages to a suitor by creating a space for private communication. 101

The paradoxes of this new life under the Protectorate in the 1920s and 1930s are also displayed in the contrast between a sense of exploitation that is expressed about life under the new regime in some poems and other poems that boast of the contribution the Berbers are making in the colonial army. In a poem from the Ait Ayyache from 1934,

98 Ibid.
100 Fond Roux, IREMAM, Carton 56.3.4. Recorded by Houssa ou Moha in Oumes, 1932.
101 In a recapitulation of this theme, I heard an *amdyaz* among the Ait Sokhman deliver a poem in December 2007 about how he wished he had a cell phone that would let the lovers communicate freely in private.
the poet describes life under the Franco-Moroccan *makhzen*, with the metaphor of a flour mill:

> The Qaid is like a mill,  
The French chief plays the role of the canal that brings him water,  
And the poor people are like the kernels of grain that are crushed under the grindstone.\(^{102}\)

However, when the French sent forces to aid the Spanish in fighting the Berber leader, ‘Abd el-Krim and his Rif Republic, many poems were composed with pride about the importance of the Berber troops in the army and the French reliance on them. As the poet Sma’il n Hammani el Mtiri describes in this *tzli*:

> If the French need something, it is me they look to, to help them.  
We, O Berbers, we are used to glorious bravery and will never desert them.  
Again, when they mobilized us to go in columns,  
Did not all of the Beni Mtir leave to subdue the countryside stirred up in rebellion?\(^{103}\)

Another poem about the fight in the Rif, by Hammami, celebrates their victories in the north but mourns their losses:

> We have conquered you, O post of ‘Ain ‘Aicha,  
But the Qaid Haddou and the Khalifat Moha were wounded there.  
The Beni Mtir have always been courageous.

The refrain for this song, “Oh give me a little more gas (*lisans*, for the French *l’essence*) for the Jebala is still far off!”, reveals the transformations wrought in such a short time, as tribesman from isolated regions in the Atlas are trucked north to fight other Berber speaking tribes (*tarifit* is the dialect in the Rif mountains) in the north of Morocco.

**Conclusion**

Following the completion of the “pacification” in 1934, this final poetic image of Berber soldiers being sent off to war became the prevalent reality for many of the former

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\(^{102}\) Fond Roux, IREMAM, Carton 57.5.1. Berber songs of the northern Ait Ayyach, of the Saiss plain.  
\(^{103}\) Fond Roux, IREMAM, Carton 52.1.3. Recorded by El Ghazi u ‘Umar es-Saddni in El Hajeb, 1939.
imjuhad, or resistance fighters. In the 1930s, the French completed the task of co-opting the military potential of the bled as-siba into the colonial army, which was then sent in subsequent decades to fight during World War II in Tunisia, Italy, Provence, the Vosges, and into Germany; then transferred in the late 1940s and early 1950s to fight in Indochina; and finally brought back to the Maghreb to try to deal with unrest in Tunisia and Algeria in 1955. This “tamed” Berber bloc, romanticized by numerous French officers in memoires about their campaigns in la montagne berbère, was also counted on to guarantee the security of the French Protectorate administration in Morocco itself in the face of the increasingly active Moroccan nationalist movement, and the resurgent Sultan, who began to assert his autonomy in the 1940s.

Despite French assertions of the antagonism between what they labeled nos berbères, and the “troublesome” Arabs of the cities, an analysis of poetry collected among these Berbers during the first decades of the Protectorate demonstrates that this relationship was in fact much more nuanced and complex. In response to Anderson’s thesis that national imagined communities are “imaginable” because of the spread of print capitalism among a large reading audience, the case of Berber tribes in Morocco’s Atlas demonstrates that these illiterate, transhumant groups also had the capacity to imagine a broad community at a “national” level, a corporate identity that was activated even more intensely by the threat of a foreign, “Christian,” invasion by the French army. In place of newspapers, this imagined community was sustained by a shared repertoire of lyrical poetry, performed by wandering professional bards that brought news and commentary from all parts of the territory that would later be defined as Morocco. Thus, in light of
the contending nationalist and French definitions of the Moroccan “imagined community,” there was a sense, as the nationalists asserted in the 1930s, that resistance to foreign invasions and belonging to a religious community had given Morocco a corporate sense of solidarity as a nation.

However, the poetry also reveals that a full-fledged modern conception of the nation was also not present among the Berber speaking tribal population of Morocco. Though the seeds of this level of identification with a broad nation-sized territorial and social entity were present, this level of imagined identity was only one of many identities at play among the Berber population during this period. These included a definite awareness of a common Berber identity, sustained by a linguistic affiliation that was reinforced in a shared poetic tradition; a strong delineation between areas that were under the “state” and those that remained free in their resistance to the “state;” a distinction between Muslim and Christian; and finally, clear divisions among ethnic categories, including Arabs, Berbers, Jews, and Senegalese.

Following the completion of the pacification in 1934, this poetry also reveals the profound transformations provoked by the construction of the colonial state. The Berber-speaking areas formerly labeled the *blad as-siba* became more and more integrated into a larger national entity due to the increased ease of travel, the integration of much of the male population into the colonial army, and the economic upheaval that encouraged, or forced, much of this population to migrate to the cities. The next chapters trace how Moroccan national identity evolved in the midst of these transformations, as different groups, including the Arabic-speaking urban nationalists and the Sultan—but also
Morocco’s Jewish community, women, and the Berbers themselves—sought to reframe the French construction of Morocco with competing definitions of their “nation.”
CHAPTER III
CONTESTING THE COLONIAL STATE:
THE MOROCCAN NATIONALIST MOVEMENT

From Anti-colonial Reform to Anti-colonial Nationalism
The history of Morocco’s forty-four year colonial period pivoted in the early 1930s. At the very moment the “pacification” project embedded in the Treaty of Fes neared completion with the complete subjugation, by the Franco-Moroccan makhzen, of the rural blad as-siba in Morocco’s “montagne berbère,” a second wave of resistance broke out in the form of an urban nationalist movement that challenged France’s dominant role in the Protectorate partnership. In an inversion of Ibn Khaldun’s model, the greatest challenge after 1930 to the control of the makhzen (which now rested in the hands of the Resident General and the French-dominated ministries described in Chapter 1) arose from the heart of the “Arab” medina (so carefully preserved by Lyautey’s colonial urbanism) rather than the “Berber” bled, or countryside. For the next twenty-six years, the Moroccan nationalists actively contested France’s near-monopoly of control over the colonial state, defending Moroccan sovereignty by constructing a rival definition of the Moroccan nation unified since the founding of the Idrissid dynasty in the late 8th century by Islamization and Arabization.

Geographically, this urban siba originated in Morocco’s northern cities—Rabat-Salé, Fes, and Tetouan—historic centers for Morocco’s Arabic-speaking intellectual and commercial elites, including many aristocratic families tracing a lineage back to Muslim Spain (Al-Andalus). While these continued to be major hotbeds of nationalist activity, particularly Fes, the center of gravity of the movement began to shift in the 1940s to the
rising political and economic power centers on the coast, Rabat and Casablanca.

Following the loosely networked protests against the Berber Dahir in early 1930s, the leadership of the Moroccan nationalist movement coalesced and succeeded in organizing a mass political movement that had expanded from the cities and begun to establish cells in town centers throughout the countryside by the mid-1940s. By 1956, the leaders of the nationalist parties that had formed (*Istiqlal* was by far the largest) in the anti-colonial struggle were the major political players that, along with the King, negotiated what the independent Moroccan state would look like, articulating an official state discourse of national identity emphasizing the country’s Muslim and Arab heritage.

This chapter focuses on how this Moroccan version of Arabo-Islamic nationalism was forged during the nationalist leaderships’ evolving efforts in the 1930s and 1940s to rally the Moroccan public, leftist French allies, the broader Arab World, the United States, and other international players to the cause of ending the French Protectorate and guaranteeing Moroccan national sovereignty with independence. The development of the anti-colonial nationalist movement in Morocco during this period can be broken down into three major phases.¹ The reformist phase spans from the initial protests against the “Berber Dahir” in 1930 to the exile of the major Moroccan nationalist leaders following violent cycles of protest in the summer and fall of 1937. Between 1938 and 1943, the

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¹ This periodization generally concurs with the distinction made by Halstead between a “reformist” and “separatist” phase in the nationalist movement (see his chart on the “Phases of Moroccan opposition to European Penetration, 1873-1956,” which he credits the conception of to Mehdi Ben Barka, on page 4). I argue the “separatist” phase actually started with the 1937 exile of nationalist leaders which falsified the reformist approach, rather than in the mid-1940s, where Halstead’s chart puts it. Though the exile, the war, and the hardships of the middle phase delayed working toward this goal, the nationalist movement after 1937 knew reform was a dead-end. John P Halstead, *Rebirth of a Nation; the Origins and Rise of Moroccan Nationalism, 1912-1944*, Harvard Middle Eastern monographs (Cambridge, Mass: Distributed for the Center for Middle Eastern Studies of Harvard University by Harvard University Press, 1967)
movement struggled to regroup following the exile of its leadership and to cope with the exigencies brought on by the war. A new period of contention began in January 1944 with the founding of the Istiqlal Party (*Hizb al-Istiqlal*) and the publication of the Manifest of Independence, which, for the first time, brought Moroccan demands for independence into the open. After hopes that the international community would side with these demands in the postwar settlement were dashed as the United States conceded France its position in North Africa to help fortify Cold War battle lines in Western Europe, Istiqlal and the other nationalist parties resumed their struggle, exploiting greater liberty of movement, fewer restrictions on the press (including authorization to publish in Arabic), and increased freedom to associate in the years after the war to expand and consolidate their organizational strength. This chapter ends in the late 1940s when the King began to assert a new central role in contesting the colonial state, taking an open stand against the Residency in his historic and symbolic trip to Tangier in April 1947. The outfall of this event led to the dismissal of the more lenient Eirik Labonne and a return to a more hard-line French administration in Morocco with the appointment of Alphonse Juin as Resident General. Chapter 6 focuses on the final decade of the Protectorate, with escalating tensions among the King, the nationalist movement, and the French administration which broke out into violent open confrontation following the exile of the King in 1953.

The critical issue through this chronology is the link between how the nationalist leadership defined collective identity, specifically “national” identity, and how they attempted to mobilize anti-colonial protest. The central claim presented by the
nationalists throughout this period was that the French were infringing on Moroccan sovereignty in how they administered the Protectorate: Morocco was being treated like a colony under “direct rule” rather than a Protectorate in which they partnered with the Sultan in modernizing and developing the country. To defend against the “Algerianization” of Morocco and to legitimize their claims about the inviolability of Moroccan sovereignty, the nationalists countered the French colonial vulgate with their own construction of Morocco that emphasized the country’s illustrious Arabo-Islamic dynastic history as evidence of its long-standing national unity. Starting from the protests against the Berber Dahir, the nationalists used religious and political discursive strategies to motivate support for their protest movement, framing French colonial policy in Morocco as an attack on Islam and Arabic language and culture (the Berber policy being interpreted as an attempt to eradicate both from a block consisting of more than half the population) and as an infringement on Morocco’s right to self-determination.

In the first “anti-colonial reformist” phase (1930-1937) of the campaign, the nationalists accepted the Protectorate paradigm but complained the French were not actually implementing the agreement stipulated in the Treaty of Fes. Their goal was to reform the Protectorate and establish a truly equal partnership in which Moroccan interests and sovereignty were actually respected. Following violent clashes in 1937 which resulted in the exile of the upper echelons of the nationalist movement, the movement shifted from anti-colonial reformism to anti-colonial nationalism, rejecting the fundamental associationist logic of the Protectorate that Morocco had to share sovereignty with France because it needed its help to develop into a modern country.
Convinced the Protectorate only served to cloak France’s colonial interests and that Moroccan sovereignty would never be respected under the Treaty of Fes, the nationalist leaders abandoned the reform strategy and began to argue independence was itself a prerequisite for development. From 1944 on, their definition of Moroccan national identity was used to justify the nation’s right to independence.

Considering the evolving context in which the nationalists made arguments about national sovereignty during this formative period helps reveal why certain Arab and Islamic cultural, linguistic, and religious dimensions of Moroccan identity were emphasized (and what other possibilities were excluded) in challenging French control of the Franco-Moroccan Makhzen. By studying the nationalists’ definition of Moroccan national identity as the product of a process that took place in this specific historical milieu, the agency and contingency involved in defining the boundaries of Moroccan identity are revealed, particularly regarding the ethnic and religious core identity that was put forward to defend Moroccan sovereignty. This approach also helps explain why certain elements, namely Berber and Jewish identity, were marginalized in the nationalists’ construction of Morocco.

**Contentious Politics, Social Movements, and Framing the Moroccan Nation**

This focus on the process by which Moroccan nationalist leaders framed national identity addresses a larger question still not satisfactorily answered in general theories of nationalism: how do definitions of national identity constructed by elites (if we accept the modernist thesis) succeed in generating popular support in bids for political power? To pose the question differently, if national identity is as arbitrarily constructed as a
scholar like Gellner seems to imply, how does it ever generate the ‘asabiyyah, or communal solidarity, necessary to get any sort of popular nationalist movement going? Why do certain invented or reinvented traditions resonate in the mobilization of nationalist movements? How do the “masses” connect to these nationalist elites? This chapter seeks to answer these questions by examining how Moroccan nationalists attempted to reshape “primordial” (or pre-existing) forms of solidarity in new constructions of national identity to motivate popular demonstrations of support in their struggle to counter French colonial policies in the 1930s and 1940s.

While many studies have focused on the development of the Moroccan nationalist movement, few, if any, have explicitly focused on the link between framing nationalist ideology and mobilizing popular protest. In the 1940s and 1950s, during and after the independence struggle, an initial wave of histories were written by nationalists themselves to “decolonize” a vast body of colonial French scholarship that had denied the existences of “nations” in North Africa; these clearly were motivated by an apologetic orientation emphasizing the historic unity and continuity of the new nation-states. In this same period, liberal French scholars such as Charles-André Julien, Jacques Berque, and Charles-Robert Ageron, sympathetic to the nationalists and critical of the failings of French colonial policy (though still somewhat fixated on trying to figure out “what went

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wrong” with it), also published several histories of North Africa, covering the rise of the nationalist movements, which remain some of the best syntheses of Maghrebi history.  

Decolonization in the 1950s and early 1960s also prompted a few French, American, and British historians and political scientists to focus on the North African nationalist movements and their roots in the colonial period in order to explain the political systems that took shape after independence. The next wave of Anglo-American scholarship looked more carefully at the pre-colonial history of Morocco in the 19th century, many times in the tribal areas that had not received much attention. In the 1970s, Abdallah Laroui, called for a fresh longue durée synthesis of Maghrebi history, resituating the colonial and nationalist periods in the broader sweep of North African history, but most postcolonial scholarship in the past three decades has focused

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4 Robert Rézette, *Les Partis Politiques Marocains*, Cahiers de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques (Paris: A. Colin, 1955). John Halstead’s study focuses primarily on the elite, Arab, urban leadership of the movement, many of whom he was able to interview personally, *Rebirth of a nation; the origins and rise of Moroccan nationalism*, (Cambridge, MA: Center for Middle Eastern Studies by Harvard University Press, 1967). One of Halstead’s major analytical divisions is the degree of French, or European, influence on the movement, which he can overemphasize at points. I agree more with Berque’s assessment of the nationalist leaders of the period, that “In their attitude towards the European, many are torn between attraction and repulsion. Can one fix the proportion of the various factors among themselves? And indeed should one attempt to do so? For this intermingling reveals the ambiguity of things and men in the Maghrib at the time.” Berque, *French North Africa; the Maghrib Between Two World Wars*, 79.

predominantly on revising nationalist historiography by beginning to explore the history of previously overlooked, non-elite actors.⁶

By reconsidering the “nation” as a meaningful object of analysis in this study, my goal is to bridge the recent wave of subaltern histories and the earlier literature reifying the role of Arab nationalist urban elites in order to move toward a broader synthesis of Morocco’s history of colonization and decolonization. To accomplish this, national identity is considered neither as a pure fabrication nor an essential category of identity, but from a relational perspective that is grounded in recent sociological theories developed to study contentious politics and the phenomena of social movements. The goal with this approach is to navigate between the teleology of nationalist historiography and the particularism of subaltern studies by historicizing the nationalist movement and its definition of Moroccan national identity, which was formulated and reformulated in response to the specific exigencies of a changing political context.

Several key analytical categories developed to describe social movements and contentious politics are employed to reconsider key aspects of the advent and development of the nationalist movement, its construction of Morocco, and its mobilization of anti-colonial protest during the period from 1930 to the late 1940s.⁷ One

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⁶ A new generation of scholars have analyzed the period from a new subaltern perspectives; Ali Abdullatif Ahmida’s volume *Beyond Colonialism and Nationalism in the Maghrib* (New York: Palgrave, 2000) includes examples such as Driss Maghraoui’s chapter on Moroccan colonial soldiers and Mona Fayad’s chapter on Maghribi women. In addition, several conferences in the past ten years under the patronage of the king have sought to incorporate previously marginalized groups including the Rif Berber populations and women in the nationalist narrative of resistance. A series of volumes with essays from the conferences is being published by the Federation for the Advancement of Resistance Fighters and Army of Liberation, including *al-Muqawama wa al-Harakat al-Wataniyya bi-jiha Taza – al-Hosayma – Tawanat (2000)* and *Dowr al-Mara al-Maghrebiyya fi Milhama al-Istiqlal wal-wahida (2000)*.

⁷ To the historian, the prodigious literature on contentious politics and social movements can appear hyperschematized. Aware of the dangers of jargon fatigue (having experienced it myself in reading this
concerns the political opportunities in this period that created openings for anti-colonial contention and the organization of a nationalist movement. This context—which spanned from the Great Depression through the end of World War II—was, of course, extremely dynamic, creating dramatic shifts in the openings and closures faced by the nationalist leaders. A second analytical lens focuses on what kinds of mobilizing structures were involved in the struggle, including pre-existing informal social networks exploited by the nationalists and more formal movement organizations they developed later. Another key focus concerns the articulation of collective action frames by nationalists, including two types of cultural meanings that oriented participants in the nationalist struggle: 1) pre-existing beliefs and understandings, and 2) interpretive frameworks that were actively constructed by nationalist leaders to mobilize support. The next sections examine how nationalist elites constructed collective action frames by drawing on and refashioning existing cultural and religious sentiments about Moroccan identity to orient and legitimize the anti-colonial nationalist struggle.

The critical link between these framing processes and what this literature refers to as cycles or waves of contention (with waves denoting an extended series of cycles) in the 1930s and 1940s is also considered. Tilly’s concept of repertoires of contention,8

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8 Tilly explains the use of repertoire saying, “The theatrical metaphor calls attention to the clustered, learned, yet improvisational character of people’s interactions as they make and receive each other’s claims. Claim making usually resembles jazz and commedia dell’arte rather than the ritual reading of scripture. Like a jazz trio or an improvising theater group, people who participate in contentious politics normally have several pieces they can play, but not an infinity.” Charles Tilly, Contentious Performances, Cambridge studies in contentious politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 14.
referring to the specific array of modes and strategies used in what he calls *contentious performances*,
9 gives rise to several intriguing questions about the Moroccan nationalist struggle: What connections were there between the repertoire employed in Morocco and the construction of Morocco framed by the nationalists? How did the repertoire employed in these contentious performances change in subsequent waves of protest after 1930 and why did it change? And, finally, how did Moroccan protest reflect existing repertoires in Europe, or in other parts of the Muslim world, and what aspects were uniquely “Moroccan?” This last point relates to a larger question about the *transnational* dimensions of Moroccan nationalist activism, including the modularity, diffusion, and mobilization of protest across “national,” (or what, in the colonial period, we might call “proto-national”) boundaries. 10 The transnational aspect of the Moroccan nationalist movement is particularly interesting during this critical period in which other parts of North Africa, the broader Muslim world, and other colonized areas were mobilizing concurrent anti-colonial nationalist protest and coordinating through new international organizational structures (the Arab League and United Nations) created later in this period.

9 Describing contentious performances, Tilly states: “In a given time and place, people learn a limited number of claim-making performances, then mostly stick with those performances when the time to make claims arrives. Contentious performances change incrementally as a result of accumulating experience and external constraints. But in the short run they strongly limit the choices available to would-be makers of claims. In some settings, suicide bombing or armed insurrection look like two of the major options. Not so in 18th- and 19th-century Great Britain.” Ibid., 4-5. One critical question explored in this analysis is when the Moroccan nationalist moved from a dominantly non-violent repertoire to one that included armed attacks on the Protectorate security forces.

One of the major developments in the literature on social movements has been a recent shift from a static to a more dynamic model of how contentious politics actually play out. This focus on how the opportunities, organization, framing, contention, and transnational factors change over time is of major importance in the subsequent investigation of how various actors initiated, reacted, and adjusted in relationship to other players involved in the struggle over sovereignty in Morocco during the Protectorate. In contrast to a teleological interpretation of the development of nationalism, this dynamic paradigm creates room for the changing rhythms of contentious cycles, the agencies at play at various junctures, and the evolving strategies employed by different sides. The following analysis employs these analytical lenses to examine how the Moroccan nationalist leadership defined national identity in anti-colonial resistance in the 1930s and 1940s.

**Anti-Colonial Reformism: A Protectorate, Not a Colony (1930-1937)**

The first wave of urban nationalist contention in Protectorate Morocco, from the 1930 Berber Dahir protests to the intense cycle of demonstrations in the fall of 1937, was directed not at securing Moroccan independence but at reforming the Protectorate

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11 The best study of the urban, Arab nationalist leadership is John Halstead’s Halstead, *Rebirth of a Nation: the Origins and Rise of Moroccan Nationalism, 1912-1944*. Halstead was able to interview most of these leaders extensively in the late 1950s, gathering vital first-hand documentation for a movement that had to destroy much of the written communication for fear that it would fall in to the hands of the Protectorate security forces. His primary focus is the first phase, 1930-1937, for which he provides an invaluable reference. Allal al-Fassi, writing in the late 1940s, also provides a first-hand account, though his narrative sometimes conveys a retrospective teleology in the aforementioned *Al-Harakat Al-Istiqlaliyah Fi Al-Maghrib Al-‘Arabi*, 5th ed. (Casablanca, Morocco: Mu'assasat 'Allal al-Fasi, 1993). This section also benefits from the major French histories of the interwar period, Charles André Julien, *L'Afrique Du Nord En Marche* (Paris: R. Julliard, 1952); Berque, *French North Africa; the Maghrib Between Two World Wars*, and Charles Robert Ageron, *Politiques Coloniales Au Maghreb* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1972).
structure that had been constructed by the French over the past two decades. The nationalists resented that the French authorities were turning Morocco into a colony, controlling the state apparatus and exploiting the resources of the country, and demanded a reform of these “colonial” policies. They still believed, however, that a Protectorate partnership was possible. Their strategic goal during this period was to pressure the French to truly adhere to the Protectorate formula stipulated in the Treaty of Fes, helping to modernize the Sharifian Empire while respecting the Sultan’s sovereignty. Examining the connections during this initial phase between political opportunities (beginning with the promulgation of the Berber Dahir), framing, organization, repertoires of contention, cycles of protest, and transnational dynamics reveals how key parameters were set during these first seven years of anti-colonial struggle that had a lasting influence on the nationalist construction of Morocco.

The 1930 Latif Protests: Framing the Nation and Creating a Moroccan Repertoire of Contention

The Latif protest in Moroccan cities against French Berber policy during the summer of 1930, described at the beginning of the Introduction, was the seminal moment from which the Moroccan nationalist movement developed. The Latif prayer itself became both a “classic” mode of protest in the Moroccan repertoire and a ritualized framing device, as the refrain “Oh God, the Benevolent, we ask of You benevolence in whatever fate brings…and do not separate us from our brothers, the Berbers!” was repeated over and over in demonstrations over the next two decades. The legacy of the protest was that the Moroccan nationalist cause was indelibly linked to the initial
campaign to defend the unification of Arabs and Berbers as Muslims under the Sultan’s uniform administration of shari’a. While more methods would be added to the repertoire later, the Latif protests were foundational in tying questions of ethnic, religious, and national identity together at the genesis of the national resistance movement.

It is important to note that before the Latif protests there had been very little unrest within the so-called blad al-makzhen since the Protectorate had been instituted in 1912.\(^\text{12}\) During the great rural resistance movements against the French and Spanish military conquest of Morocco—in the Middle and High Atlas in the 1920s-30s and the Rif Rebellion led by Abd al-Krim al-Khattabi in the 1920s—which were discussed in Chapter 2, Morocco’s urban populations remained largely quiescent, tacitly accepting the Franco-Moroccan makhzen’s efforts to pacify the so-called siba. French Berber policy had also not provoked organized protest since the original 1914 “Berber Dahir” set up a separate jurisdiction of customary courts in designated pacified Berber lands in the Middle and Central Atlas. While urban Moroccans undoubtedly resented and disagreed with Protectorate policy before 1930, none of these potential triggers provoked a movement translating this resentment into public and active demonstrations in the cities against the Residency.

\(^\text{12}\) This should not be understood to imply that the urban population was always docile. Urban unrest tended to be linked to tax grievances. In 1873, the medina in Fez had rioted after the Sultan put a tax on hides (the city’s tannery sector was quite large), because it was easier to raise revenues from Moroccan producers than foreign imports. J. Berque, L’intérieur du Maghreb: XV-XIXe siècle (Paris, 1978), 489-92. This mukus tax on goods going in and out of the city’s gates (which burdened both urban and rural populations) was abolished by Mawlay al-Hasan in 1885. Daniel J Schroeter, Merchants of Essaouira: Urban Society and Imperialism in Southwestern Morocco, 1844-1886 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 126.
What changed in the political opportunity structure in Protectorate Morocco that opened up the possibility for the outbreak of protests and the mobilization of a nationalist movement in the 1930s? By examining the origins of the Latif cycle of contention, it is clear that the major new factor in the summer of 1930 was the presence and agency of a group of young Moroccan activists, all of whom had grown up under the Protectorate and were coming of age at a point at which the French construction of Morocco described in Chapter 1, Lyautey’s vision of “Two Moroccos,” was nearing completion. Some had been educated within the traditional Islamic system or in the modernized Islamic and Arabic curriculum offered in the Free Schools (several nationalist leaders founded and taught in these schools). Many of these had then gone on to study at the Qarawiyin University in Fes, the more than a millennium-old bastion of Morocco’s educated elite where most of the ulama and makhzen functionaries were trained. Others had been educated in the French system of colleges musulmanes administered by the D.I.P., with a handful going on to pursue university studies in Paris.

Following the defeat of Abd Al-Krim’s forces in the Rif in 1925, individuals from both backgrounds began meeting in secret societies in Fes, Rabat, Salé, and Tetouan. The members would meet to read and discuss newspapers and books from Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, and Europe, and many corresponded regularly with friends studying in France or the Middle East. In terms of cultural activities, they tried to publish in Morocco clandestinely and several were involved in theater troupes that performed

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14 Allal al-Fassi relates that the Fes society published a monthly magazine, *Umm al-Banin*, that was published using stencils and secretly distributed in Fes, Rabat, Marrakesh, Tangier, and Tetouan. *The*
plays such as Saladin and Mustafa Kamil’s The Conquest of Spain, using the performances as an opportunity to speak to their audience about the need for reform. As Allal al-Fassi, the creator of the first society in Fes, describes, the point of the secret societies was to “create a current of reformist thought by propagating the modern Islamic ideologies among the intellectuals in the principal cities of Morocco.”

One of the most influential ideological currents from the Middle East for these young educated Moroccans was neo-salafiyya, a reform movement originating in the late 19th century in the teachings of Jamal al-din al-Afghani and Mohamed Abduh. In the early 1920s, a few prominent Qarawiyin professors gathered devoted followings for their salafist reformist teaching, which focused on the revitalization of Moroccan Islam in the development, through ijtihad, of a modernized system of shari’a, and the purification of heretical expressions of Islam in the country’s widespread Sufi brotherhoods, or zawiyas. The divestment of the Sultan’s power and the cooptation of the Sufi orders by

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15 Halstead, Rebirth of a Nation, p. 170.
16 Halstead, Rebirth of a nation, p. 168.
17 The first Moroccan salafi was Abu Shu’ayb bin ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Dukkali, often called the “Moroccan Abduh.” Al-Dukkali studied in Azhar at the turn of the century and then came back to the Qarawiyin where he influenced a number of the faculty and students. He traveled east again where he joined up with Rashid Rida and others in the Manar school. He returned to Morocco after WWI and accounts say he gathered a group of followers who toured the country with him distributing Egyptian salafi literature and “pulling down trees and shrines which had been made the object of popular veneration.” (Allal al-Fassi, The Independence Movements in Arab North Africa, (Washington: American Council of Learned Societies, 1954), 111.) One of his students, Moulay al-‘Arabi al-‘Alawi (Bel-Arabi), became the most influential spokesman for the salafi view after the first World War and through his teaching at the Qarawiyin, influenced a generation of students who came of age in the radically different socio-political context of French domination in Morocco. The first focused treatment of Moroccan salafiyya was by Jamil Abun-Nasr, “The Salafiyya Movement in Morocco: The Religious Bases of the Moroccan Nationalist Movement,” in Albert Hourani (ed.), St. Antony’s Papers, Middle Eastern Affairs, No. 3. (London, 1963), pp. 91-105. Mohamed el-Mansour examines the tension in the Moroccan nationalist movement between the salafiyya wing led by Allal al-Fassi and more secular modernist wing led by Mohamed al-Ouazzani in “Salafis and Modernists in the Moroccan Nationalist Movements,” in John Ruedy (ed.), Islam and Secularism in North Africa, (Washington: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 1994), pp. 53-69.
the French administration left an opening for the *salafis* in the 1920s as the remaining important religious group in Morocco with the capability of articulating a defense of the rights and cultural heritage of Muslims in Morocco in the face of growing French dominance. The members of the secret societies also had access to *salafi* writings smuggled into Morocco including Abduh’s writings, Rashid Rida’s *al-Manar* journal, and Ibn Badis’ journal *Al-Shihab*. This small network of young men in Fes, Rabat, Salé, and Tetouan, constituted a post-war generation of educated Arabic-speaking Moroccans whose hopes had been conditioned by a hybrid milieu in the 1920s of *Salafi* reformism, Wilsonian ideals of self-determination, Ataturk’s anti-Western military successes in Anatolia and ‘Abd al-Krim’s valiant resistance in the Rif, the rise of the Khilafat pan-Islamic movement, and stirrings of nationalism in the Middle East and in the Indian subcontinent.

The publishing of the May 16 decree in 1930 presented a strategic opportunity for this generation to act upon these hopes, but the opportunity required working out a succinct framing of Moroccan identity that conflated “Islam” and the “Nation” in Morocco and defined the “Berber Dahir” as a visceral threat against this community. It is important to clarify that this was not a cynical ploy by scheming elites to stir up the mob. While these young activists undoubtedly overly emphasized the religious dimensions of French Berber policy, the leaders of the Latif protests truly shared a belief that the decree represented an explicit manifestation of a broader French Berber policy that threatened

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19 Several of the early nationalist activists contributed articles to *Al-Chihab*, and one, Mohamed Ghazi, was exiled from Fes to Meknes and then to Casablanca for an article he contributed to the journal of the Algerian ulama.
the fundamental unity of the Muslim community in Morocco. They did rightly diagnose an attempt to consolidate the division of “Two Moroccos” and ensure French control over both: French Berber policy did explicitly discourage the spread of Arabic and Islam within the bled in order to prevent the consolidation of Arab-Berber unity. In addition, the Residency had itself reaffirmed the centrality of law, shari’a (Islamic law) versus izref (customary law), in defining Arab and Berber identity in Morocco, which further fused the political and religious dimensions of the May 16th decree. Given the strength of their salafi orientation, in which the defense and renewal of shari’a was a central concern, it was natural for the Moroccan activists to seize on the issue of Berber customary law as a crucial criterion in defining Moroccan identity.

It took time for this framing to be worked out and for the protest movement to gain momentum, however. Moroccans working for the Residency, Abdellatif Sbihi and Mohamed Lyazidi,21 were the first to be aware of this threat, and both tried to spread word and mobilize a response in late May-early June but were unable to succeed. Their

20 The official policy of the Residency was not to encourage the mass conversion of the Berbers to Christianity. However, various factors contributed to a sense of unease among Moroccan Muslims about the designs of the Catholic church and heightened the religious dimensions of the colonial conflict. French church journals such as the Le Maroc catholique and the La Revue d'histoire des missions openly advocated increased efforts to evangelize the Berber population of Morocco. The Bishop of Rabat, the Franciscan Monsignor Viel, received subsidies out of the Moroccan budget for missions activities. At the same time in the late 1920s, a French official, Commander Paul Marty, who was an open advocate of assimilation and Christianization, engaged in distributing an Arabic version of a book titled, Life of Jesus, and installed Algerian Kabyle court clerks who had converted to Christianity in several of the jemaas. In 1928, the son of a Fassi notable family and brother of future nationalist leader), Mohammed ‘Abdeljelil had converted to Christianity entered the priestly orders. See Charles Julien, L'Afrique du Nord en Marche, Nationalismes Musulmans et Souveraineté Française, (Paris: René Julliard, 1952), p. 147 and Julien's Le Maroc Face Aux Impérialismes: 1415-1956 (Paris: Éditions J.A, 1978), 159.

21 Lyazidi had worked as an interpreter in Rabat at the Land Registry for four years (Halstead, Rebirth of a Nation; the Origins and Rise of Moroccan Nationalism, 1912-1944, 181), and Sbihi, also a translator, had actually had the dahir pass through his hands in May (Kenneth Brown, “The Impact of the Dahir Berbère in Salé,” in Ernest Gellner and Charles Micaud eds.), Arabs and Berbers: From Tribe to Nation in North Africa, (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1972), p.209)
explanations of the threat of a territorial division of Morocco and an abrogation of the Sultan’s sovereignty failed to provoke public protest. Almost a month later, on Friday June 20th, Sbihi finally convinced the imam at Salé’s main mosque to say the traditional Latif prayer said in times of calamity, connecting it to an attack against Islam embedded in the May 16th decree. In subsequent weeks, the Latif prayer, to which the phrase “and do not separate us from our brothers, the Berbers!” was added, proved to be the key to spreading word about the decree and mobilizing protest against what was now referred to as the “Berber Dahir” in other Moroccan cities. With the Latif, the nationalists successfully reinvented a familiar cultural form as an effective mode of contention.

June, July, and August were the high points of this initial phase of mass mobilization against the Berber policy, as the Latif would be said at the mosque and then a demonstration would ensue against governmental authorities. Some of the most effective protest organizers were British protégés and Moroccans who had gained Italian citizenship, who used their legal immunities as an advantage against the local police forces which tried to arrest them as they spread the protest to Marrakesh and Casablanca. Fes, however, proved to be the most active hotbed of anti-French

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22 One of Sbihi’s friends, Abdelkrim Hajji, had suggested using the Latif to spread word about the threat of the dahir against Islam. While Sbihi was arrested on Thursday, he and his friends had convinced the 80 year old imam of the mosque, Hajj ‘Ali, to recite the prayer on Friday after his sermon. See descriptions in Kenneth Brown, “The Impact of the Dahir Berbère in Salé,” p.212 and Gilles Lafuente, La politique berbère de la France et le nationalisme marocain, Collection Histoire et perspectives méditerranéennes (Paris: Harmattan, 1999), 190-191

23 Sbihi was arrested for his efforts in spreading the protest to Marrakesh and other cities and put in forced residence for two years first in Marrakesh and later in Tiznit, after which he withdrew from active involvement in the nationalist movement. (Halstead, Rebirth of a Nation; the Origins and Rise of Moroccan Nationalism, 1912-1944, 181-182)

24 The Bouayad family (British protégés) and Douiri family (naturalized Italians) were particularly active in organizing demonstrations in Fez, Casablanca, and Marrakesh. The diplomatic protections afforded these activists gave them greater ability to travel, to organize meetings, to print and distribute tracts, to gather
agitation. On successive Fridays in July, the Latif was performed and street
demonstrations followed resulting in the arrest of scores of activists. On July 16th, a
demonstration organized by Mohamed El Ouazzani marched with a delegation to the
local Pasha’s residence to explain their concerns and were told to return the next day. On
their return, the Pasha Baghdadi’s forces arrested El Ouazzani and Hashemi al-Filali,
submitting them to the **bastonnade**. Allal Al-Fassi and Abdelaziz Bendriss were also
arrested and then released after a brief imprisonment. In August, crowds involved in the
protests increased during the annual moussem (Saint’s day) at the mausoleum of Moulay
Idriss (the 9th century founder of Fez) and more than 7,000 participated in the Latif prayer
on August 7th.

On August 11th, the Sultan Mohammed Ben Youssef issued a letter (at the bequest
of the Residency) that called for the end of the protests. The letter chided the young
activists for protesting a policy the sultanate, including his father, had instituted to
maintain peace with the Berbers by allowing them to regulate themselves. It went on to
to say:

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25 In the summer of 1932, Ouezzani published an Arabic pamphlet detailing the event in a campaign to
generate movement in Fes to commemorate it. He described how he was stripped naked, tied up, and given
“1000 blows,” and claimed thirty other Fassi youths were also bastonnaded. He called on the medina to
commemorate 21 Safar (the date on the Islamic calendar) as the day your youth had sacrificed in being
beaten to defend the rights of their nation. He cried out against the injustice against “your religion, your
language and your unity” and concluded with the exhortation that “you are the descendants of this great
Arab nation with its grand and glorious history.” The tract was republished in *Maghreb*, November 1932,
p. 40.

26 The nationalists steadfastly defended the intentions of Moulay Youssef in signing the 1914 decree,
claiming he had attempted to resist signing the decree and subsequent policies to create a separate juridical
administration for the Berbers.
However, some young people, lacking any type of discernment and unaware of the full range of their reprehensible acts, would have one believe that these measures that we have decreed have no goal but the Christianization of the Berbers. They have thus induced the crowds to believe this error and convinced people to gather in the mosques to recite the “Latif” prayers after the ritual prayers, transforming prayer by this process into a political demonstration that troubles peoples’ minds. Our Majesty absolutely condemns the transforming of mosques, which God made as places of prayer and piety, into halls for political gatherings where hidden political agendas and negative tendencies are given free range.  

On August 13th, the *Latif* prayer was officially prohibited in Morocco, but the Sultan did agree to receive a delegation to hear the complaints. Ten delegates were selected to present a memorandum to the Sultan in which the nationalists, claiming to be representative spokesmen for the Moroccan people, expressed their demands against French Berber policy. The August 23 letter began with a historical preface asserting the Islamization and Arabization of the Berbers of Morocco since the time of Moulay Idriss in the 9th century, chronicling the history of Morocco’s Arab and Berber dynasties since, and then citing a Quranic injunction that all Muslims were obliged to submit to the jurisdiction of Islamic law.  

The rest of the letter iterated a set of demands vis-à-vis the “Berber Dahir” that encapsulated the nationalists’ definition of the Moroccan national community and plans to consolidate this definition. First, they called for a unified judiciary administering Islamic law (exempting the country’s Jewish minority) and for the unification of the country’s educational system. No distinction should be made between city and

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27 Gilles Lafuente quotes the text of the letter in *La politique berbère de la France et le nationalisme marocain*, Collection Histoire et perspectives méditerranéennes (Paris, 1999), p. 196. The nationalists clearly disregarded the directive and continued in subsequent years to try to exploit the advantages of the relatively free space for activity provided by the mosque. During an interrogation following the uprising in Fes in October 1937, an activist explained, “I know that the Sultan had forbidden giving political speeches in mosques, but I did not think that anything would be done, because the Security services do not have the right to intervene in the mosques.” SHD-AT 250, “Extraits des déclarations du nommé Taieb Ben Hassan Janati,” (November 1, 1937).
countryside, with obligatory instruction in Arabic and Islam for all. In addition, Arabic was to be recognized as the only official language of the country. No other language should be used in courts or in the administration of the makhzen, a point that was directed less at French than at Berber, with an additional statement that the government should “never give any Berber dialect an official character, such as its transcription in Latin characters.” The letter demanded an immediate end to all missionary activity in Morocco and a prohibition on the government subsidizing evangelistic efforts, the pay of priests, or the construction of churches. It also demanded that no more parochial orphanages for abandoned Muslim children or vocational schools were to be created but that Muslim alternatives should be supported. Another important issue was that the Residency cease requiring a special travel permit to move within Morocco, a policy which “distanced city and rural dwellers from each other and created obstacles for religious education.” Instead, identity cards should be issued for all inhabitants in the empire, which would facilitate internal circulation. In opposition to the “divide and rule” impulse of the Berber dahir, the memorandum concluded by calling for the Protectorate to “consider all inhabitants of the Empire subjects of the Sultan, excluding foreigners, and entirely submitted to his authority and jurisdiction, including religious jurisdiction as administered by the makhzen in his name, and to consider all Moroccans, except the Jews, as Muslims, that is to say that there is not a third religion for Moroccan subjects.”

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28 The Franciscans and Poor Claires had opened up a vocational school in the Berber town of Midelt in the early 1920s and another school had been opened in the Souss at Taradount.

The Latif cycle of contention against Berber decree, which culminated in the presentation of this memorandum to the Sultan and the Resident General, revealed several key elements about the mobilizing structures available to Moroccan activists in 1930, their initial strategies at framing a defense of the Moroccan national community, and the limits of their ability to motivate active resistance against French policies. First, the mosque was clearly one of the most important mobilizing resources available to these activists, providing the central institution through which the protest was mounted. One reason for this was a decision by Lyautey, soon after the founding of the Protectorate, to prohibit any non-Muslims from entering mosques in Morocco. 30 This decision helped protect mosques as open spaces for political speech, due to the fact that French personnel could not themselves enter (though the Pasha’s mokhzani police forces and informers obviously could). In Morocco, as in the rest of the Muslim world, mosques have historically functioned as a primary locus of public association in urban life, with most of the male and a significant amount of the female population gathering regularly for prayers, particularly on Friday for the main service. Despite the protestations in the Sultan’s letter, there is an implicit political dimension to this space. Prayers in the mosque are said in the name of the ruler of the community, in the equivalent to a pledge of allegiance (ba’ya). Throughout Islamic history, changing the name of that ruler has been a political statement tantamount to declaring a revolution.31 The Friday sermon, the khutba, has been another political instrument, as it constituted a primary channel through

30 After a serious bout of illness, Lyautey had refused entreaties by Fassis to go to the sanctuary of Moulay Idriss, the patron saint of the city, to ask for supplication, despite the entreaties of the local population.
31 In the tumult of Morocco’s civil war soon after the turn of the 20th century, prayers had been successively said in the name of Moulay Abd al-Aziz, Moulay Abd al-Hafidh, and then, in the south, of El-Hiba, depending on the fluctuating political allegiances of the moment.
which to communicate to the Muslim community as a whole and inherently affords itself to mobilizing this community for action.

Another structural advantage the nationalists exploited was the bifurcation of urban space between the European and indigenous quarters of cities, which, in segregating the populations, created more freedom of activity for the Moroccans within the medina. The Fes medina, in particular, presented an intimidating labyrinth to French security forces that gave the nationalists an advantage due to their own familiarity with the layout of streets and the fact that they could find refuge in multiple locations throughout the city. The nationalists also benefited from institutions such as the Qarawiyin mosque-university complex at the center of the medina, which served as a central meeting place that could accommodate crowds in the thousands. The Qarawiyin University also provided an important networking node creating strong ties between Fassi activists and like-minded youth in Marrakesh, Tetouan, and Tangier who had spent time studying Islamic sciences there in the 1920s.\(^{32}\) The Qarawiyin also linked urban centers and parts of the countryside, as a majority of the students at the university\(^{33}\) were actually *tolbas* (students of Islamic sciences) from the *bled* who would spend time at the university, boarding in the many *madrasas* encircling the main complex.\(^{34}\)

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32 These included Mokhtar Al-Soussi from Marrakesh (who was imprisoned for his activities in the 1930s); Mohamed Daoud, Abdessalam Bennouna, M’hammed Bennouna Abdelhalek Torrès from Tetouan; and Abdellah Guennoun from Tangier.
33 In 1935, out of the 800 to 900 students at the Qarawiyin, only about 150 came from Fes itself, where as the rest, the *afaqiyun* (people from the far horizon), were from the *bled*. Berque, *French North Africa; the Maghrib Between Two World Wars*, 177
On a tactical level, using the familiar Latif prayer on Fridays in mosques gave the nationalists access to the largest possible urban audience and a means to mobilize this audience using an emotionally resonant appeal that the Berber Dahir posed an imminent danger to the Muslim community in Morocco. The marches that resulted from these appeals were themselves highly public contentious performances—including the shouting of slogans, singing of songs, and chanting of the Latif again—that served the dual functions of broadcasting their grievances against the government throughout the medina and educating the population at large about the anti-Berber Dahir cause.

Organizationally, they took advantage of the relationships that had developed among the like-minded secret societies which built off a latent informal organizational structure through personal relationships developed while studying together in Fes at the Qarawiyin, at French-run colleges musulmans in Fes or Rabat, or through family and business connections. As has been mentioned, several of the activists exploited their diplomatic immunity as protégés or naturalized citizens of foreign governments—primarily Britain, Italy, and the United States—to travel among cities and openly organize the Latif with the assurance that the Protectorate authorities could not imprison them for long.

Though the Latif demonstrations died out in Morocco in September, this cycle of protests had established key parameters that influenced the trajectory of the nationalist movement in its future development. First, it had demonstrated the potential of mobilizing mass protest in cities by pitting French colonial policy against Muslim communal solidarity in Morocco. While it is not unusual or surprising that the religious
community became a primary foundation for national identity in Morocco (this is common to many nationalist movements), the specific circumstances in which the 1930 protests were mobilized directly impacted how this community was defined. From the inception in the Latif protests, Moroccan national identity was defined in direct opposition to French attempts to preserve a distinct Moroccan Berber identity through the preservation (sometimes the outright fabrication) of Berber customary law and Berber language. In opposition to this French policy, Islamic law and the Arabic language were used instead as the pillars on which the nation should be constructed. The cry “Do not separate us from our brothers, the Berbers” implied that the separation would be overcome by a uniform Islamization and Arabization of the national community. The Latif cycle also had a lasting impact as it entered the Moroccan repertoire as a classic contentious performance that would be used to commemorate not only the May 16th anniversary of the Berber Dahir, but also other dates such as March 30th, when the Treaty of Fes was signed. May 16th itself became an anniversary for the nationalists to ritually commemorate the tragedy of the Berber Dahir and to reassert their defense of Islam, the Sultan’s sovereignty, and the integrity of the Moroccan nation.

Chakib Arslan, the Pan-Islamic Anti-French Berber Policy Protest, and Transnational Dimensions of Moroccan Nationalist Contention

While the streets of Fes, Salé, Rabat, Marrakesh, and Tetouan had calmed down, the nationalists saw their anti-colonial protest gain momentum outside of Morocco in the fall of 1930 as the front for the Berber protests shifted to Paris, Geneva, Cairo, and Jerusalem. The development of an anti-French protest movement across the Muslim
world in the early 1930s, sparked by the “insidious” Berber policy, demonstrated the potential for the internationalization of anti-colonial protest within the unique transnational ecosystem that flourished in the interwar period. Parallel to the domestic structures described above (such as alumni organizations, the protégé system, mosques, etc.), this transnational context provided other informal and formal mobilizational structures that the Moroccan anti-colonial movement was able to exploit in the 1930s. The European metropole itself—in which many future nationalist leaders studied together in cities such as Paris, London, and Berlin—created an environment in which personal relationships and networks were developed that would be in place for the next several decades. This environment was also much more open for nationalist activism than the colonies. Extensive transportation connections between metropole and colony and between the Maghreb and the Middle East made travel for these activists cheap and convenient. In addition, a reliable postal system (including a separate British postal system in Morocco free of French surveillance) facilitated extensive correspondence between activists in different parts of the colonized world and the widespread dissemination of Arabic-language and European press, despite attempts to block these by colonial authorities.

The rich potential of this transnational forum for contention was remarkably displayed in the second act of the anti-Berber campaign. The main tactician, instigator, and propagandist responsible for transforming the Latif protests against the “Berber Dahir” in Morocco into a wide-scale pan-Islamic movement was Chakib Arslan, a Lebanese Druze amir, poet, and journalist based in Geneva who emerged in the interwar
period as one of the most vocal anti-colonial political activists in the Arab world. In the late 1920s, Arslan had come in contact with Moroccan students studying in Paris, including Mohammed al-Fassi, Ahmed Balafrej, and Mohammed El-Ouezzani who had been instrumental in the formation of the North African Muslim Students Association (AEMNA). In the summer of 1930, Balafrej and Al-Fassi accompanied Arslan on a tour of Spain and helped arranged for a ten-day visit to Tangier and Tetouan from August 9-19th, at the height of the Latif protests in the French zone. Having expressed support for the anti-Berber Dahir struggle during the trip and cemented relationships with more of the Tetouani nationalists, Arslan returned to Geneva and launched a massive propaganda campaign through his French-language journal *La Nation Arabe*. He also published numerous articles in several of Cairo’s major Arabic periodicals, including *al-Manar*, *al-Fath*, and *al-Zahra*, that helped make the Berber Crisis a major concern throughout the Muslim world.

In the August/September 1930 volume of *La Nation Arabe*, Arslan penned his first article about the crisis, “Tribunaux Berbères,” that blasted the Resident General, Lucien “Saint:” “Mr. Saint must justify his name and figure in this century for having achieved the work of Ferdinand and Isabella. They converted the Moors in Spain, and will he not convert the Moors in Africa?” Arslan claimed the supposed “laicist” French had taken the Berbers out from under Muslim law, prohibited the teaching of Arabic, and

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35 Chapter five of Cleveland’s biography of Arslan focuses on his influential impact on Maghribi nationalism, which was most pronounced in his relationship to Morocco’s nationalist elites. William L. Cleveland, *Islam Against the West: Shakib Arslan and the Campaign for Islamic Nationalism*, 1st ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985), 90-114

36 Arslan had started publishing the journal in March.

sent missionaries in to preach Christianity. In November, Arslan derided the “terroristic”
response of the French to the Moroccan demonstrations, describing the arrest of over 600
protesters; a bloody revolt in the city of Oujda; and continued aggression against the
southern Tafilelt, the Draa valley, and the Atlas mountains, to which the French were
sending troops and using squadrons of airplanes to bombad villages, killing women and
children. Throughout subsequent months, Arslan included articles in the journal about
the Berber policy, highlighting the crisis and Morocco and tying this threat to the well-
being of the global Muslim community.

Over the next two years, coverage of the Berber issue in Arabic language journals
in Cairo, Tunis, Tripoli, Beirut, Jaffa, Damascus, provoked a vociferous anti-French
campaign. In October 1930, at the Sidi Hamouda mosque in Tripoli, the Imam Bashir
Ben El Hamza exploited Italian leniency towards anti-French polemics to rail against the
“perfidious” Berber policy in Morocco and to encourage anti-French demonstrations.
Arabic newspapers such as Al-Raqib, Al-Atid, and Al-Adel had articles beginning in the
fall of 1930 attacking French policy in Morocco, interpreting the plight of seven million
“Berber brothers” as a threat against the Muslim religion affecting the ummah (the global
Muslim community) as a whole. Al-Adel wrote, “It is a duty for everyone who can to
stand up to France, the enemy of Islam, and oppose it with evidence, documentation, and
protests to kings, princes, to just men, and to just states: to come to the aid of their Berber
brothers at last, to defend the patrimony of the Muslim religion, and its sacred traditions and rights.”38

In November, the French began to take heat for the Berber decree in Cairo. Tunisian Destourian leaders, who had taken refuge there, sent a protest letter to the French president declaring,

We, Tunisians, Moroccans, and Tripolitanians, have the honor of bringing your attention to the following: France obtained a decree from the Sultan of Morocco according religious independence to the Muslim Berber people. This constitutes a violation of religious conventions and treaties and has the effect of separating the great Muslim Berber people from Muslim law and society.39

That month the Universal Association of Muslim Youth, headquartered in Cairo, also planned a demonstration in front of the French consulate demanding the abrogation of the Berber Dahir.40 By January, the anti-French movement had reached to the eastern edge of the Islamic world, Indonesia, as twelve Muslim associations on Java met to create the Muslim Committee for the Defense of Berbers.41

That spring in March, a seventy-six page pamphlet was published in Paris in advance of the one-year anniversary of the Berber Dahir, called Le Tempête sur le Maroc, ou les erreurs d’une ‘politique berbère.’ The piece summarized the evolution of French Berber policy in Morocco, the campaign against the 1930 “Berber Dahir,” then made recommendations, many of which reiterated demands in the earlier memorandum.

submitted to the Sultan and Resident General, for how to resolve the Berber crisis. The pamphlet was signed with a deliberate pseudonym, “Mouslim Barbari” (meaning “Berber Muslim”) and was the combined effort of several Moroccan nationalist activists studying in Paris including Ahmed Belafrej, Mohamed El Fassi, Abdelkader Benjelloun, Mohammed al-Kholti, Abdelmalek Faraj, and Mekki Naciri. The targeted audience included sympathetic members of the French Left (with whom the nationalists would cement valuable relationships over the next few years) and sympathizers in the Middle East for whom the pamphlet was also published in Cairo in Arabic.

In July 1931, the Association of Muslim Youth in Cairo organized a major event to display pan-Arab and pan-Islamic solidarity against French Berber policy. The Moroccan nationalist leader, Hassan Bouayad, spoke out against the May 16th decree together with Abdelaziz Thaalibi, the Tunisian leader, and several Egyptian, Palestinian, and Syrian nationalist activists. The speakers also denounced other French anti-Muslim policies in North Africa and railed against Dutch mistreatment of Muslims in Java.

The highpoint of pan-Islamic awareness of the Berber crisis in Morocco came in December at the Islamic Congress held in Jerusalem between the 7th and 17th.

Two Moroccans, Mekki Naciri and Mohamed Bennouna (both of whom were based in Tetouan in the northern zone) were sent as delegates to the congress, where they distributed pamphlets about the crisis and were allowed to present the plight of Moroccan

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42 The French intelligence services thought al-Fassi, the son of wealthy bourgeoisie in Fez, who had proceeded from the college musulman to study at the Faculté de Droit and École des Sciences politiques in Paris, was solely responsible for the brochure. SHD-AT, Carton 3H 247. Office de Liaison, Rabat. Renseignement: A/S Brochure anti-française concernant la prétendue évangélisation des berbères du Maroc, 21 May 1931.

43 Halstead, Rebirth of a Nation: The Origins and Rise of Moroccan Nationalism, 1912-1944, 185.

44 Ageron, Politiques Coloniales au Maghreb, p. 141-142.
Berbers to the general assembly. At the conclusion of the meetings, the Islamic Congress included a resolution demanding that the French government abrogate the decree “ruling for the Christianization of Muslim Berbers.” The gathering further strengthened networking relationships between Moroccans and leaders in the Middle East, particularly with the Palestinian leader, Haj Amin Al-Husseini, with whom several Moroccan nationalists continued to correspond into the 1940s. The Berber crisis moved Morocco, the peripheral “farthest west,” to the center of pan-Islamic concerns in the early 1930s, with its anti-French struggle considered the frontline of a conflict between Christian Europe and Islam. The anti-Berber Dahir campaign, with its emphasis on defending Arabo-Islamic culture, also tied Moroccan nationalists more closely to the Arab East. The movement developed an important transnational base for activism in the Mashriq, enjoying continued support in the Egyptian and Palestinian newspapers, which continued to rail against the Berber policy, and Cairo became a base for publishing nationalist propaganda. After World War II, these links to the Arab world proved increasingly important as Cairo transcended Paris as a base for ex-patriate Moroccan nationalist

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46 Many of these letters are collected in a file donated to the Hassaniyah Royal Archives in Rabat by the family of Chakib Arslan.

47 The campaign in the Arab press continued strong for a couple more years. An article in the Cairo paper, Al-Fateh, emphasized Morocco’s attachment to the Arab world and criticized the French attack on the country’s “Arabo-Islamic unity” and ties to other Arab and Islamic countries with an assimilationist policy in the countryside that is trying to covert Berber to Catholicism and French culture. SHD-AT, Carton 3H 247, Report from Col. Margot, Service de la Presse Musulman, to Chef du Cabinet Militaire de Monsieur le Résident General, A/S, Articles d’Al Fateh sur le Maroc, (June, 16, 1932).

48 For example, in June 1932, French intelligence services in Morocco reported that a tract against the Berber Dahir published by the Association of Muslim Youth in Cairo had been sent via English post to Abdelaziz Aboutaleb, manager of the Imprimerie Moderne in Fez (who received five hundred copies); Mohamed Akalai in Tangier received one hundred and fifty, and Mohamed Bennouna in Tetouan received three hundred and fifty. SHD-AT – Vincennes, Carton 3H 247, Office de Liaison, Rabat. Renseignements : A/S Propagande nationaliste, 23 June 1932.
activity with the founding of the Arab League in 1945 and the rise of Nasser as the leader of the pan-Arab movement in the 1950s.

*Mobilizing the Moroccan Nationalist Movement*

After the Latif cycle of contention died down in Morocco, the nationalists faced the question of how to create a sustainable movement that could achieve the reforms they desired to improve the Protectorate relationship. The next steps required developing a more formalized organizational structure, expanding the means by which they could propagate their collective action frame of defending Moroccan national unity against French colonial “divide and rule” policies, and determining more effective contentious strategies to gain more leverage against, and response from, the Residency.

Organizationally, the nationalist movement slowly progressed in the early 1930s from a tiny circle of loosely connected young activists into a more tightly organized and disciplined leadership structure. Despite their *salafiyyah*-inspired anti-Sufi polemical stance, on an organizational level they drew extensively on Morocco’s deep Sufi traditions, as well inspiration from Communist and Freemason organizational strategies related to cell-based structures and secret societies.49 The result was a hybrid structure

49 Connections between freemasonry, early *Salafiyyah*, and Egyptian nationalism have been explored in more depth than those in the Maghrīb (A. Kudsi-Zadeh, “Afghani and Freemasonry in Egypt,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 92, No. 1, (Jan.-Mar. 1972), 25-35; Karim Wissa, “Freemasonry in Egypt, 1798-1921,” *British Society for Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2, (1989), 143-161). But, Freemason orders had been established in Morocco since before the Protectorate was established (in Tangier in 1891 and in Casablanca in 1910). Several of the Tetouani activists joined the Freemasons in the 1930s, though I have not found evidence those in the French zone joined. In terms of relations to Communist Organizations, Moroccan nationalists studying in France were in contact with members of the French Communist party in the 1920s and 1930s. While these contacts were important, the Moroccan nationalists were perhaps not as closely connected as Messali Hadj and the early Etoile Nord-Africaine in the 1920s.
that created a uniquely Moroccan form of nationalist movement organization. At the end of the summer of 1930, the inner circle involved in mobilizing the Latif protests appropriated a Sufi-oriented name, calling themselves the Zawiya.Outside of this circle, the nationalists created another ring of membership that was simply called the Taifa, or group. In 1933, the public arm of the movement was labeled, Kutlat al-Amal al-Watani, the National Action Block, which in French was known as the “Comité d’Action Marocaine.”

Membership in the taifa required an oath of allegiance and the paying of dues. For the oath, a copy of the Qu’ran was placed on a table, the prospective member put his finger on the verse “Qad-sami,” and then said, “I swear by God and the Quran that I will follow the orders of the Wataniyin.” The nationalist movement also developed Sufi-like overtones of a master-disciple relationship, especially in rural areas, as it attempted to compete with Qadiriyya and Tijanniya Sufi orders. Following the split in the movement in 1936, those following Allal al-Fassi were referred to sometimes as the Allaliyin, with al-Fassi being called Sheikh Allal or Haj Allal.

In the northern zone, though the Tetouani leadership attempted, to the extent possible, to coordinate with the Kutlat, they also created parallel organizational

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50 Zawiya literally means “corner,” referring to the corner of the mosque where a teacher would teach his pupils. As Sufi orders became established, the word came to signify the physical building, or lodge, of the movement, and even to the movement itself, being used along with tariqa (or way). In the Moroccan context, all of these levels of meaning were implied for the nationalist “zawiya.”
51 Halstead includes detailed lists breaking down the membership and activities of the Zawiya leadership in different Moroccan cities in Chapter 11. Rebirth, 191-197
52 Wataniyin (nationalists) was the name given to the main branch of the movement that followed Allal al-Fassi following the split with Ouezzani. The description of the oath was given during interrogations following riots in Fes in 1937. SHD-AT 3H 250, “Extraits des déclarations du nommé Taieb Ben Hassan Janati,” (November 1, 1937).
structures. In 1932, the new Republican regime that had taken power in Spain allowed the creation of the Hispano-Muslim Association (al-Jamiya al-Ishaniya al-Islamiya), which was led by Abdessalaem Bennouna, Mohamed Daoud, and Abdelhalek Torrès. Because the political opportunity context fluctuated differently according to the relative liberality of the French and Spanish administrators and according to shifting tensions between the two countries, the two nationalist leaderships developed on different trajectories, though there were always points of contact and communication between them.

Another important organizational initiative during the early phase of the nationalist movement was focused on cultivating a “national spirit” among the youth. Though not formally affiliated with the Kutlat, the Free School movement (“free” meaning free of government control) was a vital structure through which the collective action frame of the leadership was propagated. The Free Schools, the first of which was opened in 1919, were a Moroccan attempt to create a competitive alternative to the Franco-Muslim schools founded by the Direction of Public Instruction. By teaching Arabic and Islam as a part of a modern curriculum, these schools played an important role in cultivating a cultural sense of national identity among urban youth.54 While the political dimension of the Free Schools has been overemphasized, they did play an important role in providing a parallel Arabic educational system (which by the 1940s had come under the administration of the Grand Vizir) and laying a cultural foundation

54 In the mid-1930s there were 5000 Moroccan students enrolled, and by the late 1940s this number had increased to 25,000. See John Damis, "The Free-School Movement in Morocco, 1919-1970." (Ph.D. dissertation, Tufts University, 1970), 240.
“instilling national spirit—feeling of patriotism and a sense of Moroccan nationhood—in the students.”

Many of the activists involved in the early years of the movement had taught in the Free Schools, were involved in founding them, and by the 1940s, several of the major nationalist leaders had been educated in the Free Schools. Alongside these schools, the nationalists were also affiliated with the creation of a Muslim corollary to the *Éclaireurs Français*, creating the first Moroccan Scout troop in Rabat-Salé in the summer of 1933. Several more branches were created in subsequent years, and the Moroccan scouts provided a valuable group of motivated ground troops who actively participated in protests, marching through streets singing nationalist hymns, distributing tracts, and writing anti-French graffiti on walls. On the Franco-Muslim side of the educational system, the nationalists had strategic ties with the leadership of the alumni organizations networking Moroccan graduates of the elite *collèges musulmans* in Fes and Rabat, which provided another important structure through which the nationalists attempted to mobilize the resistance movement.

In addition to this organizational development, the nationalists also continued to hone and modify their collective action frame defending national identity and resisting French colonial policies which threatened Moroccan unity. These framing processes were carried out on two levels: 1) an explicit exposition of claims articulated within the

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55 Ibid., 242. Damis disagrees with Halstead, Rézette, and Julien, arguing they the Free Schools were not used to politically indoctrinate or recruit members, but that they did have a vital role in propagating a cultural frame of Moroccan nationalism.

56 The “Moroccan Scouts” were started by Ahmed ben Maati Bouhlal in August 1933 in Rabat-Salé, had ninety members. For French analysis of the “threat” of Moroccan scouting, from the perspective of the mid-1940s, see, M. Goidan, “Le Scoutisme musulman au Maroc,” *CHEAM*, No. 944, October 1946.

57 *L’Action du Peuple* reported in the September 15, 1933 edition on the scandalous treatment of the Moroccan Scouts who had gathered to welcome the sultan back from trip to France at the Trois-Portes and then the Residency sent the motorcade through another gate. The scouts were also frequently mentioned in security reports about nationalist demonstrations in Rabat/Salé and Fes.
nationalist press that had been established first in 1932 in Paris and later in Fes and Rabat, and 2) a construction of national identity on a symbolic level through the invention of public commemorative spectacles and the staging of mass protests. While there was significant overlap between these forums for framing, it is also important to recognize the different purposes of the two methods on the domestic and international levels in terms of message and audience.

In terms of print media, the nationalists were severely handicapped in creating the type of mass reading public described by Benedict Anderson as an important precondition for imagining a national community, due to two major factors: 1) literacy levels in Morocco were extremely limited, a figure that negligible spending on indigenous education by the Franco-Moroccan Makhzen did little to increase, and 2) the Residency strictly limited freedom of the press through most of the Protectorate period by heavily censoring or completely forbidding the publishing of French and Arabic materials at different points. These two factors were linked because the French administrators, implicitly and explicitly, had no interest in fostering a mass Arabic reading public, and, in addition to simply not funding the expansion of Arabic education, created legal barriers to the publication of Arabic materials. An April 27, 1914 dahir created a legal foundation guiding how the press would be regulated under the Protectorate, giving the Residency expansive controls. The edict forbade "any attack on the rights and power of the French Republic in the Sharifian Empire," and it also gave the Residency the right to forbid the circulation of any foreign journal in the Protectorate. The Arabic and French press in Morocco were differentiated, and any Arabic language publications, even if published in
Morocco, were considered “foreign” press that could be prohibited by special decree by the Resident General. In 1920, another dahir stipulated that the founding of an Arabic language publication required an (always revocable) viziriel order, creating another hurdle to the creation of the Arabic press.\(^{58}\) Later dahirs gave the Residency additional powers to forbid any publications necessary to protect order and security.\(^{59}\)

For more than twenty years, these policies prevented virtually any Arabic language periodicals from being published in Morocco. The only exceptions were Al-Sa’ada, the official Arabic journal of the Franco-Moroccan Makhzen, and the Arabic version of the Bulletin Officiel, the Al-Jarida Al-Rasmiya which began in 1913.\(^{60}\) Over time, almost all other Arabic press coming from the east had to be circulated clandestinely after it had been banned by the Residency. In contrast, the French press in Morocco exploded during the first decades of the Protectorate with papers being started in all of the major cities, many of which were under the control of the French Mas family, including L’Echo du Maroc (1913), Le Petit Marocain (1920), La Vigie Marocaine (1908), Le Courrier du Maroc (Fes, 1929).\(^{61}\)

Due to these strictures on the creation of an indigenous press within the French zone, the Zawiya supported the launching of the first major nationalist periodical,


\(^{59}\) These include the June 26, 1936 dahir and October 18, 1937 decrees.

\(^{60}\) The bi-weekly *As-Sa’ada* was first published by the French Legation in Tangier in 1905 and was then transported to Rabat in 1912, where it was under the control of the Direction des Affaires Indigènes. Christine Souriau, *La presse, maghrébine : Libye, Tunisie, Maroc, Algérie : évolution historique, situation en 1965, organisation et problèmes actuels* (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1975), 86-87.

Maghreb, in Paris in 1932. A major goal of the revue, the editorial board of which included sympathetic French leftists including Robert Jean Longuet, was to argue the case of the Moroccan nationalists to a metropolitan audience largely ignorant of and indifferent to events in the empire.62 The journal was also distributed widely (before being banned) in Morocco. In 1933, a second paper (also in French because the Residency denied permission for an Arabic version) was founded in Fes, L’Action du Peuple, with Mohamed El-Ouezzani as editor-in-chief. L’Action du Peuple was aimed at three audiences: Moroccans (French-speaking), the Protectorate authorities, and French colons.63 Moroccan nationalists also had the freedom to air opinions in other Paris-based journals that were then smuggled into the country, often through the British post, via a network of nationalist friends in Tangier and Tetouan including Abdel Khalek Torrès and Mohamed Daoud.64

The activists in the northern zone enjoyed a much more liberal publishing environment as the Spanish authorities authorized the creation of several nationalist papers in Arabic and Spanish. In Tetouan, the first nationalist periodical, as-Salam, appeared in October 1933 and was joined by al-Hayat, in March 1934. Both of these were circulated clandestinely in the French zone where the freedom of the Moroccan

62 Robert Jean Longuet wrote the following about the metropole, "In France itself, in spite of the ignorance and indifference that a great number of citizens manifest regarding the problems of our colonies and Protectorate countries, despite the orders of silence and the policies of the ostrich, practiced in high places, writers and esteemed journalists have clearly expressed their worries inspired by the new Berber Policy of the Residency." Maghreb, No. 11, May-June, 1933, p. 1.
63 In its inaugural issue, Ouezzani writes, “Our journal will have three categories of readers: Our compatriots who will find here the exposition of their ideas and desires; the local and metropolitan authorities will find the necessary illumination to accomplish their task; and the French living in Morocco will find indispensable information relevant to all that touches the autochthones that form nearly the entire population of the country.” “A nos lectures,” L’Action du Peuple, No. 1, August 4, 1933.
press had quickly been revoked. *Maghreb* was first banned in September 1932 and then the Residency permanently banned its circulation in the Protectorate in 1933 (the journal was discontinued in January 1935). The Fes-based *L’Action du Peuple* was shut down immediately after the controversial, and exceptionally enthusiastic, reception of the Sultan in the medina during his official visit to the city in May 1934.

During this brief window of opportunity in which they were able to openly print newspapers and journals in Morocco and in Paris, the nationalists began to elaborate their platform, systematizing a collective action frame directed at pressuring the French to reform colonial policy in Morocco and reaffirming their unitary construction of Moroccan national identity. On the reform side, articles criticized colonial exploitation in the Protectorate including economic and legal inequalities between Europeans and Moroccans. A section of *Maghreb* and *L’Action du Peuple* was devoted to defending the rights of the “fellah” against the expropriation of his land by colons and decrying unfair taxation burdens. Sections of the papers also followed developments in Spain regarding the northern zone and devoted extensive coverage to concurrent struggles elsewhere in the colonized Arab world, particularly in Tunisia, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine. Another question taken up in the press was the place of Morocco’s Jews in the nation, a question that became more urgent with the rise of Zionist activity in the Protectorate and efforts by some French Jews to promote assimilation among the Moroccan Jewish population.  

One major concern that drew the nationalists’ ire was the failure of France’s

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65 Chapter 4 examines this dialogue in the 1930s in depth.
education policy in Morocco. Authors lamented the tremendous disparity in investment in “indigenous” education in comparison with the budget allocation for European and Jewish schools in Morocco and criticized the marginalization of instruction in Arabic and Islam in the educational system. Various authors also pointed out that the Protectorate administrators, though failing to provide enough educational opportunities, then placed unreasonable restrictions on Muslim initiatives to found more modern (Free) schools and prevented Muslim parents from getting passports to send their children to schools in Egypt, Palestine, and Syria. Educational reform and judicial reform were the top priorities in the nationalists’ reforms agenda.

Identity was also incorporated explicitly in the nationalists’ collective action frame directed at reforming the Protectorate partnership. A majority of the articles which appeared in the nationalist press over these two years were directly focused on a cultural and religious defense of Moroccan national identity to justify complaints against France’s colonial infringement on Moroccan sovereignty. In the first issue of *Maghreb*, an article summed up the reformist agenda of the Moroccan nationalists, “to modernize while

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**Footnotes:**

66 Abdellatif Sbihi, one of the instigators of the Berber protests, pointed out that the Protectorate education budget allocated 55 million francs for the European and Jewish population, which consisted of 300,000 people with 41,000 students. For the entire Muslim population of over eight million, there were only 10,000 students in the system and only 17 million francs allocated. Abdellatif Sbihi, “Le problème scolaire au Maroc,” *Maghreb*, pg. 19-20.

67 In the same article, Sbihi complained that only 2 to 3 hours were dedicated to Arabic and Islam in the Franco-Arab schools and none was dedicated to the subjects in the Berber schools.

68 An article in *Maghreb* in November 1932, “Pour la sécurité de l’œuvre française faut-il garder les marocains dans l’ignorance?,” complained there were just two primary Franco-Arabic schools in Rabat. In Fez, where there were 120,000 Muslims, there were only three primary schools. It also cited a recent example in which Rabati notables visited the Bureau of the Region to get passports to send children to France or to the Middle East for school. They met with Brunot, the director of education, who tried to persuade them that the idea was dangerous, that education in France was basically pagan and would corrupt the religious sentiment of their children. At the end of the conversation, the article quoted him as saying “That which you are, you are very well, you do not have need for anything else.’ Then, a notable present incisively responded, “Then what did France come here to do?”
remaining ourselves,” saying,

Certainly we would like to pursue the modernization of our country, to take that which is
good from Western modern culture, but we hold on equally to our past, our traditions,
and will never let go of the strong flame of Islam which is so strongly planted in the heart
of Barbary. If modernization requires sacrificing our own personality, it is natural that
we would not want it. In sum, we wish to modernize while remaining ourselves.69

France’s Berber policy continued to be the lightning rod for the nationalists’
criticism of how the Protectorate nation-building project had gone wrong, and they were
fixated on deconstructing the Arab-Berber dichotomy expressed in the French
construction of “Two Moroccos” in order to reconstruct their own definition of the
Moroccan nation. The strategy that emerged in this first wave of nationalist press to
counter the ideological basis of the colonial state involved articulating a historical
defense of the country’s Islamization and Arabization, attacking the moral basis of
Berber customary law while defending the superiority of shari’a, and arguing that the
state should officially support Arabization and Islamization policies.

On the historical front, numerous articles reaffirmed the firm attachment of the
Berbers, for over a millennium, to Islam and Arabic. An article titled “The Berbers and
the Gauls” decried the “double-perfidy” of considering the Berbers as independent of
Arabs and as non-Muslims, using a quote from Gautier’s famous colonial history of
North Africa, Les siècles obscurs du Maghreb to defend their Islamization and
Arabization:

For ten or twelve centuries the Berbers have been Islamized and, for the most part Arabized, in their manners and language. This is evidenced in the upsurge of the Islamic faith which, since the first years of the Arab occupation of North Africa, carried the Berber armies of the general Tariq to Spain across the strait that bears his name, “Gibr-al-Tar.”

In the May 1933 edition of *Maghreb*, which was entirely devoted to commemorating the anniversary of the issuance of the “Berber Dahir,” Mohamed Lyazidi contributed an essay with an extensive rebuttal of the historical presuppositions of the French Berber policy and the dahir that consecrated the legal foundation for this policy. He cites an article by another French colonial scholar, Michaux-Bellaire, in the *Archives Marocains* to refute the claim by the Protectorate authorities that the dahir only consecrated a pre-existing status, that the Berbers had never been under the Moroccan Sultan or recognized a law other than their *‘urf*, or customs. He then points out that Idriss I himself (founder of the first Muslim Moroccan dynasty) was welcomed by Berbers as a descendant of the prophet and used Berber soldiers to conquer the plains and mountains of Morocco, spreading the doctrine of Mohammed. Furthermore, he pointed out that the most glorious periods of *Islamic* civilization in Morocco were instigated by Berber (the Almoravids and Almohads) not Arab dynasties, and that it was the Almohads that achieved the political and religious unification of the country. He also argues the *blad al-makhzen* and *blad as-siba* had no long-term historical basis, saying instead that, "The division of this country into *bled makhzen* (the submissive zone) and *bled siba* (the unsubmissive zone) can only be applied to a relatively recent time-period, that is to say the era when the Great

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European powers began, with scheming plots, to foment troubles in order to justify their intervention.”72

In a salafi-inspired argument against Berber customary law, he critiques the unequal treatment of women in ‘orf and defends the superiority of shari’a. Under the customary law, he points out that women and girls have no inheritance rights, widows lose all property to the husband’s family, and the rape of a virgin or married woman results in a paltry indemnity owed to the father or husband.73 Despite French claims they are simply respecting the tribes rights and not imposing the “foreign” jurisdiction of Islamic law, Lyazidi declares the dahir is, in truth, part of an overall plan to assimilate the Berber and that the policy had a strong Catholic dimension encouraging proselytization.

A significant amount of energy was directed at discrediting customary law and defending Islamic law. A 1932 article titled, “Consequences of the Berber Dahir,” began by telling the story of a mokhzani soldier assigned to the Pasha of Fes who had given his daughter in marriage to a man in Khenifra, a Berber town in the Middle Atlas 160 kilometers down the Fez-Marrakesh road. The son-in-law died, and when the father went to arrange his daughter’s inheritance, he was told her status had been determined according to the “prehistoric customs of the Berbers that do not recognize the right of the wife to inherit any of her husband’s or his parents’ property.” The article’s author exclaimed:

And thus, thanks to the Berber policy of Mr. Saint, a woman of Fez, a city which is not part of the Berber sector, finds herself dispossessed of her rights on the basis of the heritage of her husband who is a Muslim like her. This is the organizational logic of the

72 Ibid., p. 9, 11.
73 Lyazidi relates that the indemnity was 50 douros (250 francs) for a virgin and 75 douros (375 francs) for a married woman.
justice system in which there is a dual jurisdiction between Arabs and Berbers in a country in which all of the elements of the country intermingle and can in no way lead isolated lives.74

Exasperation with the Protectorate’s fragmented legal system, arising out of indignation about the Berber Dahir, was a recurrent theme in the nationalist press. Another author explains:

Our ideal, we Moroccans, Muslim and Jewish, is to have a single justice, which covers personal status, whether Islamic or Israelite. We do not want any differentiation according to race. We have at present, jurisdictions for Jews, for Berber, for Arabs, and for the European elements, in addition to the consulary jurisdictions. The Arab, in the face of this diversity of tribunals, loses his head and does know not where to go.75

For the nationalists, the clear solution was a concerted effort to reform shari’a and apply it within a unified judiciary. In a letter reprinted from a French paper, Le Cri Marocain, and signed “Muslim,” a reader attacked the Berber Dahir for trying to introduce the French legal code in Morocco and defended the relevance of Islamic law, saying:

Our law is neither archaic, nor absurd. On the contrary, it agrees perfectly with the spirit of modern times. Our justice only needs to be brought up to date and cleared of certain influences that paralyze its action and soil its reputation. Muslim law needs to be studied carefully. It needs to be codified. Only a truly competent, truly independent commission could conduct such a noble enterprise.76

In addition to judicial reform, the other clear political goal of the nationalists was to buttress the role of Arabic as the official language of the Protectorate. An article from January 1933 complained that the so-called “Franco-Arab” schools in fact were basically just “French,” as only one to two hours a week were devoted to Arabic instruction. In the collèges musulmans in Fez and Rabat, initially sciences, history, and geography were taught in Arabic; in the 1920s, however, the new Director of Public Instruction, Brunot, 

74 “Conséquences du dahir berbère,” Maghreb, October 1932, pg. 6-7.
75 “La politique berbère,” L’Action du Peuple, August 18, 1933.
began to apply reforms decreasing the amount of Arabic instruction to only seven out of
thirty weekly hours. The author also criticized the fact that the colonial state created by
the French also functioned almost exclusively in French, listing a litany of examples: a
Moroccan needed an interpreter to explain letters, circularies, and other paperwork from
the different administration offices which led to the creation of a burgeoning translation
industry in the medina which was prone to abuse; at the post office, all of the signs were
in French and the address had to be written in French (a Moroccan could pay 10 centimes
to have it translated); the State Bank of Morocco only used French (though it legally had
to provide translators); and passports issued by the Residency were completely in French,
though the author pointed out that those in Tunisia, Tanger, and the Spanish zone were
bilingual. The author pointed out that a Moroccan traveling in Middle East or in Europe
had to do so in complete ignorance of what their passport says. Furthermore, he
complained the names of streets in cities are in French, and the major routes between
cities also had exclusively French signage. The signs in railroad cars, though in both
languages, are written in terrible Arabic. Two city names had been changed to French
(Sidi Kacem to Petit Jean and Kenitra to Port Lyautey). At the end, the author concluded
by saying “It would take too long to enumerate all off the cases in which the use of
Arabic has been flawed, and it is enough to say that a foreigner traveling in Morocco
would have no idea that he was in a country for which Arabic was the mother tongue of
its inhabitants.”

77 Abou Abdillah, “Comment le protectorat respecte notre langue,” Maghreb, January 1933, 30-32.
The denigration of Arabic was a symptom, diagnosed by the nationalists, of a general policy orientation on the part of the Residency that was antithetical to protecting Moroccan sovereignty. In another article, Ouezzani demonstrated how the Berber Dahir was fundamentally opposed to “protecting” the authority of the Sultan. The Sultan, particularly in the regions “dites de coutume berbère,” had been left with only nominal authority in both the religious and temporal sense, with no qadis or judges to apply Islamic law or decrees emanating from the makhzen. According to Ouezzani, the French excuse that they had an obligation to respect the rights of the tribes that submitted to them was ludicrous, since the “pacification” had precisely been a “formal engagement taken by the French government to aid our Maghzen in reestablishing order and tranquility over dissident provinces.” It made no sense to sanction the customs of the insurgents which had only been necessary because the situation in the country had been “unfavorable to the installation of an institution applying Muslim law there as in the rest of the country.” The raison d’etre of the Protectorate regime and the pacification campaign was to extend the authority of the Sultan and the Makhzen. Ouezzani concludes by saying that “All Berber policy—not only the Dahir of May 16, 1930—has no reason to exist because it is illegally established and contrary to the obligations guaranteed and the fundamental rights of the Moroccan state, which have not ceased despite the regime installed in Morocco.”

Ouezzani appealed to the best of French liberal idealism in several of his articles, claiming that the direct rule in Morocco, which contravened the international treaty founding the Protectorate, was not used to impose “peace, liberty, and progress for the

profit of the Maghrebi people,” but to impose terrible oppression based on exploitation and anti-liberalism that divided Morocco into two classes: “It has been characterized by a policy of two weights and two measures, in other words, by a two-headed policy, applied on one side to the French and Europeans as privileged elements, and on the other, to Moroccans who are considered as a servant class for the needs of the other caste of lords.”79

For the 1934 issue on the Berber Dahir anniversary, Ouezzani penned a lengthy article commemorating the “twentieth anniversary of the Berber policy (1914-1934),” which he called a “war machine” against the treaties signed by France and Morocco; against the Sultan and the Moroccan government which the French state contracted an agreement with; against Islam, which for twelve centuries has been the religion of nearly all the Moroccan people; against the Arabic language and culture; and against order and unity within Moroccan society. He defended the Sultan, saying he had been hostile to the Berber policy but had been outmaneuvered by the Residency,80 concluding that: “This is nothing but a Machiavellian colonial project. It symbolizes the abominable crusade carried out by the imperialists and priests against Islam and Arab culture. It constitutes a war engine against Sharifian power and the Moroccan people.”81

The conflation of the Residency’s Berber policy and the church’s hopes in Morocco was also a major theme in the press. For several editions beginning in August

80 Another example of this sentiment was a letter to the Maghreb editor by a Moroccan who stated, “We are convinced that the young leader of the Muslim community did not grasp the heavy responsibility which was put on him.” “Pour le France et le Maroc contre le dahir berbère,” December 1932.
81 Mohamed El Ouezzani, “20ème anniversaire de la politique berbère (1914-1934),” Maghreb, May-June 1934, 10.
1933, the Fez-based paper, *L’Action du Peuple*, had a series called “L’Action Catholique,” that recounted the Catholic evangelistic efforts in Morocco and reprinted inflammatory quotes about Christianizing the Berbers in Catholic literature. The first articles traced the history of Franciscan mission initiatives in the 17th century and then focused on their “continuation” in the appointment of Franciscan chaplains during the 1907 campaign in the Chaouia hinterland of Morocco, by General Amade, a fervent Catholic. Quotes from the journal “Le Maroc Catholique” and other publications of the church about hopes for Berber conversions were included, as well as news about the creation of Catholic dispensaries and schools for children in the Atlas and the Souss. Another series titled, “The Crusade against Islam,” began in January 1934 and pointed out that the rosary prayer in Morocco called for “the establishment and extension of the reign of God in Morocco” and for the “conversion of Muslims.” The section also quoted passages directly concerning Catholic “designs” on the Berber population, including one from the September 1927 *Revue d’Histoire des Missions*, page 327, that said:

> Let Christianity act on the Berber soul as it formerly acted on our soul, not by helping its action through brutal means, not even by official means, but just by not frustrating it. This would without doubt make the dissolution of the Arab bloc much easier, and by extension the Islam of our North Africa, to the aid of our civilization and our race.  

The unity of a united Moroccan Muslim bloc was the central concern for the nationalists as they framed Moroccan national identity. In another article in the May 1933 special issue commemorating the third anniversary of the Berber Dahir, Ahmed Belafrej crystallizes this definition of the nation:

> History offers us proof of the existence of a national Moroccan spirit which was formed in the course of trials and in battle against the Christian Portuguese and Spanish

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kingdoms and against the Turks, Muslims who nevertheless harassed the country without respite...Why choose to use the principle of race in order to break us up and divide us? We are all more or less Berbers, some more Arabized than the others; the Arab element in Morocco is tiny. But one fact is certain—that all of Morocco is Muslim...One cannot assert that Morocco is a Berber country colonized and oppressed by the Arabs and that France has arrived today to charitably liberate it. For, Muslim Morocco has always been independent. From the earliest time in which the Berbers chose Idriss as Sultan and who never had, we are certain, a single connection to the Caliphs.

This definition of the Moroccan nation pointedly subverts the French construct of “Two Moroccos,” subsuming ethnicity and race with religious identity: Morocco is Arab and Berber, but above all, Muslim. Belafrej finishes with the following incisive and prophetic analysis of the Berber policy, “the Berber policy can have but one result which is to give Moroccans themselves a consciousness and to unify them in an instinctive defense reaction. For, they now feel the danger that menaces them. The “montagne berbere” is not a farm laboratory where the imperialists can experiment with their dangerous theories. There is an economic factor that trumps them. Sooner or later the Berbers will come down to the plains and learn to speak Arabic.”

In the two years in which the nationalists were able to propagate their message in a print media, the outlines of their anti-colonial reformist collective action frame were hammered out. Beginning in the fall of 1933, a committee was appointed to draft a document summarizing the reform agenda of the Kutlat, which included members of the Zawiya such as Mohamed Lyazidi, Omar Abdeljalil, and Mohamed Hassan al-Ouezzani. In December 1934, the Kutlat presented the Plan de Reformes Marocaines to the French Foreign Minister, the Sultan and the Resident General, Henri Ponsot.

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83 Ahmed Belafrej, "Et maintenant?," Maghreb, No. 11, May-June 1933, p. 50-51.
84 Halstead, Rebirth, p. 212.
85 Al-Fassi, Independence Movements, p. 165.
The plan epitomized the reformist agenda of the Moroccan nationalists at this point, accepting the Protectorate formula but pleading with the “Protector” to do a better job.\footnote{Al-Fassi explains, “The reform program was an ingenious stratagem to reconcile the existing treaties with the interests of the county, in the economic section, for example, the Kutlah advocates the open-door policy and free trade, in accordance with the resolutions of the Algeciras Conference. This platform was designed to appeal to the support of the left-wing parties in France and to the signatories of the Algeciras international conference; at the same time, it was agreeable to the best interests of Morocco under the circumstances.” \textit{The Independence Movements}, 140.} The preamble articulated grievances against the Protectorate administration, attacking French colonial policy in Morocco as racist, unjust, anti-liberal, colonizing, and assimilationist. It then asserted the plan could ameliorate these failures of the Protectorate system.\footnote{Comité d’Action Marocaine, \textit{Plan de Reformes Marocaines}, (Paris, 1934), i-xvi.} Further sections offered recommendations for political, judicial, social and economic reform. The \textit{Plan de Réformes} also, in a later section, called for the renunciation of the Berber policy, a ban on Christian proselytization, and the institution of Arabic as the official language. The tepid response of the Residency to the plan and the failure of the French government in Paris to respond to the reforms proposed by the nationalists created a crisis for the nationalist movement leadership, who had invested so much hope in this strategy. By the beginning of 1935, the nationalist press had also been totally shut down. No papers would be authorized for another two years, creating an opportunity context in which the non-print media strategies for defining the nation become even more central to the nationalists’ strategy.

These non-print methods, which involved staging large-scale demonstration, were, in many ways, far more important to the task of connecting elite efforts to frame a definition of the nation to a mass Moroccan audience. In Chapter 1 we examined how Lyautey reinvented the pomp and ceremony of the makhzen in the \textit{hedya} ritual and the
stylization of palace protocol, which extended to redesigning a new Sharifian flag for the empire and writing a national anthem. In the early 1930s, the nationalists began inventing their own counter Symbols of Moroccan national unity and sovereignty by staging country wide annual commemorative spectacles on significant dates that became identified with national resistance. As we have already seen in the analysis of the nationalist press, one of the most important of these nationalist “holidays” was the May 16th anniversary of the Berber Dahir. In addition to the special issues of papers and journals devoted to the Berber policy (until the publications were closed down), the day was also marked by large gatherings at the mosques to perform the Latif prayer, stores were closed in the medina, petitions were circulated against the Berber decree, and scores of telegrams protesting the Berber Dahir were sent to French officials in Rabat and in Paris.

The Berber issue continued to be a powerful means by which to fuel demonstrations against the French authorities, particularly in Fes. Following the May commemoration in 1932 of the Berber Dahir, nationalist activists continued to use the decree to agitate the medina into the summer. In a July security report, it was noted that menacing letters had been sent to the Grand Vizier El Mokri, to the Pasha El Baghdadi in Fes, and to the leader of one of the largest Sufi brotherhoods, Abdelhai el Kettani, “considered as one of the greatest enemies of Islam and of Fassis” by the nationalists. Strong measures were taken to keep a lid on the unrest, with cannons pointed at medina, heavily armed troops patrolling the streets, and new police posts installed at the gates and at strategic points inside the medina. Hassan Bouayad took a leading role in attacking the
Protectorate administration in a speech given at the Qarawiyin mosque, linking the violations of the Berber Dahir, unfair taxation of the Fez bourgeoisie, the Pasha’s brutality, exploitation of the city’s water supply by colons, and a systematic negligence of the medina in favor of the ville nouvelle. After the speech, the crowd recited the Latif prayer.88

In addition to the Berber Decree anniversary, the second major invented nationalist tradition was Throne Day (Aid al-‘Arsh in Arabic and Fête du Trône in French), a commemorative celebration begun in 1933 of the day Mohamed ben Youssef succeeded his father as Sultan of Morocco (November 18th, 1927.) On October 20, 1933, L’Action du Peuple carried a large picture of the Sultan on the front page and announced an initiative to celebrate the anniversary of the accession of Sidi Mohamed to the Sharifian throne by instituting the Aid al-‘Arsh. An organizing committee was formed, including the salafi former Minister of Justice, Al-Dukkali, and plans were made to have nation-wide celebrations including the decoration of streets and markets with Moroccan flags, the closure of government institutions, and official ceremonies.89 Despite a meager celebration in 1933, Throne Day began to take off after 1934 and became one of the major holidays on the Moroccan calendar. Protectorate authorities sought to co-opt the event to symbolically reinforce the appearance of the Protectorate partnership, but the nationalists continued to be able to use the day’s sanctioned banquets and official gatherings to reiterate their own program.

88 “L’agitation à Fès,” Maghreb, July 1932, p. 34.
89 In true Moroccan fashion, a ceremonial tea was schedule for 4 pm in Fez.
One of the major effects of the establishment of Throne Day was that it firmly tied the nationalists’ construction of Morocco to the Alawite monarchy, and specifically to the fortunes of Moulay Mohamed. Al-Fassi reports part of the reasoning behind creating the Throne Day was to reaffirm the nationalist movement’s allegiance to him to counter efforts by the Residency to convince the Sultan that the National Bloc wanted to restore Moulay Abd al-Hafidh to the throne. By creating the Throne Day celebration, the nationalists also empowered the Sultan, whom they began to refer to with the more “modern” title, “King,” creating a potential outlet for his own efforts to mobilize the nation. It became tradition for the King to give a speech to the nation for the feast, which was published in the Arabic government journal, Es-Saada, and in the French press; later the speech was broadcast live on Radio Maroc. In the 1940s, when the King began to take leadership of the independence movement after the war, the Throne Day speeches became a strategic opportunity for him to communicate directly to the Moroccan people, reinforcing his symbolic importance in defining the Moroccan national community.

The symbolic potential of the King for the nationalist cause was clearly demonstrated during his official visit to Fez in May 1934. Massive crowds turned out in the medina, lining the streets on his route, which had been decorated with Moroccan flags and emblems, to visit the mausoleum of Moulay Idriss, the founder and patron saint of the city. French officials were disturbed by the enthusiasm of the crowds, many of whom were shouting, “Long live the King! Long live the Crown Prince! Long live Morocco!”

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and “Down with France!” and singing a nationalist hymn composed for the occasion. According to al-Fassi, when the King reached the *hurm* (the sacred space around the mausoleum), the crowd “broke into tumultuous applause joined with nationalist chanting.”\(^{91}\) Citing the unruly nature of the crowd (in addition to the anti-French chants, they claimed a French tricolor hung in the Jewish Mellah had been torn down), the Residency urged the King to order the arrest of the Kutlat leadership and to suspend his itinerary on Friday, which included returning to the center of the medina to pray at the Qarawiyyin mosque. In the end, the King left Fez early, returning to Rabat on Friday morning. Against French attempts to portray the nationalists as rabble-rousers who had threatened the well-being of the Sultan in stoking the crowd’s fervor, the nationalists issued a statement reaffirming their loyalty, signed by the nine leaders of the movement and sent as a telegram to the Resident General Ponsot and the Sultan. The front page of the next week’s *L’Action du Peuple* was dedicated to revealing the true facts about the May 10\(^{th}\) and carried a copy of the nationalists’s telegram which said, “We confirm our confidence in the Medina assuring you that it intends for the Sovereign to remain the friend of France.” \(^{92}\) While the King met with the Kultah leaders who had signed the telegram on May 14\(^{th}\) to assure them that he had left the city, not in anger, but to prevent a violent confrontation in the medina, the Residency cracked down on the movement by suspending publication of *L’Action du Peuple* in Fez and prohibiting the entry of *Maghreb* from Paris.

\(^{91}\) Ibid., 133.

\(^{92}\) The telegram was signed by all of the major leaders of the movement including Mohamed El Ouezzani, Mekki Naciri, Allal al Fassi, Omar Abdeljalil, Ahmed Mekouar, Ahmed Bouayad, Driss Berrada, Abdel Aziz Ben Driss, and Hachemi Filali. *L’Action du Peuple*, May 13\(^{th}\), 1934.
In inventing ritual commemorations of anniversaries (the Berber Dahir, Throne Day, the signing of the Treaty of Fes) and taking advantage of opportunities such as an official visit by the King, the nationalists reached a mass urban audience with a symbolic construction of Moroccan identity. These events were also linked to improvised new modes of contention seeking to mobilize that audience (which was primarily urban in the 1930s) to become active in marches, sign petitions, contribute to collections for the families of protestors that had been imprisoned, close one’s store in support of the event, boycott certain products, or secretly distribute literature or put up posters on the medina walls.

On this last point, a necessary mode of contention was to devise ways to bypass restrictions imposed by the Protectorate on how the Kutlat could communicate to the Moroccan people. After the Moroccan nationalist press was shut down, forbidden Arabic and foreign-language periodicals continued to be smuggled into the country and sold under the table. The nationalists also used a variety of less sophisticated technologies to verbalize resistance in print. A printing press was smuggled into the Qarawiyin University during this period and used to help print brochures and pamphlets, though many of these still had to be reproduced by hand. In the medinas of Fes and Rabat, the nationalists also posted handbills on the walls by night, a major print

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93 It is important to note that written propaganda was disseminated to a large audience than just the literate population, which, as has been mentioned, was small in Morocco. Newspapers, tracts, and other materials were read aloud, though discreetly, in cafés, which by the 1920s had become a significant public space for men in Morocco’s cities. Later, radio broadcasts (which began to become more prominent in the mid-1930s) could be listened to within this important communal space in the large and small cities in which cafés were ubiquitous. On café culture in North Africa, see Omar Carlier, “Le café maure: Sociabilité masculine et effervescence citoyenne, (Algérie XVIIe–XXe siècles),” *Annales, ESC* (1990): 976–77.

94 Interview with director of Qarawiyin University library, October 20, 2006.
space that the nationalist also took advantage of by writing pro-Moroccan and anti-
French graffiti in chalk or charcoal. These forms of written propaganda reinforced the
symbolic communication of mass protest demonstrations.

Another avenue for expanding protest against Residency policy was to channel
public indignation about violations of public morality into action, primarily in anti-
alcohol and anti-smoking campaigns. In 1933, an activist in Fez, Abdesalam ben
Messaoud was arrested and sent to jail in Mogador for organizing a boycott against the
French state-owned tobacco monopoly.95 Eighty-seven others, who had protested his
arrest in front of the Pasha’s residence were themselves jailed for one to twelve months.96
In another instance in Salé, a group filed a complaint about the ubiquity of black market
sales of alcohol and the related problem of public drunkenness but received no response
from the Civil Controller. According to the Rabat press, a group of three hundred
Moroccans frustrated about the lack of action attacked seventeen small hanuts (corner
stores) selling alcohol,97 breaking all of the bottles of wine in stock. In an article
defending the demonstrations, the nationalist leader, Omar Abdeljalil, argued that
clandestine sales of alcohol had gotten out of control in recent years, with stores selling it
near private homes and in front of mosques, and that bands of drunks had even attacked
pregnant women. He argued that a group had gone to speak with vendors, some of which
had carried bottles out and dumped them out, after which the group paraded through the

95 Georges Hertz, “Les troubles de Fès,” L’Action du people, August 18, 1933.
96 The nationalists argued Messoud had simply distributed a tract citing an injunction against smoking by
the Fassi ulama because of the health risks, and that his actions were not political. “Les derniers
événements de Fèz,” Maghreb, September 1933, p. 3.
97 Owned by Spanish, Senegalese, Algerian, and Moroccan proprietors.
streets to the cheers of the neighborhood. In addition to these vices, the nationalists also targeted certain Sufi orders, namely the Isawa and Hamadsha, that engaged in ecstatic displays of religious devotion including self-mutilation, sword-swallowing, snake handling, and trance dancing. A formal decree banning their annual moussems (Saint’s Day celebrations) in Meknes was cheered by the nationalist press, demonstrating the still resonant Salafi overtones of the movement.

In the early 1930s, building off of the Latif protests, the nationalists developed a uniquely Moroccan repertoire of contention. The corollary result of the ritualization of nationalist protest was that the Residency also developed patterns of response including mass arrests and imprisonment in remote regions of the bled (in the Atlas mountains at Boulemane for example, or in the south in the Sahara). In this interactive cycle, the nationalists tried to use the Residency’s repression of their movement as a means to further publicize their goals of defending Moroccan sovereignty, to legitimize the righteousness of their cause, and to generate sympathy on the part of the Moroccan public. The confrontation between the two sides came to a head in the fall of 1937, after the nationalist reform initiative failed to yield any results.

The 1937 Cycle of Protest and the Exile of the Nationalist Leadership

The rise of the leftist Popular Front to power in the French legislative elections in May 1936 appeared to be the golden opportunity for the reformist agenda presented by

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99 These are the subject of Vincent Crapanzano’s ethnography, The Hamadsha: a study in Moroccan ethnopsychiatry. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973.)
the Moroccan nationalists two years earlier in the Plan de Réformes to finally bear fruit. Like other leaders of nationalist movements in the French empire, the Moroccan nationalist leadership had developed relationships with sympathetic politician friends on the French Left, and believed the first socialist coalition to control the French government would finally respond and reform France’s illiberal colonial policies. The nationalists again drew up a list of demands, calling it the National Pact, which they presented to the Protectorate authorities and which a delegation presented to representatives of the Popular Front government in Paris. The pact reiterated many of the points in the Plan de Réformes, included demands for democratic, economic, legal, educational, labor, industrial, taxation, and public health reforms.

That summer, however, events inside and outside of the Protectorate raised tensions in both the northern and southern zones. Beginning in June, workers in multiple sectors in the French zone, including Europeans and Moroccans, declared strikes in coordination with the mass wave of strikes in France that month. In July, the Spanish army in the northern zone mutinied under General Franco and started a civil war against the Spanish Popular Front. The border between the zones was closed, and the Tetouani nationalist leadership attempted to play off both sides, forcing Franco to promise democratic reforms in the zone. Events in the Middle East including the outbreak of the Arab Revolt in Palestine in the early summer, the signing of the Anglo-Egyptian treaty in August in which the British pledged to withdraw most of its troops, and negotiations between the Syrian National Bloc and the French over independence also contributed to
heightened tensions and expectations in Morocco.\textsuperscript{100} That summer in Paris, Ouezzani and Abdeljalil were sent to lobby ministers in the Popular Front government, but returned in October with no concrete results. At this time, the Moroccan nationalist movement leadership itself grew increasingly divided due to the personality conflict between the two major leaders, Allal al-Fassi and Mohamed el-Ouezzani. Ouezzani split off in the fall to create his own organization after Al-Fassi was elected president of the movement instead of him.

The months-long failure of Leon Blum’s coalition to deliver expected meaningful reforms led to renewed push by the nationalists to press their demands.\textsuperscript{101} On October 25\textsuperscript{th}, they held a conference in Rabat and decided to launch a campaign to publicize their demands and pressure the Residency to respond. On November 2\textsuperscript{nd}, a meeting was held in Fes to communicate the nationalists’ agenda to a broader Moroccan audience which had three hundred attend. A meeting in Salè on the 6\textsuperscript{th} had a crowd of two hundred. The security forces then intervened and banned a meeting scheduled on the eve of the Throne Day celebration, arresting Allal al-Fassi, Mohamed Lyazidi, and Mohamed El-Ouezzani. The arrests sparked riots in Fes, Salè, Casablanca, Oujda, and Taza on November 16\textsuperscript{th} and 17\textsuperscript{th}. In clashes with the police, many demonstrators were wounded, and the French arrested hundreds of others. After a month of detention, the newly appointed Resident General, Noguès, decided to let the leadership of the movement and many of the

\textsuperscript{100} One of the few meaningful proposals by the Popular Front about colonial policy, the Blum-Violette proposal to grant citizenship to Algerian Muslims, was never submitted to a vote by the National Assembly and ended up being abandoned.

\textsuperscript{101} The replacement in September of the Resident General, Marcel Peyrouton (who the French leftists in the Protectorate and the Moroccan nationalists accused of being a Fascist sympathizer), by General Charles Noguès, was viewed as an improvement, though the initial enthusiasm faded when no other reforms followed.
demonstrators free, causing the nationalists to hail the episode as a victory. Al Fassi recalls, “The fact is that the nationalist movement took a great stride forward as a result of these bloody demonstrations; they manifested considerable popular support for and identification with the nationalist movement.”102

Throughout the rest of the year and in the spring of 1937, the nationalists were able to provoke sporadic demonstrations but gained little overall traction. The major opportunity that opened up in the spring was that General Noguès signed an order authorizing the creation of several new Arabic and French periodicals, after two and a half years in which no newspapers or journals had been allowed.103 The growing divisions within the nationalist movement between factions loyal to Allal al-Fassi and Moyammed al-Ouezzani had the effect of doubling the number of journals created by the nationalists during this window of opportunity. Allal al-Fassi’s National Party for the Realization of Reforms founded the first nationalist Arabic journal, Al-Atlas in Jan. 1937,104 and a French version, L’Action populaire.105 Ouezzani’s National Movement began also soon began publishing a new L’Action du people that spring and started an Arabic version, Al-Difaa. Other Arabic journals including Al-Maghreb (a biweekly published in Casa), At-Taqaddum (1937), and al-‘Amal (1937) were also authorized, though these papers were not directly affiliated to the parties and were less politically

103 Amina Aouchar, La Presse Marocaine Dans La Lutte Pour L’indépendance (1933-1956) (Casablanca, Maroc: Wallada, 1990), 33-35
104 Mohamed Lyazidi edited this Rabat-based journal which was published from February 1937 until it was closed down following the widespread anti-French demonstrations in October.
105 This newspaper was edited by Khadija Diouri (a French woman from Dakar) and financed by her husband Mohamed Diouri.
oriented. In the northern zone, which had also seen a leadership split, Franco’s liberalization led to the creation in Tetouan of *Al-Rif*, founded by Touhami Ouzzani, a member for Torrès’s National Reform Party, and the party’s official organ, *al-Hurriya*. The rival party of Mekki Naciri, the Party of Moroccan Unity, began publishing *al-Wahdat al-Magribiya* that year.

While Noguès opened up a rare window in terms of the press, a decree on March 18, 1937, cracked down on the nationalists’ freedom of association by declaring the *Kutlat al-Wataniyya* no longer a legal organization because it violated laws against the creation of organizations requiring membership cards and dues. The measure, though, did not prevent the national committee from implementing a plan to expand by clandestinely creating branches all over Morocco. It was not until late summer, though, that the nationalists were presented with an opportunity to retake the initiative in pressing their reformist agenda through large-scale demonstrations.

This opportunity arose out of a controversy over the distribution of the water of the Boufekrane wadi (which flowed north from the Middle Atlas towards Meknes) that deteriorated over the summer into open conflict between the municipal authorities and the residents of the medina. The previous November a viziriel order had repartitioned the water rights of the Boufekrane, which was a key source for French colons and Moroccan peasants farming on the plain (part of the wadi also flowed through gardens on the outskirts of the city owned by Meknessi notables.) A religious dimension was added to

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controversy because the waterway also flowed through habous (Islamic foundations\(^{107}\)) domains further downstream.\(^{108}\) In June, the nationalist papers began to report on the diversion plan and the Meknes medina’s opposition to it, which had led to a petition drive with two thousand signatures complaining that the new canal only served the interests of the municipality and colons further upstream.\(^{109}\) Another controversy added further fuel to the tensions between the municipality and the medina that summer when the authorities refused to admit Moroccans to the municipal pool in the *ville nouvelle*.

In late August, medina leaders decided to demonstrate in front of the Municipal Services building against the water diversion plan, and on September 1\(^{st}\), close to a thousand gathered to submit complaints to municipal superintendent. Afterwards, the crowd, chanting “Give us back our water!,” returned from the *ville nouvelle* to the Zitouna mosque in the medina to await the decision of the authorities. The next morning, the police arrested five of the leaders of the demonstrations and condemned them to three months in prison. Close to six thousand gathered at the Grand Mosque, and a contingent of seven hundred headed towards the Pasha’s residence where they were blocked by legionnaire troops. The confrontation got out of hand, and the troops fired on the crowd: fifty-two police and one European civilian were injured while thirteen Moroccans were killed and forty more were injured.

While the initial protests had arisen locally out of the grievances of the Meknes medina, the nationalists quickly took an active role, building off of the momentum that

\(^{107}\) The term *habous* is commonly used instead of *waqf* in Morocco.
\(^{108}\) SHD-AT, 3H 250, Note sur les eaux de l’oued Bou-Fekrane, (September 11, 1937).
\(^{109}\) *L’Action du Peuple*, June 17, 1937.
had been created in the September 2nd confrontation. A few days later, on September 6th, there were mass protests about the bloody events in Meknes in Casablanca, Fes, Rabat, Oujda, Marrakesh, and again in Meknes with the Latif prayer being recited in the major mosques. French officials, worried about the volatility of the situation, shut down the nationalist newspapers again and continued to arrest demonstrators.110 Fes continued to be the epicenter for further agitation, and Noguès, the Resident General, arrived to meet with delegations including notables, shurafa (descendants of the Prophet Mohammad who formed a privileged class in the medina), and the nationalists on September 12th. Protests continued off and on in various cities for the next couple of weeks, achieving a final crescendo in the last week of September. Riots broke out in Marrakesh on the 24th during the visit of Paul Ramadier, the French Secretary of State for Public Works, to the Jmaa Al-Fna. In Khemisset (between Rabat and Marrakesh), another riot, allegedly instigated by nationalist students from Fes, took place over plans by the Catholic Church to organize a pilgrimage to the church of Saint-Therèse, which had been built there in the 1920s. Having obtained a confession from one of the organizers that the riots had been ordered by Allal al-Fassi, the police secretly arrested him, Ahmed Mekouar, Omar Abdeljalil, and Mohammed Lyazidi in Fes on the 25th.

Two other nationalist leaders in Fes, Hachemi Al-Filali and Hassan Bouayad, spear-headed demonstrations against these arrests in the medina’s mosques and declared

110 SHD-AT Carton 3H 250, Commissariat Divisionnaire Casablanca, Note de renseignements, 9 September 1937.
a strike closing down the medina’s businesses.\footnote{In an interrogation following his arrest, Al Filali revealed the nationalists had printing machines in the homes of Hassan Bouayad (a British protégé), Omar Ben Abdeljalil, and Abdelwahad Al-Fassi (Allal al-Fassi’s father), with which they printed tracts publicizing the demonstrations in mosques.} Huge crowds gathered in the Rcif and Qarawiyin mosques for prayers on the 26\textsuperscript{th}, with a group of 1500 marching out of the Rcif mosque wearing white robes (ostensibly as martyrs) and carrying a few knives and clubs. The group chanted the Latif and forced any boutiques that remained open to close. Despite a torrential downpour, demonstrators tried to attack a police station at the Bab Ftouh. Troops occupied strategic points in the medina the following day, and guards were placed at each of the medina gates for fears of an attack from surrounding the Berber tribes.\footnote{Ironically, the troops that were used to occupy the medina were themselves predominantly Berber, including the 3\textsuperscript{rd} Goum of Tafrannt, the 43\textsuperscript{rd} Goum of Haddad, and the 18\textsuperscript{th} Goum of Boulemane.} Following further altercations between troops and demonstrators on the 28\textsuperscript{th}, the Rcif and Qarawiyin mosques were also occupied, and on the 31\textsuperscript{st}, with the weather clearing, planes were sent on patrols over the medina, clearly threatening bombardment given further unrest.\footnote{The following spring the Protectorate military command conducted an internal investigation about the Fes medina uprising in order to revise its strategy for containing an urban disturbance like this. Troops reported that the medina had posed serious difficulties: these quarters were labyrinths in which it was difficult to move, they could not find their way because they had no maps and there were no street signs, and they were totally dependent on Moroccan mokhzani guides in their maneuvers. In addition to distributing new maps, putting bronze plaques labeling streets in the medina, the military also created command centers at strategic points in the medina which were connected by telephone wires. Plans to quickly reoccupy the medina developed in 1938 were later put to use in uprisings in the 1940s. SHD-AT Carton 3H 250, Folder on “Plan d’Occupation de la Medina de Fès,” March 1938.}

One of the major concerns for the Protectorate authorities was the threat that the 1937 uprising in the cities would spill over into the countryside. Agents were, in fact, sent out by the nationalists to incite the tribes but these were picked up by the authorities. The scattered responses in the \textit{bled} to the protests included a contingent of the Ould El Hadj tribe that came to the medina to take the nationalists’ oath and pay membership
dues.\textsuperscript{114} There were also reports of sympathetic demonstrations of support in Azrou, Gigou, and Mrirt (towns of the Beni Mtir tribe in the Middle Atlas). Reports from other areas of the “Berber Mountain,” however, led the commander over the Meknes region to report: “The firm policy carried out by the Protectorate has had a positive effect and has been favorably commented on by the tribes in the region.”\textsuperscript{115}

The situation calmed down by November, but the increasingly violent confrontation in September and October between the Moroccan nationalists and the French Protectorate authorities had signaled that the nationalists’ contestation of the colonial state had entered a new phase. After their appeals for reforms of the Protectorate abuses went unheeded, the Boufekrane water controversy in Meknes provided an opening for the nationalists to engage in a new round of framing in an attempt to channel and mobilize support for their case. In response, the Residency security forces responded with harsher measures including shutting down nationalist papers, carrying out mass arrests, and exiling several of the key leaders of the nationalist movement including Allal al Fassi (initially to Gabon and later to Congo); Mohamed Lyazidi, Omar Ben Abdeljalil, Ahmed Mekouar (all of whom were exiled to remote locations in the Sahara); and Mohamed El-Ouezzani (who was exiled to Itzer in the High Atlas). Noguès, commenting on the events, stated:

\begin{quote}
We no longer have a choice. The rigorous measures against the leaders of the movement, if they continue to mobilize the people against the Makhzen and against France, are necessary, regardless of the reactions they provoke. They are the only means for assuring the future of French Morocco and to create a new climate that permits us to follow our
\end{quote}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{114} SHD-AT Carton 3H 250, Report of Chief Boiseaux, Commander of Gendarmerie of Fes, (September 9, 1937).
\textsuperscript{115} SHD-AT, Carton 3H 250, 3rd Trimester Report on Meknes Region, Chef de la Région, Caillault, (October 29, 1937.)
\end{flushleft}
Due to this radicalization of the conflict, by the end of 1937, the modes of contention and framing of the nationalist leadership had permanently shifted away from a reformist agenda that sought to pressure the French to be “good” colonizers and steadily (particularly after the fall of France in 1939 and the Allied landings in November 1942) towards a demand for Moroccan independence.

Anti-Colonial Nationalism: Istiqlal, Not a Protectorate (1938-1947)

The 1937 cycle of contention signaled the end of the reformist phase for the Moroccan nationalist movement and the beginning of a five year period in which the Moroccan nationalist movement had very few political opportunities in which to mobilize. Reform was no longer the goal of the movement, but the nationalist leadership had to wait until conditions changed in order to begin to mobilize towards Istiqlal, independence. By 1938, the French administration had “decapitated” the movement by exiling the entire top tier of the leadership and shutting down the movement’s press outlets. Morocco’s cities were “pacified,” and, with tensions rising in Europe and the Sultan’s pledge to support France in the upcoming conflict, the nationalists declared an unofficial truce with the Residency. However, after the onset of the war, the political opportunity structure began to shift dramatically, reshaping the domestic and international landscape in ways that created openings for the movement. Beginning in 1944, the movement renewed its active resistance, openly calling for the abrogation of the Treaty of Fes and the granting of Moroccan independence. Though the nationalists

116 SHD-AT, Carton 3H 250, Report by General Noguès to Yvon Delbos, Minister of Foreign Affairs, on Moroccan Nationalism, (October 9, 1937), 31.
believed in the necessity of reform, and even accepted that France could have a role in this process, they were firmly convinced “modernization” had to be pursued after Moroccan sovereign independence had been restored.

Exile, War, and Hardship (1938-1943)

In the interim, the most the movement could marshal was a low-level propaganda attack, attempting to keep the cause of defending Moroccan sovereignty in the minds of the public and in front of the French authorities. Anti-French tracts, posters, and graffiti continued to be produced, but little to no contentious protest was mobilized. For the anniversary of the Berber Dahir in 1938 and 1939, there were few open demonstrations in the French zone. The tracts that were circulated continued to use the Berber Dahir as proof of France’s mendacity and linked this to developing events in Europe. One exhorted the readers, saying:

O Moroccan people, since May 16th, 1930, the day when the Berber Dahir appeared, you have been given an account of this project for annihilating your unity, your language, your national feeling, your noble religion, and which would also destroy your rights, crush your existence, and diminish the authority of His Majesty, your King.117

On the day after the anniversary, another tract was circulated in Fes stating, “O France, we will not let you deceive us,” and then arguing that, just as pledges to “protect” Czechoslovakia had been disregarded, their promises were meaningless in Morocco. The last paragraph ended with:

Death to democratic France. Long live Morocco and Moroccans. Long live noble independence. Remember our heroes who made our greatness: Ben Nafia, Tariq Ben Zyd, El Mansour, Abdelmoumin, Yaacoub, and Youssef. O people, prepare for the coming day, at last to fight for your liberty, your independence, and your glory, under the

117 SHD-AT, Carton 3H 250, Communiqué No. 55, Anniversaire du 16 mai, (May 16, 1939).
vibrant standard of Islam, one and immortal. Prepare to sacrifice for this high ideal, for you faith, your patrie, your happiness, your nobility, your liberty, and your independence.\textsuperscript{118}

In the midst of rising tensions on the European continent, the nationalists (particularly several of the leaders from Tetouan who had more freedom of movement under Franquist authorities) also capitalized on German and Italian interest in spreading anti-French propaganda to try to rally the Moroccan public through broadcasts of Radio Berlin and Radio Bari (relayed from broadcast towers in Seville and Tetuan) and in tracts smuggled south to the French zone.\textsuperscript{119} For the 1939 anniversary of the Berber Dahir, Radio Berlin broadcast an address by the Moroccan Salafist ex-patriate, Taqi al-Din al-Hilali, based at that time in Berlin, who exhorted his Moroccan audience, saying:

\begin{quote}
Do you know what May 16\textsuperscript{th} signifies? It reminds us of the day when a terrible evil struck Morocco. In 1930, on May 16\textsuperscript{th}, France “killed five million of your Berber brothers.” This was a moral death, not a physical death. But what is physical death in comparison with moral destruction? The usage of Arabic, the reading of the Koran, was forbidden to the Berbers. They would be Christianized by force. They used prison, exile in the Sahara. Torture was reserved for all Moroccans who had the audacity to say “There is no God but Allah, I do not want to abandon my religion.” That is how France proceeded to annihilate your Muslim brothers. It began with the mountains and the plains, and it will soon attack the cities. Five million inhabitants have already been sacrificed; the three million that remain will follow. One part was served for lunch to France, and the rest will be served for dinner.\textsuperscript{120}
\end{quote}

In an anti-Allies jab, Al-Hilali then pointed to Moroccan history since 1900, how France invaded the country with British aid and imposed the Protectorate on the Moroccan

\textsuperscript{118} SHD-AT, Carton 3H 250, Analyse d’un tract provenant du “Comité de défense du Maroc,” (May 17, 1939).
\textsuperscript{119} Interestingly, according to a report by the French Indigenous Affairs, the German propaganda effort included recording phonograph disks in the Tashelhit Berber dialect produced by the Cairo-based Baidaphone record company. The officer reporting this had confiscated copies of these disks in the Souss. SHD-AT—Vincennes, Carton 3H 250, Report by Commander of Agadir Territory, “Propagande anti-française par disques de phonographie,” (March 31, 1939).
\textsuperscript{120} SHD-AT, Carton 3H 250, Compte rendu d’écoute Radio-Berlin, Piece No. 5, May 16\textsuperscript{th}, 1939. It is interesting to note Al-Hilali’s population estimates which put the Moroccan population at 38\% Arabic-speaking and 62\% Berber-speaking.
Sultan; France then betrayed their pledge in the Protectorate treaty and implemented a plan beginning in 1913 to Christianize the Berbers, shutting down Qu’ranic schools, outlawing *shari’a*, and chasing Arabic speakers out of the countryside. He concluded by pointing out the historic importance of May 16th, 1930 in Islamic history, ending the address with, “May God make justice prevail!”  

In 1939, with the onset of hostilities following the German army’s invasion of Poland, the Sultan pledged the full support of the Moroccan people for their French Protector. The early course of the war, however, began to irreversibly shift perceptions in the Palace, among the nationalist leadership, and in the Moroccan public about the Protector, after the dramatic fall of France to the German army and the transition to Vichy rule for the next three years. Though the Residency was allowed to continue to administer the Protectorate with little direct interference following the arrival of Anglo-American forces in the Operation Torch invasion in November 1942, Moroccan expectations for a change in the status quo began to increase, given the anti-colonial pledges made in the 1941 Atlantic Charter describing the aims of the Anglo-American alliance in the war. This growing Moroccan ambivalence about the French Protector, given the shifting balance of power during the war, is clearly expressed in a fascinating group of Berber poems collected by a French commander, Coudino, to be broadcast as anti-German propaganda during the war on Radio Maroc. In one, the poet, Smail ben Hammani of the Beni-Mtir tribe, comments on the end of Vichy-mediated Nazi influence on the Protectorate and the triumph of Allied forces against the German troops in Tunisia:

\[121\] Ibid.
It is said that the German wants to come here. He wants to eat our sheep, because he is sick of frog meat.

I am getting away from you, O German! What riches can you bring us? You demand ration cards for produce and bills for clothes.

The Americans have given help to Noguès; I’m afraid, O German, that they are throwing you to the wind.

I believe that the German is out of breath. He found them (the French and Americans) completely ready for war.

O German! You made our hearts bitter. That God might abandon you in the middle of the seas!

O my enemy! If I displease you, know that I am preparing something that will totally distance you from me.

Look! Does the Italian have any prestige? Is he not just taking part again in a conference that governs the world?

It’s the days of Petain and Lyautey that I miss. As for the German, he rests on the stomach.

Today the Italian wants to raise his head, even so, he’ll still be called nothing except “Jew.”

I present my protest, O my God, do good to me, the Italian and the German are detestable, I want nothing from them.

What would the Germans do to me, who are nothing but murderers? These (the French) kept me for a long time on a leash, but they gave me back my liberty.122

Another song presents a pro-French narrative of Protectorate history from the pacification to the present, but it also demonstrates, in the section included below, a clear Moroccan awareness of America’s growing dominance:

The French, skilled politicians, made peace reign in the country. They administer wisely; they have created customary tribunals and, over those, the courts of appeals.

For Morocco, this has made a truly beautiful springtime, with green, abundant pastures. But the war came and dried it up, all the way to the roots of all the vegetation.

The Americans have now arrived. They have become masters of all industry. They make the automobiles and the tanks and the airplanes and the boats. The tractors come from them and all sort of tools. They are excellent workers; they make everything one can desire; they work with iron as if a plaything.

If they want to ride in a train with its locomotive and wagons, they make it in five days, as if they had raised a wall of bricks. If they want, they shoot out a fire that dries the water and destroys the pastures.

The Germans and Italians, however, are the wicked people. Leave them, therefore, O Lord, there where they are. Oh, that they would not come here! I do not like what they do at all.123

122 Fond Roux, IREMAM, Carton 65.1.5. Hidous by Smail ben Hammani, Songs collected for Radio Maroc, 1942-1944.

On a political as well as an economic level, the powerful American ally seemed to be pushing aside the French protector. During the Casablanca conference in January 1943, Roosevelt overrode objections by the Residency to meet individually with the Sultan, which was Mohamed ben Youssef’s first face-to-face meeting with a foreign head of state without a French intermediary. During the off-the-record conversation, Roosevelt allegedly affirmed American support for Moroccan nationalist aspirations following the war. In November 1943, these aspirations received further encouragement when the British and Americans pressured the Free French administration to tacitly recognize Lebanese independence by releasing prominent Lebanese politicians they had arrested for voting to abolish articles referring to the mandate in the constitution.

The Manifest of Independence Cycle of Contention (January-March 1944)

In December, Ahmed Belafrej and other nationalist leaders who remained in Morocco from both the Qawmiyin (Ouezzani’s faction) and Wataniyin (Al-Fassi’s faction) streams of the movement began to meet in secret to plan how to resume active resistance against the Protectorate. On January 11th, a delegation of the newly formed Hizb al-Istiqlal (Independence Party) submitted a “Manifest of Independence” to the Sultan; to the French Resident General, Puaux; and to the American and British officials in the Protectorate.¹²⁴ The manifest, which contained over fifty-eight signatures including notables and high ranking members of the makhzen, affirmed Morocco’s commitment to the Atlantic Charter before calling for the immediate recognition of

¹²⁴ Churchill was actually in Marrakesh at the time (one of his favorite vacation spots was the La Mamounia hotel).
Morocco’s independence and its participation in the postwar peace conference. Arabic copies of the manifest (which had been transcribed by hand by students at the Guessous Free School in Rabat directed by Belafrej) were also distributed across the country.

Though the Sultan informed the Resident General on January 15th that he desired to invite the nationalist delegation to a meeting of the council of government, the Residency was highly disturbed that *istiqlal*, “independence,” had now been brought out into the open.

Attempts at mediation between the Residency, the Palace, and the nationalists began on January 16th to try to agree a reform package to respond to concerns in the Manifest.

Also, the Sultan issued a statement the next day on Radio Maroc reaffirming that “the evolution of Morocco will develop within a framework of French friendship and respect of the treaties.”

However, worried that the situation would escalate out of control, the Residency ordered the arrest of Ahmed Belafrej and Mohamed Lyazidi in Rabat on the night of January 28th for allegedly giving information to the German enemy. In Fez, Ahmed Mekouar, Hachemi Filali, and Abdelaziz Ben Driss were also taken into custody.

Word about the arrests spread quickly, and the next morning stores were closed in the medina in protest. Just before noon, a group of five hundred gathered at the sanctuary of Moulay Hassan then marched towards the palace chanting “Balefrej or death!” In the Mechouar (a large public square at the palace entrance), the Grand Vizier received a delegation from the demonstrators and explained the military reasons why Belafrej was arrested, to which the crowd responded, “If Balafrej is a German, we are all Germans!” The crowd eventually pressed forward, beating up another of the Sultan’s counselors who had been
sent out to speak with them, Si Mammeri, and threatening to enter the throne room itself. The Residency released Mohamed Lyazidi, who had also been arrested and was being interrogated by the police, and sent him to the Mechouar to calm the crowd. Lyazidi received a tongue lashing from the Sultan for the crowd’s savage beating of Maameri, and then Lyazidi directed the crowd back to the medina. On the way, the demonstrators killed a French man, Roulois, on their way through the ville nouvelle to the medina, where large crowds gathered to recite the Latif in various mosques. Arsène Roux, who had been reassigned in 1936 from the Azrou Berber College to direct the College Moulay Youssef in Rabat, was injured when he tried to prevent students from joining the protestors at the Mechouar. Across the river in Salé, crowds attacked the municipal offices, killing an officer and stabbing the Civil Controller. Troops were sent with tanks to encircle the medina, and mass arrests were carried out in Rabat and in Salé. Security forces in Fez and Casablanca were alerted, and nationalist leaders in Fez including Mohamed El Fassi, Mhammed Zeghari, and Mohammed Laghzaoui were arrested on the 31st. Senegalese troops were sent in to occupy the medina in Fez to quell growing unrest, and thirty demonstrators were killed in a confrontation with troops near the Derb Roum. There were mixed reactions in other Moroccan cities: while the Latif was recited in Oujda and stores were closed in protest of the arrest of nationalist leaders, no demonstrations were reported in Meknes, Marrakesh, or Casablanca. A month later in March, however, demonstrations were again instigated in Fes and Rabat with huge
crowds gathering to chant the Latif in the main mosques which resulted in the arrest of hundreds of more protestors.\textsuperscript{125}

In the countryside, though Indigenous Affairs officers reported that the “Berber bloc was not opened,” the French did face open revolt at the pinnacle of the Berber educational system, the Azrou College. Students at the college, who had been in communication with nationalist activists in Fes and Meknes during the war,\textsuperscript{126} went on strike in solidarity with the Istiqlal demonstrations on February 5\textsuperscript{th}. The official report on the Azrou disturbances expressed a distinct fear about the potential for the situation to deteriorate in the bled. The loyalty of the “Berber bloc” was directly connected to the stance of the Sultan in the minds of the French military:

If the Sultan were to align with the nationalists, he would take with him the great part of the indigenous chiefs that, for a long time, have remained indecisive and waiting for the Sultan to declare himself, so they can declare themselves. We risk, then, a general uprising: twenty years of combat for the pacification taught us what that eventuality represents. The essential, urgent task is to dissociate the Sultan and the nationalists, to have the Prince take a public and clear position against the demand for independence, for the respect of the treaty of the Protectorate. This would permit us to ensure the tranquility of the bled, limit the agitation in the cities. Two battalions of Senegalese were needed to bring the medina of Fes under control. It would take an army for us to bring the Berber mountain under control.\textsuperscript{127}

While the situation in March did finally calm down, the French Protectorate officials remained very concerned about their tenuous position in the country, realizing the limits of their ability to use force to quell the nationalist challenge to their control of the

\textsuperscript{125} SHD-AT, Carton 3H 249, Commandement Supérieur des Troupes du Maroc, Rapport Mensuel sur la politique en milieu indigène, (February 1944).

\textsuperscript{126} According to Abderrahim Bouabid, a nationalist activist and signer of the Manifest, Mehdi Ben Barka, had been instrumental in helping create the first nationalist cells in the Azrou College in 1940-41, and subsequently among the functionaries working in the A.I. offices and tribal councils. Two tribal council officials, Abdelhamid Zemmouri and Si Amar ou Nacer, signed the Manifest in the name of “Berber youth.” Guy Delanoë, \textit{Lyautey, Juin, Mohammed V, Fin D’un Protectorat} (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1988), 188

\textsuperscript{127} SHD-AT, Carton 3H 251, Section des Affaires Politique, “L’Agitation Nationaliste de Janvier-Février 1944.”
colonial state. In a report to the heads of regions following events in Rabat, the Resident
General assessed the predicament the French faced in Morocco:

However, the recourse to force cannot be a permanent procedure of a government in a
protectorate country. France is imposed on Morocco by force and by prestige. We
cannot maintain our place in this country by force without prestige when now we are
making our protégés into a defeated adversary. It is important, then, to dedicate
ourselves to the work of restoring French prestige. All of the levels of the administration
must be involved.\textsuperscript{128}

In March, Puaux announced a set of plans to increase support for indigenous
education, to appoint a panel to review the penal code and reform the judicial system, to
admit more Moroccans into the Protectorate administration, and to put a Moroccan in
charge of a Muslim assistance division in the Direction of Public Health. The package
was rejected by the Istiqlal leadership, who insisted that independence precede reform.
The Sultan reassured French authorities that his friendship with France was still strong
and that the events in January had been simply a surface movement directed by young
activists. However, after reaffirming that the first priority was the liberation of France, a
cause for which Moroccan soldiers were at that very moment dying in Italy, he strongly
hinted that France needed to work swiftly towards Morocco’s independence after the war.
On the 1944 Throne Day celebration, the Sultan’s speech was carried for the first time on
the radio. At numerous gatherings organized by the nationalists, speeches calling for
independence were also given, insinuating that the Sultan officially supported their stance
on the issue.

In the closing months of the war in Europe, hopes began to rise that Moroccan
independence would be granted in the postwar settlement. Over next months the French

\textsuperscript{128} SHD-AT—Vincennes 3H251, Report by Resident General, Gabriel Puaux, on “Agitation nationaliste”
(February 19, 1944).
authorities became more and more concerned about collusion between the nationalists and the Sultan, particularly in light of the approaching one year anniversary of the Independence Manifest. These respective hopes and fears, however, began to dissipate by the summer of 1945 after the death of Roosevelt in March (later American cold war policy prioritized Franco-American partnership over anti-colonial pledges of support) and the exclusion of the Moroccan delegation at the San Francisco peace conference that began in April, at which the United Nations was founded. The violent repression by French forces in May 1945 of protests in Syria and Algeria, including the bombing of Damascus and Setif, further dimmed prospects that the goal of istiqlal was imminently achievable.

Mobilizing Towards Independence after the War

In the years after the war, several developments reshaped the political opportunity context for the nationalist movement strongly influencing how the struggle for independence developed in the last decade of the Protectorate. Along with the French attempt to shore up the Protectorate structure through reform, they also relaxed restrictions on the nationalist movements, allowing the return of exiled leaders and approving the reestablishment of the nationalist press. The return in 1947 of Allal al-Fassi, Mohamed el-Ouezzani, and other leaders after more than a decade of exile generated widespread enthusiasm, including huge banquets and parades in Fes and

130 While the French were out of 1946, the Moroccans realized the Americans and British would not apply the same pressure on them to withdraw from North Africa.
On an organizational level, the nationalist movement worked to build off increasing popular support for the objective of independence and public enthusiasm for leaders such as Allal al-Fassi, whose exile had only served to increase their legitimacy as representatives of the “nation.” In the cities, section chiefs were designated and campaigns to extend the Istiqlal party structure into the country were launched. By the late 1940s, these efforts had enabled Istiqlal to establish itself as a truly national party.

This period also saw the resurgence of a flourishing nationalist press. At the end of 1946, a new wave of Arabic newspapers were authorized, most of which continued to be published up until violent clashes in 1952. In an inversion of the situation in the 1930s, the Spanish zone was much less open, with no press allowed between 1947-1952. In the French zone, Rabat and Casablanca became the major publishing centers as Tetouan and Fes receded in importance. The main organ of the Istiqlal party, Al-'Alam, began publishing in November 1946 and a French language version, L'Opinion du peuple, was started in March 1947. In addition to news about Morocco, significant attention was paid to international events, including coverage of the United States, Europe, India, and the Middle East, and particular attention to the deteriorating situation in Palestine. Extensive coverage was also devoted to the activities of the royal family (al-'Alam had a section called “News of Royal Family”), and most of the pictures in the papers were of the King, the Crown Prince Hassan, and Princess Lalla Aicha, the latter of whom were both sent out to high-profile public events. The nationalists’ ability to

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131 Ouezzani had spent his ten years of exile under house arrest in Itzer in the high Atlas (1937-1947); Lyazidi was imprisoned in the south from 1937-1941; Belafrej could not reenter Morocco until 1943, and after the 1944 riots, was exiled to Corsica.

132 Aouchar, La Presse Marocaine Dans La Lutte Pour L'indépendance (1933-1956), 80-81.
criticize the administration in the press, however, was restrained by expansive censorship powers that been granted in an August 29, 1939 dahir. The Direction of Interior, instead of confiscating the whole issue of a paper, could black out individual articles. The censorship increased greatly after the appointment of Alphonse Juin as Resident General in the summer of 1947, who shut down *L’Opinion du Peuple* in June 1948. Ouezzani, after being freed in 1947, also founded a paper for his Democratic Independence party (PDI) called *Ar Ra’i al-‘Am*. Mekki Naciri started a paper in Tanger, *Minbar al-Sha’ab*, in 1949, using the international zone as a base of operations. Several other papers directly or indirectly sympathetic to the nationalist party were also founded in the late 1940s.

The transnational context of the late 1940s was also very different from before the war, creating different opportunities that influenced the nationalists’ mobilizational strategies. In the postwar period, the pan-Arab relationships developed in the 1930s became increasingly important following the creation of the Arab League in 1945 and the decolonization of British and French holdings in the Middle East. North African nationalists pointedly affirmed the solidarity of the “Arab Maghrib” — Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia—and energetically asserted its ties to the newly independent states in the Arab East. In 1947, a conference was organized in Cairo to coordinate the

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133 Ibid., 86 In papers in the late 1940s, many times the front page was mostly covered in black ink.
134 The appendix to Amina Aouchar’s *La Presse Marocaine Dans La Lutte Pour L’indépendance (1933-1956)* contains a valuable compendium of the Moroccan nationalist press. The Moroccan Communist Party, which was sympathetic to nationalist cause, was allowed to begin publishing *L’Espoir*, which had made a brief appearance in 1938, in February 1945. In August 1946, the editorship of the paper was taken over by Moroccans. Other papers that started up after the war included *L’Action Syndicale*, a French paper for the UGSCM in Casablanca (January 1945-June 1950) and another Casablanca paper, *Ar Ra’i al-‘Am*, which was published from April 1947 to December 1952.
135 The first edition of *Al-‘Alam* explained its focus was on Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia and then the Arab World.
activities of the three nationalist movements in North Africa, and the Arab Maghrib
Office was founded to carry out the recommendations of the conference. Several
nationalists, including al-Fassi, used Cairo as a base to exploit greater freedom of action
outside of Morocco after the war. Another transnational context that became a priority
for the Moroccan nationalists after the war was the newly created United Nations in New
York. Istiqlal drafted memoranda arguing against the Protectorate partition of the
empire, and sent delegations to the U.N. to make their case. Their appeal was
specifically directed at the non-aligned bloc and the United States, which they felt could
still sympathize with their case.

Within Morocco, one of the most significant developments in the late 1940s was
the increasing confluence of the nationalists’ objectives with the aims of the King. While
the nationalists had attempted to capitalize on the symbolic importance of the King since
early in the movement, most prominently in the invention of the Throne Day celebration
in 1933, the explicit linkage between nationalist demands for Moroccan independence
and the King’s sovereignty came to the fore in the postwar period as the Mohamed ben
Youssef himself became more proactive. By 1947, the alignment of the King with
Istiqlal, so feared in the quote above by Puaux, came out fully into the open in the
historic visit of the royal family to Tangier in April. The trip took place the day after a
bloody confrontation between Senegalese colonial troops and Moroccan demonstrators in
Casablanca in which scores of demonstrators had been killed. Having physically
transversed the three divisions of the country (French, Spanish, and International zones),
the King gave a speech in Tangier that, after affirming Morocco’s adherence to the
Atlantic Charter and its strong connections to the Arab Maghrib and the Arab League, pointedly omitted the obligatory affirmation of the historic partnership with the French Protector. The speech’s meaning was clear to the French government, and Erick Labonne, the Resident General, was replaced a month later with the hard-line Gernal Juin. From this point forward, the nationalist struggle entered a new phase in which the Sultan became a full player in the attempt to contest French control of the colonial state, maneuvering alongside (though not in total identification) with the Istiqlal and other nationalist parties in opposition to the increasingly hostile Residency.

**Conclusion**

From 1930 to the postwar period, the Moroccan nationalist movement developed from an informally networked group of young activist elites into a highly structured mass independence party. The first years of the movement’s evolution were hugely significant in laying out the parameters for how nationalists would frame Moroccan national identity and develop a repertoire of contention to carry out their struggle against the French-controlled colonial state in Morocco. From the Berber protests forward, Muslim and Arab identity were the pillars on which the nationalists built their construction of a Moroccan national community unified for more than a thousand years by Islamization and Arabization under successive ruling dynasties. French Berber policy attempting to preserve Berber cultural identity through the official support of customary law and Berber language was framed as a lethal religious attack on the unity of this community. Subsequent cycles of contention built off of this foundational framing, as ritualized
protest strategies including the Latif prayer and commemoration of May 16th and Throne Day became essential components in the Moroccan repertoire of nationalist contention.

From the 1930s to the 1940s, the movement shifted from demanding the reform of the Protectorate partnership to demanding its end. The rejection of the Plan de Réformes by the French authorities and their exile of the nationalist leadership closed off possibilities for rapprochement. The Second World War shifted the political opportunity context after France’s dramatic collapse and the rise of the United States, and the nationalists likewise shifted their collective action frame to motivate contention towards the goal of independence. In the postwar period, Moroccan national identity was tied even more closely to the unity of the “Arab” Maghrib and to rising pan-Arab sentiment in the Mashriq. In the last decade of the Protectorate, the King himself positioned himself at the forefront of the movement towards independence. Before turning to that endgame struggle, however, it is important to investigate how the evolution of the nationalist frame of Arabo-Islamic national identity was intertwined with the position of two other internal “others”: Morocco’s Jews and the “Moroccan woman.” The next chapter turns to the ambiguities and tensions created by the presence of Morocco’s historic Jewish religious minority.
Dhimmi, Subject, or Citizen?

Because it occupied a tenuous position on the margins of rival definitions of the Moroccan nation, Morocco’s sizable Jewish minority was profoundly affected in the struggle between the French administration and Moroccan nationalist movement to control the colonial nation building project undertaken during the Protectorate. This chapter explores how the position of this historic “protected,” but subaltern, community was radically transformed in the midst of the struggle to define Morocco during the colonial period. During this transitional stage, Morocco’s Jews were caught between three competing forces: 1) assimilation into French language and culture coupled with the promise of naturalization; 2) Zionism’s claims to their loyalties on the basis of Jewish political nationalism and, for some, religious messianism; and 3) Moroccan nationalists’ appeals for them to be faithful to their own “patrie-watan” (homeland).

During Morocco’s evolution from sultanate to nation-state, the status of this “protected” religious minority was particularly sensitive because it highlighted fundamental questions about where the boundaries of the national community would be drawn. As Mohamed Kenbib has pointed out, the status of Morocco’s Jews actually began to become a problematic issue much earlier, in the 19th century, as European and American businesses increasingly penetrated the Moroccan economy, a process in which several prominent Jewish business families, like their Muslim counterparts, played
important roles as intermediaries. Under capitulatory agreements between the Sultan and Western powers signed in the wake of the 1856 Anglo-Moroccan commercial treaty, Jewish agents and their families, formerly protected by the Muslim ruler as “dhimmis” under Islamic law, came under the protection of Western powers as “protégés,” exempt from the Sultan’s taxes (including the jizya paid by non-Muslims) and immune from legal prosecution in Moroccan courts. In the Protectorate period that followed, however, Lyautey deliberately resisted pressure from influential French organizations to change the status of Morocco’s Jews and naturalize them as French “citizens” en masse, as had been done in Algeria, and, in fact, codified their status as “subjects” of the Sultan. As the struggle between the French and the Moroccan nationalists over sovereignty began to escalate in Morocco in the 1930s, the identity, and loyalty, of Morocco’s Jews became an increasingly contentious and politicized issue. Tensions in Morocco increased in tandem with those regarding the status of Jewish communities in Europe and in Palestine.

Over the next two decades, this community caught between assimilation, Zionism, and Moroccan nationalism faced successive crises, from Vichy anti-Semitic legislation to the seismic shift in Muslim-Jewish relations after Israel’s independence in 1948, that permanently altered its position in Morocco. By the end of the Protectorate period, conditions had been transformed to a degree that, by the mid-1960s, virtually the entire Moroccan Jewish population had chosen to emigrate to Israel, France, or the Americas. This chapter attempts to determine the factors influencing how and why this

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2 The 1870 Crémieux decree unilaterally declared that Jews native to the departments of Algeria were French citizens, with the attending rights and status (real and personal) under French law.
historic Moroccan minority community, caught between competing allegiances, ended up almost totally excluded from the definition of the nation that prevailed at independence.

**Jews in the “Morocco that Was” – Dhimmis and Protégés**

Though now reduced to only a few thousand, the Jewish community in Morocco is one of the most ancient in the world and, during the Protectorate, constituted the largest in the Muslim world (numbering close to 250,000 by 1950). While there is debate over its origins, with legends claiming they arrived during the time of King Solomon and scholarly speculation positing that they came with Phoenician traders in the 7th century B.C.E., it is certain that Jewish communities were established in Morocco by the time of the rise of the Roman Empire. The major distinction within Morocco’s Jewish community was between the *Toshavim*, these original “residents” who arrived in Antiquity, and the *Megurashim*, the “expelled” Sephardic exiles forced to leave the Iberian Peninsula in the 15th century. On the eve of the Protectorate, the Sephardic *megurashim* tended to be located in urban areas, primarily in the northern cities of Tetouan, Fez, and Rabat-Salé where they had settled alongside their Muslim counterparts who had arrived from al-Andalus. The *toshavim* were settled in both urban and rural areas, with sizable populations in Sefrou, Marrakesh, Mogador, and in the Souss region, the Atlas ranges, and the *palmeraie* oases on the edge of the Sahara.

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3 The Phoenicians established a string of colonies on the Moroccan coast including Lixis (near modern-day Larache), Tingis (Tangier), Sala (Rabat), Zili (Asilah), and Mogador (Essaouira). See Aaron Brody, “From the Hills of Adonis through the Pillars of Hercules: Recent Advances in the Archaeology of Canaan,” *Near Eastern Archaeology*, Vol. 65, No. 1, Mar., 2002, pp. 69-80.

4 This term, though specific to those leaving the Iberian Peninsula (*Seperad*), encompassed all of the Jews expelled from European Christian countries in the Middle Ages who sought refuge in North Africa.
In urban areas, Jewish communities spoke Arabic and *Hakétiya* (a Judeo-Spanish Ladino-like dialect)\(^5\) and wrote in Arabic, Hebrew, and Judeo-Arabic (written with the Hebrew alphabet). Toshavim were integrated in the countryside in both Tamazight (Middle-Central High Atlas) and Tashelhit (High Atlas and Souss) Berber-speaking areas. While Hebrew was used as a sacred text, Berber was commonly used for exposition and translation (written in the Hebrew characters), and some prayers were even recited in Berber. Haim Zafrani has published a notated version of a Berber *Haggadah* (the text used during a Passover Seder) that was used by the Jewish community in the Tinerhir oasis.\(^6\)

With the rise of Muslim dynasties in Morocco beginning in the 9th century, Jews (along with Christians) were classified, as elsewhere in the Muslim world following the 7\(^{th}\) century Pact of ‘Umar, as *dhimmi*, a “protected” religious minority. Though they did not enjoy as many rights as Muslim subjects, in exchange for paying the *jizya* tax, Jews came under the protection of the Muslim ruler, were not obligated to serve in the military, and were granted a degree of administrative autonomy in running their own rabbinical courts. With few exceptions (most notably the Almohad period of intense persecution in the 12\(^{th}\) century),\(^7\) this relatively tolerant system of protections made Morocco, and other areas of North Africa, an attractive refuge for Jews fleeing persecution on the northern

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\(^6\) A version of the *Haggadah* was published by the eminent scholar of Moroccan Jewish civilization, Haim Zafrani, with linguistic analysis. See “Ch. 11 Une Version Berbère de la Haggadah de Pesah : Texte de Tinerhir du Todhra,” in *Études Et Recherches Sur La Vie Intellectuelle Juive Au Maroc De La Fin Du 15e Au Début Du 20e Siècle* (Paris: Geuthner, 1972), 319-399.

shores of the Mediterranean. With the Andalusian influx, the Jewish community in Morocco flourished in the 14-16th centuries, with Fez becoming a major center for Jewish (and Muslim) learning. Under subsequent Merenid, Sa’adi, and Alawite dynasties, Jews were also incorporated in the makhzen as key advisors. The special relationship between the Sultan and the Jewish dhimmi became a prominent feature of urban geography in Morocco’s royal cities, particularly after the creation in 1483 in Fez of the first Jewish quarter, the mellah, adjacent to the palace.8 Due to their linguistic skills, business contacts, and the relational networks of the Sephardic diaspora, prominent Moroccan Jews were sent on diplomatic missions to Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries.9

The dhimmi status of Morocco’s Jews began to become more ambiguous in the 19th century. Under several Sultans in the early 1800s, several major Jewish merchant families were designated as royal business agents, the tujjar al-sultan, in charge of makhzen monopolies over key Moroccan agricultural and manufacturing sectors.10 At the same time, Jewish traders also served as key intermediaries for European economic interests in Morocco, which steadily grew throughout century. Under trade agreements between European states and the Sultan, these “protégés” were granted diplomatic and

8 In Fez, the Jewish quarter was constructed on a salt marsh, or mellah. The mellah in Marrakesh appeared in the 16th century, in Meknes in the 17th century, and in the 19th in smaller towns. Emily Gottreich's The Mellah of Marrakesh, (Indiana University Press, 2006), is an excellent critical reevaluation of conceptualizations of the “Islamic city,” and provides invaluable background on the role of “Jewish” space in Morocco’s urban centers.
fiscal immunity, creating tensions in the Muslim society due to the transformation of the *dhimmi* status quo that had been in place in Morocco for centuries. In tandem with the relative decline of the Makhzen’s ability to withstand European economic, military, and diplomatic pressure following the Spanish-Moroccan war of 1859-1860, the 1860s also saw the first of several Western interventions to “protect” Morocco’s Jews. In 1863, Sir Moses Montefiore, the prominent Jewish philanthropist, made a historic visit to Marrakesh to petition the Sultan to release nine Jews imprisoned in Safi and also persuaded the Sultan to issue a dahir (royal decree) granting Moroccan Jews equal rights, though the edict was subsequently largely ignored by qaids and pashas in the empire. In 1862, another form of European interventionism vis-à-vis Morocco’s Jewish communities began with the creation of the first Alliance Israélite Universelle (A.I.U.) school in Tetouan.

**Making Moroccan Jews into Frenchmen? Assimilation, the Alliance Israélite Universelle, and Protectorate Jewish Policy**

The Paris-based A.I.U. was founded in 1860, with the help of Adolphe Crémieux, an antimonarchist lawyer who authored the 1870 decree, bearing his name, naturalizing Jews living in Algeria. The A.I.U. grew out of the renewed interest on the part of French Jewry in the plight of their North African brethren in the late 19th century. The purpose of the organization was to encourage the moral progress and emancipation of Jews living in the Muslim world, principally through the propagation of French language and culture. In Morocco, the A.I.U. opened schools in the 1870s and 1880s in most of the cities, first on the coasts and in the north, and later, with much more difficulty, in the interior cities,
starting with Fes.\textsuperscript{11} The schools, even in the first school which was opened in 1862 in Tetouan (which had been under the Spanish administration in 1859-1860 and which later became the capitol of the Spanish Protectorate zone), taught Jewish students a modern curriculum in the French language and actively encouraged assimilation into French culture.

Following the establishment of the French Protectorate, the A.I.U. began to be subsidized in 1913 directly out of the Protectorate budget. Two years later, however, the Direction of Public Instruction (D.I.P.) attempted to centralize European, Muslim, and Jewish education directly under its administration. New Franco-Israélite schools were established, many Alliance schools were put directly under the D.I.P., and all of the remaining A.I.U. schools were put under the supervision of the D.I.P. pedagogical board. In 1924, however, this effort at direct administration of Jewish education in Morocco was abandoned. Most of the Franco-Israélite schools were closed, and the D.I.P. instead increased its subsidy of the A.I.U. in order to open more schools.

The apparent success of the A.I.U. schools in assimilating many of Morocco’s urban Jewish population into “modern” French culture (one indication being that in the first decades of the Protectorate many moved out of the \textit{mellah} into the \textit{ville nouvelle} in major cities) did not translate, however, into direct political dividends. During the first six years of the Protectorate, very little was done to change the position of the Jewish community in Morocco. On the contrary, Lyautey steadfastly supported the status quo:

\textsuperscript{11} In English, the most comprehensive study of the A.I.U. in Morocco remains Michael M Laskier, \textit{The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Jewish Communities of Morocco, 1862-1962} (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983).
Moroccan Jews were to remain “subjects of the Sultan.” French officials were very hesitant about making the same “mistake” as had been made in Algeria in naturalizing Morocco’s Jews as French citizens, a move that they recognized had exacerbated Muslim-Jewish tensions. As has been detailed elsewhere in this study, the “traditionalizing” orientation of the Residency in Morocco was to vigorously “preserve” what were conceived of by administrators as the existing social and legal structures in Morocco.

In this respect, it is important to note that, under the Protectorate, a firm distinction was maintained between “Moroccan Jews” and “Jews in Morocco.” The former were classified as indigènes (natives), put under the jurisdiction of the Sharifian court system, subjected to a separate tax scheme, and channeled into the Franco-Israelite or A.I.U. schools. The latter, who constituted a substantial population concentrated primarily in the coastal commercial centers, included Jews with French (including those from Algeria) citizenship or any other non-Moroccan nationality. These Jews, living in Morocco, had access to different schools and were under the jurisdiction of the French legal system. Over the course of the Protectorate period, this distinction became more and more problematic, specifically for Morocco’s Jews, who were defined as subjects of the Sultan but distinguished from his other, Muslim, subjects.

During World War I, hundreds of Moroccan Jewish youths volunteered for service, but they were not allowed to fight in military units, like thousands of their

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12 Of course, the cause of the tension was that the French differentiated between two categories of indigènes, extending citizenship rights to one and denying it to the other.

13 With the final abrogation of the system of capitulations (Britain was the last to give up its privileges in 1937), even the many Jews that had benefited from a protégé status lost these protections.
Muslim countrymen who were sent to Europe, due to their status as “dhimmi” subjects of the Sultan. They were, however, allowed to work in explosives manufacturing factories in Saint-Fons, close to Lyon, staying on after the war to found an active community. Robert Assaraf, Une Certaine Histoire Des Juifs Du Maroc: 1860-1999 (Paris: Gawsewitch, 2005), 294

Towards the end of the war, in October 1918, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Stephen Pichon, sent a letter to Lyautey inquiring about the creation of a Moroccan Jewish brigade to counter-balance the appeal of the British Balfour declaration. Lyautey strongly refused it, warning of the “deplorable effect” it would have on the Moroccan Muslim community. Francois Georges-Picot (who negotiated the British and French partition of Ottoman lands with Mark Sykes during the war) also probed the possibility of creating a Jewish battalion from Morocco and Tunisia, though he was clearly aware of the delicate nature of the proposal, which risked arousing Muslim indignation with regard to the situation in Palestine: “Of course, while being careful to not diminish our influence in the Jewish milieu, we must take the greater care to not give the Muslims of North Africa or of the East the sense that the achievement of the Zionist program in Palestine can hurt the material or moral position of Muslims in Palestine.”

Colonel Berriaud, the Director of Intelligence Services in the Protectorate, also weighed in on the proposal to create a Moroccan Jewish battalion, expressing a clear disdain for the political and military agency of Morocco’s Jews:

First, the Moroccan Jews do not have the combativity that Mr. Farb seems to assume. Unused, after centuries of servitude, to any military action, they have no conception of how to defend their person, interests, or most importantly, their ideas, by arms. Palestine seems like a marvelous utopia to them. The offer made to them is flattering, satisfying their aspirations. It is not necessary to count on them to conquer. It is doubtful whether the Zionist exodus will take anyone other than the aged and destitute from Morocco to

14 They were, however, allowed to work in explosives manufacturing factories in Saint-Fons, close to Lyon, staying on after the war to found an active community. Robert Assaraf, Une Certaine Histoire Des Juifs Du Maroc: 1860-1999 (Paris: Gawsewitch, 2005), 294
15 Ibid., 294-295
Jerusalem.17

After the war, Morocco’s “Jewish Question” continued to be debated in the French metropole and among administrators in the Protectorate throughout the 1920s. In 1927, the new Resident General, Theodor Steeg,18 convened a commission to explore the issue of the naturalization of Morocco’s Jews as French citizens in December 1927. In 1928, he signaled support for the measure in a speech to the central committee of the *Ligue des droits de l’homme* in Paris, saying: “The complete evolution of this population is very rapid, and we are looking for a means that would permit us, little by little, to let the Israelites—those who are more or less the most educated among them—to become French citizens.”19 This prospect, given the precedent of the Crémieux Decree in Algeria, seemed entirely plausible to the greater Moroccan population. On the eve of the Sultan’s trip to Fes later that year, there were widespread rumors in the major cities that a dahir had been negotiated that would naturalize Morocco’s Jews en bloc.20 Despite these assurances from top French officials, however, the Residency never concluded this type of measure would be viable, due to worries that naturalization would threaten the international legitimacy of the Protectorate treaty which was predicated on their ostensible commitment to “protect” the position of the Sultan. According to international law, Morocco’s Jews were the Sultan’s subjects. The irony of the Protectorate reality, however, was that the status of this *dhimmi* community under the “protection” of the

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17 MAE-Nantes, Cabinet Diplomatique, Carton 668, Dossier 1, Letter from Col. Berriau, head of Intelligence Service, to Adjunct Secretary General of the Protectorate, Cabinet Diplomatique, (November 24, 1918).
18 Lyautey resigned in 1925 after losing military command to Pétain during the Rif War.
19 Quoted in, Assaraf, *Une Certain Histoire*, 337
20 MAE-Nantes, Direction de l’Intérieur (DI), Questions Juives, Dossier 1.
Muslim ruler was dictated, to an increasing degree, by French “Christian” colonial administrators.

In 1918, the Residency began to reform structures regulating the life of the Moroccan Jewish community. A May 22 dahir systematized a hierarchal structure for the Jewish court system in Morocco and brought it more directly under the control of the Ministry of Justice. The courts, which previously had been supported by donations from the community, were funded directly out of the Protectorate budget. For large cities, rabbinic courts of three judges were created, clerks and bailiffs appointed, and court fees set. Smaller centers were assigned a delegated rabbi that traveled between them. Another new reform was the creation, in Rabat, of a high rabbinic court of appeals. The Moroccan rabbinic courts possessed jurisdiction only over “Moroccan Jews” (Jews of other nationalities were under the French court system in the Protectorate) and only ruled on personal status issues (including marriage, filiation, divorce, adoption, the validation of testimony, probate, and donations). Any other civil or criminal litigation was under the jurisdiction of the Sharifian court system, administered by qaids or pashas.

In addition to the judicial reforms, the 1918 legislation also set out terms for the creation of the “committees of the communities.” Previously, under the Sharifian makhzen, these committees were autonomously governed, with few directives from the state about their internal organization. The 1918 dahir created a system by which members were nominated by notables and then chosen by the Grand Vizier. The committee then elected a president, secretary, and treasurer. The committees were responsible for caring for the needy, overseeing religious foundations, and supervising
services at synagogues. As an official liaison with the Residency, the president of the Casablanca community committee, Yahya Zagury (who was actually a naturalized French citizen) was initially appointed as the inspector of “Israelite” institutions.” The shortcoming of the reforms, however, was that no structure was put in place to coordinate between the individual committees, a grievance that, in addition to the non-democratic appointment process for committee members, became a central demand for reform by the Jewish communities later in the 1940s.

In the Spanish zone, which had a much smaller population of Jews (around 15,000 concentrated in the cities of Tetouan, Larache, Asila, El Ksar el Kebir, Chefchaouen, and Nador), no reforms were initiated until March 1928, when a dahir was issued by the Khalifa reorganizing the rabbinic courts in a manner similar to that in the French zone, with a High appeals court based in Tetouan. The Rif War, which preoccupied the Spanish administration for much of the 1920s, was a major reason for this delay. Moroccan Jews enjoyed the greatest degree of latitude in participation in governance and the protection of their rights in the international zone of Tanager, where

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21 This function was limited, though, due to the fact that many synagogues in Morocco were traditionally owned and maintained by private families rather than by the community at large.

22 As a rule, with almost no exceptions (Vichy’s “statut des Juifs” being the most notable), what in English would be translated as “Jewish” was referred to by the French administration as “Israelite.” Though I occasionally follow the more common English usage, I try to reflect the distinction between the modifiers “Juifs” and “israélites,” as Moroccan Jews were referred to most commonly as “les israélites marocains” in official usage. Part of the nuance involved with the two is that “Israélite” seems to carry less of a racial connotation.

23 The representative of the Sultan who was “delegated” responsibility for administering the northern zone, in partnership with the Spanish, on his behalf.

24 In terms of the Jewish population in the Spanish zone, it is interesting to note that Jews in the Rif contributed to the Abd Al-Krim Al-Khattabi’s cause by helping with explosives manufacture, a process which included taking undetonated bombs dropped by Spanish planes and refitting them for artillery. Abd Al-Karim Al-Khattabi, himself, had occasionally visited the A.I.U. school in Tetouan when his family refuged there during his childhood. Assaraf, Une Certaine Histoire, 333
they constituted twenty percent of the total population. There, the community had a
democratic, autonomous judicial and administrative system, and Jews could also hold
positions within the city government itself.25

As mentioned earlier, one of the problematic aspects of the Protectorate policy
regarding “israélites” living in Morocco was the complex overlay of jurisdictions that
delineated vastly different legal rights depending upon nationality. The fundamental
binary distinction between European and indigenous, whether Jewish or Muslim, created
significant tensions that increased in the 1920s and 1930s as growing numbers of
Moroccan Jews, specifically the évolués educated in the French system of the D.I.P. or
the AIU, became culturally assimilated as French. In these decades, there were
increasing calls for Moroccan Jews to be transferred to the French legal system, though
the sensitivity of these demands became clear in the aftermath of the protests against the
1930 Berber Dahir.26

Despite these assimilationist hopes, the fractious Protectorate juridical structure,
in reality, continued to structurally preserve ambiguities about the identity of the Jewish
minority in Morocco. In 1937, a probate case in Salé involving the Encaoua family
created a quandary illustrating how complicated these ambiguities could become. On the
death of Rabbi Raphael Encaoua, his son Mikhail claimed that the inheritance should be

25 Ibid., 302-307
26 In an article addressing this question in one of Morocco’s largest Jewish newspapers, the author asserted:
“We are certain that the case of Moroccan Jews cannot be equated with that of the Berbers. We are
persuaded that in conferring an authority on the Berber jemaas that officially took them from under Muslim
justice, the Protectorate government wanted, in allowing these peoples to evolve in their traditional
framework, to manage their future. That future, as far off as we wish, includes the expansion over all of
Morocco of French jurisdiction which will crown an evolution carefully favored and guarantied over every
obstacle.” L’Avenir Illustrée, June 6, 1931.
divided according to “Mosaic” (rabbinic) law rather than French law, despite the fact that his grandfather, Mardoché Encaoua (a rabbi and businessman in Salé), had been naturalized as a French citizen in 1870. The grandson claimed that, according to Moroccan law, naturalization was good only for his grandfather, but not to any other successive generations, including his father and himself. They could not lose their Moroccan nationality. This is one of the rare cases where a Moroccan Jew fought in court to protect their status as a subject of the Sultan. More frequently, the cases went the opposite direction, with Moroccan Jews fighting to confirm French citizenship or another nationality, in order to more advantageously benefit from probate settlements. In Salé in 1938, a Jewish businessman, Meir Lugassy, protested a decision made by the French consul in Tangiers regarding the nationality of his wife’s maternal uncle, Abraham Benoliel. The probate process had been complicated by the multiple nationalities claimed by him and his two brothers. Abraham, since deceased, had been a Moroccan subject; his brother Joseph (and his children) had been naturalized as Portuguese in 1889, and the third brother, Salomon (who passed away in 1921), had legally been a French protégé. Lugassy faced the daunting task of figuring out his wife’s potential inheritance, which depended on whether rabbinic, Portuguese, or French laws would apply, as all had different provisions for the inheritance rights of male and female relatives of the family.

In another case, the French Diplomatic Office in Rabat was trying to figure out in 1940 if the daughter of a Jewish man, Mr. Taieb, who had passed away that year, would

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27 MAE-Nantes, Séries Maroc, Cabinet Diplomatique, Carton 670, Dossier General. Note from Director of Sharifian Affairs, State Section (May 28 1937).
receive her father’s property, which consisted of two buildings in Rabat, as an
inheritance. The answer depended on whether she was legally French or a Jewish. Mr.
Taieb, her father, was born in Tunis in 1880 and married an Italian woman, Maria
Bartoloni, in Bizerte in 1906, in a non-Jewish wedding. The two had their daughter in
1903, three years before the marriage. In 1920, the Taiebs were naturalized as French
citizens in Tunisia before moving to Rabat. The French Diplomatic Office held the
daughter should inherit, because of how civil status was regulated under the laws of the
Tunisian regency, but this depended on whether her father had recognized her as his
legitimate daughter at the moment of marriage in 1906 or at his naturalization in 1920. If
she was recognized at either point, she should inherit as a legitimate daughter according
to French law. If not, they believed she would legally be under mosaique (rabbinic) law
and would not inherit. When the authorities presented the case to the High Rabbinic
Tribunal in Rabat in October 1940 for consultation, the court replied that rabbinic law did
not recognize the legitimacy of a marriage consecrated by another authority, in this case
the Tunisian civil court. Furthermore, even if it had been a religious marriage and the
father had recognized her as his child, she would not have inherited because her mother
was a non-Jew at the time she was conceived. In the end, the poor woman did not inherit
because as a non-Jew and as an illegitimate daughter according to French law, she had no
rights to her father’s estate in either jurisdiction.29

29 MAE-Nantes, Séries Maroc, Cabinet Diplomatique, Carton 670, Dossier General. Note from head of
Financial Property Conservation Service, “Dévolution de la succesion de M. Achille Taieb, israélite
d’origine tunisienne, naturalisé français,” (November 13, 1940).
The assimilationist trajectory of many of Morocco’s Jews, which had been initiated by the A.I.U. through the expansion of French schools in Morocco in the second of the 19th century and which gained momentum as the Protectorate state created an economic and bureaucratic system favoring French language and culture, increasingly created a highly problematic framework of identity. Two issues in particular, legal jurisdiction and military service, brought the “Jewish Question” in Morocco into sharp relief. In the legal system, Moroccan Jews were differentiated from their European coreligionists with other nationalities, from non-Jewish Europeans, and from Arab and Berber Muslim Moroccans. Likewise, on another fundamental criterion of “national” identity, the opportunity to die for the “nation,” Moroccan Jews were prevented from identifying with France or Morocco. They were prohibited from fighting for France in either world war, which might have strengthened a case for their naturalization as French citizens due to their having shed blood for the patrie.\textsuperscript{30} They were also prevented from dying for Morocco: the creation of “Moroccan” Jewish brigade was also prohibited by the authorities because it would have provoked tensions with the Moroccan Sultan by creating a blasphemous innovation, Jews serving in the military, which contravened Islamic law and the “traditional” order of Moroccan society.

\textsuperscript{30} Moroccan Jews were completely aware that denying them the right of military service implicitly entailed a denial of equal belonging in either the French or Moroccan nation. During World War II, this awareness led many to demand they not be treated as “second-tier Moroccan subjects” by not being allowed to join the French army, in reference to the fact that Muslim (mostly Berber) Moroccan colonial troops were fighting in the Allied campaigns in Italy and in France itself. MAE-Nantes. Séries Maroc, Direction de l’Intérieur (DI), Carton 111. Letter from Col Chevroton, Head of the Meknes Region to the Director of Political Affairs, (November 15, 1944).
Zionism—Jewish Nationalism in Morocco during the Protectorate

These fissures in Moroccan society regarding the status of Jews within the “national” community were further complicated by increasing Zionist activity in the Protectorate in the 1920s and 1930s. Prior to the Protectorate period, Morocco’s Jewish communities had a long history of communication and interaction with colonies of Moroccan Jewish immigrants (olim) that had moved to the Holy Land over the centuries. In addition, strong links maintained within the Sephardic diaspora also tied Jewish communities in Morocco to those in Palestine (in addition to Istanbul, Alexandria, and elsewhere on the North African coast). One manifestation of these ties between Morocco and Palestine was the triennial delegation sent from Palestine to North Africa, the Chalich Colel, to raise benevolence funds for the Jewish communities in Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed, and Tiberias.

The advent of the political Zionist movement in the 1890s created a new wave of initiatives, now through Zionist organizations, to strengthen ties between North Africa and Palestine, a development that created tensions with the non-Zionist A.I.U., which was, of course, already heavily invested in the region. Herzl directly criticized the A.I.U., in fact, as its purpose—European cultural assimilation—was diametrically opposed to his own goal of creating a political entity that could function as a national homeland. 31 Another prominent early Zionist thinker, Nahum Sokolow, also aimed criticism at the AIU’s pedagogical emphasis on French culture, particularly in its schools in the eastern Mediterranean, rather than the Turkish or Arabic language. He

recommended they should instead work towards equipping a Breton-style group of Jewish peasants, with practical agricultural skills, rather than spending their energy replicating the Parisian bourgeoisie.\(^{32}\) Within Morocco, one of the first Zionist figures to try to organize a movement in Tangier and Fes was Nahum Slousch, who had been commissioned in 1918 by Lyautey himself to study the questions of reorganization of the Jewish community committees and rabbinic courts. Slousch encouraged Zionism as a form of Jewish nationalism within the Moroccan Jewish community and directly criticized the A.I.U. for being overly influenced by Western liberalism.

Another significant early Zionist attempt to mobilize in Morocco was through the existing structure of the regular benevolence missions sent out to North Africa on behalf of the Jewish communities in Palestine. The hardships of World War I in the eastern Mediterranean gave rise to new calls for assistance, and special relief collections were taken up on behalf of Jews, including Moroccan Jewish colonies, in Palestine.\(^{33}\) Facing a sharp increase in the number of these missions and the potential political sensitivity of the participation of Zionist groups, the Residency introduced new procedures to regulate them. In order to prevent abuses, Lyautey required the delegates to apply for a permit (the trips had to be coordinated with the French consul in Jerusalem and the Resident

\(^{32}\) Ibid., 196

\(^{33}\) In the summer of 1918, the Jewish Committee of Safi in Morocco sponsored a campaign to raise funds for its counterpart in Jerusalem and a collection was gathered in the major Moroccan cities. MAE-Nantes. Sérès Maroc, Cabinet Diplomatique, Carton 668, Dossier 1, Letter No. 1667 from Chief of Municipal Services in Safi to Resident General Lyautey.
General in Rabat) and limited the number of recognized Palestinian benevolence societies to six.  

In general, the official stance of the Residency towards Zionist activity in Morocco was antagonistic, due to fears it would provoke the Moroccan Muslim population. Abraham Israel, the president of the Jewish Community Committee in Fes, founded the *Shibat Zion* organization in the Spanish zone in Tetouan in March 1919. Similar requests in the French zone for the creation of affiliated branches of the *Fédération Sioniste de France* in Fes and Oujda were denied by the French Residency. The Protectorate authorities, however, did sanction Zionist educational activities, including the creation of schools teaching Modern Hebrew. The first, Maghen David, was created in Casablanca in 1920 and others followed in the 1930 including Fes (1931), Oujda (1935), Sefrou (1936), and two more in Casablanca in 1943. In some ways, these Zionist schools paralleled the activities of the Muslim Free Schools, creating a foundation for Jewish cultural nationalism through the teaching of the Hebrew language, nationalist hymns, and the use of Zionist symbols.

In Lyautey’s view, Zionist activity was bad for Morocco’s Jews and bad for Morocco’s Muslims: how could French authorities condone Jewish nationalist activity and not *de facto* let the same thing occur on the Muslim side? Zionism posed a combustible threat on many fronts because it inflamed contradictory nationalisms—Jewish and Muslim—and heightened emotions on both sides, especially as the conflict

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between Jewish and Arab Palestinians escalated later in the 1930s. In a letter to the French Minister of Foreign affairs sent after the war in September 17, 1919, Lyautey carefully delineated the position of Moroccan Jews under the protection of the Residency and stressed the potential hazards of Zionist political activity:

The Moroccan Jews have no need to look for help outside to ensure the defense of their interests, of which my Residency and the Makhzen have never lost sight. The reorganization of their institutions...the creation of Rabbinic courts and of special sections in the municipal assemblies; the granting of large indemnities for damages suffered in 1912, during the pillage of the Mellah of Fez; the regulation of open collections for the Jews of Palestine; have given them immediate and concrete satisfaction, both on a practical and moral level. All of these are testimonies to the goodwill that the Protectorate demonstrates towards them.

I will add that the Sultan, the Makhzen and the higher and enlightened Muslim class, on which we rely and which gives us the most solid base for the Protectorate, sees the Zionist activity in the worst possible light, a fact that has been reiterated over and over again. In this, there is a political and governmental factor, unique to Morocco, that cannot be neglected.

In its application, Lyautey’s policy was to prohibit any Moroccan-based corporate Zionist organization, but to allow individual support for Zionism. According to Lyautey, this decision was justified because Palestine was principally a British interest, Morocco’s Jews were content under the French Protectorate and had no interest in creating a national homeland somewhere else, and Zionist propaganda would have a negative impact on relations between Jews and Muslims in Morocco. On this last point, he worried that Zionism could destabilize the French position in Morocco, which was built upon the appearance of “partnership” with the Moroccan authorities.

This restrictive policy in Morocco, however, drew the ire of several Zionist organizations in the mid-1920s, particularly after the Zionist paper, Ha-Olam (The

World), was banned in the Protectorate. In a reply letter to the World Zionist Organization in London, which had demanded freedom of association for Zionist organizations in Morocco and free circulation of *Ha-Olam*, Lyautey explained that individuals could contribute the *shekel* and belong, as individuals, to an external Zionist organization. He also allowed a delegate of Keren Hayesod\(^{37}\) to take up collections and pledged not to block families who wanted to emigrate. However, he warned against the negative repercussions of Zionist propaganda in Morocco and their potential for aggravating a “fanaticism,” referencing Muslim persecution, from which the Jews had for a “long time suffered.” Lyautey also stressed that the Sultan formally refused “to tolerate any propaganda which would lead to a reduction of the number of his Jewish subjects.”\(^{38}\)

In effect, Lyautey argued that, because Morocco’s Jews were subjects of the Sultan, it was an extremely delicate matter to allow any sort of effort to target them with an opposing national sovereignty.

The dilemma of competing demands on the loyalty of Morocco’s Jews, between the sovereignty of the Sultan over his Jewish subjects and the appeals of a Jewish nationalist movement, continued to be problematic for the community as the situation in Palestine deteriorated in the 1930s.

Following the 1929 riots in Palestine, the Residency authorized Josué Cohen, a journalist and delegate of *Keren Kayemet L’Israel* (Jewish National Fund), to hold meetings in Casablanca and Fes to raise funds for families of the victims of the massacres

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\(^{37}\) Literally, “the Foundation Fund,” this fund-raising initiative was established at the 1920 World Zionist Conference in London.

\(^{38}\) MAE-Nantes. Séries Maroc, Cabinet Diplomatique, Carton 668, Dossier 2, letter from Resident General Lyautey to Zionist Organization of London (June 26, 1926).
in Safed and Hebron, but forbade any mention of the nationalist objectives of the Zionist movement. The funds were to be channeled through the Office of Israelite Institutions and then sent to the French Consulate in Jerusalem for distribution in Palestine.\textsuperscript{39} In the summer of 1930, collections were taken up in Meknes, Oujda, Marrakesh, Fez, and Mazagan. When the Arab Revolt broke out in Palestine in 1936, however, fundraising by the Jewish National Fund was prohibited, following vehement protests by the Muslim Moroccan community. In response to a demand from the French Senator, Justin Godart, to appeal the decision, the Residency justified their ban on Zionists fundraising by pointing out the contradiction of allowing a pan-Jewish political movement freedom of action in a country in which they were worried about the spread of pan-Islamism and pan-Arabism:

\begin{quote}
It could only cause trouble to allow Zionist organizations to carry out, with the official support of the Protectorate government, their direct propaganda within the Jewish community of Morocco, which to the present has remained outside of the pan-Jewish political movement, at the same time that we are using every means to fight against an external action by Muslim agitators who use the call of pan-Arab and pan-Islamic doctrines. \textsuperscript{40}
\end{quote}

In the late 1930s, the Residency further hardened its stance on Zionist activity in Morocco, due to continued fears of its potential to increase Muslim-Jewish tensions (exacerbated by the Arab Revolt in Palestine and the rise of Nazi Germany in Europe) and undermine their position in North Africa. On the eve of World War II, Resident

\textsuperscript{39} MAE-Nantes. Séries Maroc, Cabinet Diplomatique, Carton 668, Dossier 2, Note de Renseignement, “Propagande Sioniste,” (May 7, 1930).
\textsuperscript{40} MAE-Nantes. Séries Maroc, Cabinet Diplomatique, Carton 668, Dossier 2, Letter from Counselor to the Sharifian Government to the head of the Diplomatic Office in Rabat, “Objet: Propagande sioniste au Maroc.”
General Noguès summed up the delicate position of the Jews in Morocco and the French stance towards any attempt to mobilize this population politically:

It is necessary to not lose sight of the unique position of Moroccan Jews, submitted to strict obedience to the Sultan, subject to the same regulations as Moroccan Muslims in terms of nationality and naturalization, forming, in the interior of Morocco, large communities in constant contact with Muslim communities.

In the terms of the Protectorate treaty, we have formally undertaken the responsibility to safeguard and respect the traditional prestige of the Sultan. This pledge does not only oblige us to maintain harmony between Jews and Muslims, which is often fragile due to the latent antagonism that traditionally opposes these two elements of the Moroccan population, and which recent events, whether in Germany or Palestine, have a tendency to reawaken. We must also avert all propaganda liable to birth within the Jewish communities subject to the Sultan any hint of independence, any separatist aspiration that could soon be exploited against us.41

For the French administration, the prospect of Jewish nationalism taking root in Morocco with the expansion of the Zionist movement presented a threat against the colonial nation-building project over which they hoped to continue to maintain control. The rival claims of Zionism on the political loyalties of Morocco’s Jews also threatened the construction of the Moroccan nation that the Moroccan nationalists began defending in the 1930s.

Jews and the Moroccan Nationalist Movement

For Moroccan Arabophone nationalists in the 1930s, Morocco’s Jews presented a dilemma. How did Morocco’s Jews fit into the Moroccan nation they were involved in defining—as dhimmi, subjects, or citizens? This question begged a parallel question: what status did Muslim Moroccans have in the Moroccan nation—subjects or citizens? As was emphasized in the last chapter, the nationalists constructed a definition of Morocco, following the Berber protests, that was built on the twin pillars of unifying the judicial system under Islamic law and unifying an Arabic-based educational system. In this definition, the place of Morocco’s Jews in the nation was problematic. A further stress was the assimilationist threat, including the regular lobbying efforts in France itself to give Moroccan Jews the right to become naturalized as French citizens as had happened in Algeria. In the struggle for sovereignty that began to be waged in the 1930s, these issues raised the profile of the basic question of who actually served as the “protector” of Moroccan Jews—the Residency or the Sultan.

The controversy over the status of Jews in the Protectorate was a major issue addressed in the nationalist press of the early 1930s. One flashpoint of the tension over sovereignty concerned the right of Moroccan Jews to convert to Islam. In 1932, Isaac El Harrar, a Jew who had been practicing Islam for ten years, went to the municipal authorities in Mogador (Essaouira) to make his conversion official; according to the journal, *Maghreb*, he was subsequently persecuted by French Civil Controller and by the local Jewish community. The French authorities rejected his request, saying it was a personal matter, despite his protests that he wanted to be under the same laws and courts
as fellow Muslims. El Harrar then went to Rabat to get his conversion registered, buying Moroccan clothing to dress like other Muslims. According to the article, on his return to Mogador, four policemen had to be stationed at his house to guard him from attacks from the Jewish community. His Jewish cousins tried to have the Adjunct Civil Controller force him, in accordance with Jewish law, to divorce his wife (with whom he had five children) and to return a dowry of 50,000 francs. El Harrar, however, told the controller that, as a Muslim under Islamic law, he did not have to grant the divorce request or give back the dowry. The matter would have to be decided in shari’a courts. The controller in Mogador forced him to give up his property, forbade him to see his kids, and expelled him from the city. Caught between the French administration, the Sharifian Makhzen, and Jewish authorities in Mogador and Rabat, the article reported that he eventually appealed to the Sultan.  

For the nationalists who printed the story, the case underscored the problem with the French system of a fragmented sectarian judiciary and supported their case for a uniform application of Islamic law.

The question of the place of Morocco’s Jewish minority in the nation also commanded substantial coverage in the Fez-based L’Action du Peuple, edited by Mohamed El Ouezzani. In August 1933, Ouezzani argued, in reference to the Berber Dahir, that France should give all Moroccans, and not just Berbers, the same guarantees stipulated in the French penal code safeguarding individual liberty, but preserve a distinction between Muslims and Jews in terms of civil law. Lumping the Berber Dahir

and the initiatives to naturalize Morocco’s Jews together, he warned that Arabs
themselves would end up a persecuted minority:

There will be an exceptional jurisdiction for the Arab if France continues to follow the
present course towards granting Jews the right of naturalization. He [the Arab] will
become a minority, and, like every minority, will be repressed because he is kept in an
inferior position vis-à-vis the Berber, the Jew, and the European. In conclusion,
Moroccans, and above all the elite, would like to have, for civil, Islamic law for the
Muslim element (Arab and Berber) and Hebraic law for the Jewish element.43

In a series of exchanges between nationalists and Moroccan Jewish leaders in the
paper, it is possible to see the difficulty of harmonizing the nationalists’ frame of Arabo-
Islamic national unity with the perspectives of Morocco’s significant Jewish minority on
the question of identity. Mohamed Kholti, in an article in August 1932, “Les Israélites et
nous,” related that his Jewish friends in mellah and ville nouvelle had asked him what the
attitude of Muslim youth was towards Muslim-Jewish relations in the future, a question
they had raised after the outbreak of protests following the arrest of Ben Massaoud (the
Moroccan Jew, mentioned earlier, who had converted in Mogador). Kholti’s response
emphasizes the historic solidarity of Moroccan Muslims and Jews, contrasting the
tolerance and freedom Jews have enjoyed since they took refuge in Morocco with the
European Christian anti-Semitism displayed in the “pogroms of the Romanians” and the
“Hitlerian inquisition in Germany.” He also stressed the importance of solidarity
between Moroccan Jews and Muslims with regard to the injustice of the French
Protectorate system. Responding to a campaign by a Casablanca lawyer, Mr. Busquet, to
renew demands that Morocco’s Jews be naturalized as French citizens, Kholti argues this
would violate the 1912 treaty and foment discord between the two races by inaugurating

an era of favoritism for a minority in the country: “For the jurisdictions, it is necessary to admit that the Muslim suffers like them, from the same evil. We cannot apply there, too, two weights and two measures.”

In the next months, the paper included several articles written by Moroccan Jews that positively affirmed Moroccan Muslim-Jewish unity. The next issue carried a letter from a young Moroccan Jew, responding to Kholti’s article, who agreed Morocco’s Jews should not forget the hospitality “extended to our fathers when they were expelled from Spain and Portugal.” He also pointed out that during the tumultuous time leading up to the imposition of the Protectorate an Arab delegation had stood guard on the ramparts by the gate of the mellah to protect against rebel tribes. Another article, titled “Judeo-Muslim Friendship,” reported a joint statement issued by Jewish and Muslim notables in the Spanish zone celebrating the historic tolerance and friendship between the groups and rejecting propaganda encouraging the Jews to assimilate. It also recalled the centuries of tolerance and shelter offered by the Moroccan Muslim people and called on the Jews and Muslim to remember this history.

In the September 8, 1933 issue, a Jewish leader in Fes, Isaac Bendayan, mentioned an attempt in 1928 to create an association, “El Tsihad el Chabiba Islamia Israeliia el Magribia” (Union of Moroccan Muslim-Jewish Youth) which the French authorities had rejected. He lamented that the educational system had virtually no teaching of the Arabic language, history, or of Moroccan geography. He concluded by declaring his opposition to a “Crémieux decree” for Morocco, but also

voiced concern about the spread of anti-Semitism in the Moroccan populace and called on the “Young Moroccans” (some of whom published the paper) to denounce it.46

While there were attempts to build on these affirmations of Judeo-Muslim Moroccan unity, the increasing tensions over Zionist activity in Palestine created a major barrier. In a January 1934 article on “the role of Jewish youth in the Moroccan evolution,” Kholti affirmed the solidarity of Moroccan Muslims and Jews but warned:

Zionism must be discarded by the Jewish youth as a sentiment of oppression. We will never allow it in our relationship. A Moroccan who loves his country must aspire to work for it. Every other preoccupation must be eliminated. Naturally, our compatriots can be Jews as much as they want. That is a problem of internal order. Zionism is a factor of outside domination and disorder in the Moroccan country.47

Later in March, he discussed “Zionism and Moroccan patriotism,” again arguing that naturalization would give Jews rights they will quickly exploit against Muslim Moroccans and would constitute a violation of the commitments made by France to respect the political character of the Sultan and his subjects.48 Kholti affirmed later, though, that Jews and Muslims should have equal treatment and equal participation in the political domain:

For I consider that he [the Jew] is Moroccan, and that he must be treated like other Moroccans without consideration of religious ideas that he professes, which remain for me an element of personal belief which does not affect the will of us who want to see our country unified under the reciprocal tolerance of a penetrating liberalism. The Jews born and living in Morocco are Moroccans. The international and political contingencies created by the “Metropole” cannot be decided otherwise, without annulling the contract with the Sultan.

This more civic definition of the Moroccan nation, however, was mutually exclusive with any other political loyalties, as Kholti concluded: “for us, Zionism, in its nationalist form, cannot be accommodated with Moroccan nation.”

The nationalists’ antagonism against Zionism continued to be expressed the following spring. In March, Kholti warned of the dangers of Zionist propaganda, focusing on the recent conference sponsored by the Netter Association that encouraged donations to help Zionists in Palestine. He asked why Jews, and not Muslims, have the right to organize political gatherings like that.\(^49\) In April, a column warned Zionism threatened to sow discord between the Jewish and Muslim communities in Morocco and could have grave repercussions:

The Jews can be Zionists as much as they want outside of Morocco... But in a country where they have lived for centuries and where they are called to benefit at the same time as Muslims from the advantages of social evolution, to show less zeal and more tact towards what I may call the Zionist “proselytism” becomes an absolute necessity.\(^50\)

Later in that issue, another column warned of an alarming report from Tangier of a march of the Jewish Scouts through the streets upon their return from a trip to Gibraltar, carrying a Zionist flag and playing music. A group of four hundred Moroccan Muslims had approached the Mendoub (the Sultan’s delegate in the International Zone) to protest this, saying that “The Jews, here, only have one flag: the flag of Morocco. How can they carry another without considering the consequences of these gestures?”

These discussions in the nationalist press reveal the critical transitional nature of this period in which the Moroccan nationalists were framing the boundary lines of the


nation while attempting to mobilize popular demonstrations of anti-French protest. The 1934 *Plan de Réformes* demonstrates the synthesis they were trying to achieve in defining a Muslim, yet liberal, polity. The Plan called for the unification of the judicial system—including civil, commercial, and penal jurisdictions—under a single code inspired by Muslim law, with provisions for the continued operation of rabbinic courts. At the same time, it also proposed granting equal civic rights to all Moroccans (Muslim and Jewish) and called for universal suffrage without distinction to religion in the election of Moroccan representative councils at a municipal and national level. The potential for using the difference of the religious “other” within Morocco was also a temptation though. In 1933, nationalists tried to help mobilize more support on the eve of the May 16\(^{th}\) Berber Dahir anniversary by distributing tracts and delivering speeches calling for demonstrations against the impiety of Jews in Morocco and their affront against tradition.\(^{51}\) Numerous factors over the next several years further complicated relations between the Moroccan Arab nationalists and Moroccan Jews: these include the outbreak of Muslim-Jewish violence in Constantine in August 1934 in Algeria,\(^{52}\) the growing antagonism in the Protectorate throughout 1935 between French parties on the Left and Right,\(^{53}\) the outbreak of the Arab Revolt in Palestine, and the historic victory of the Popular Front in 1936.


\(^{52}\) Simmering Muslim-Jewish tensions broke out into a pogrom against the city’s Jewish population, after a Jewish man was accused of urinating on the wall of the Sidi Lakhdar mosque. Robert Attal, *Les Émeutes De Constantine: 5 Août 1934*, Collection "Terra Hebraïca" (Paris: Editions Romillat, 2002).

\(^{53}\) Most Moroccan Jews were aligned with the Socialist Party and enthusiastically supported the rise the Léon Blum-led Popular Front. Tensions were high in 1935 between the French Left and Right in Morocco partly because the Resident General at the time, Marcel Peyrouton, was a notorious anti-Semite (who later
In 1937, there was another round of Muslim-Jewish dialog about the definition of the Moroccan nation when the nationalist press (which had been shut down since 1934) was allowed to begin publishing again. In February, the pro-Zionist Jewish paper, *L’Avenir illustré*, published an article by A. Sannoum exhorting the Moroccan Jewish community to maintain a close friendship with their fellow Muslim Moroccans, which “had been the strength of our fathers and which needs to continue to be ours.” He urged both the young educated Muslim elites and the young Jews to “walk hand in hand” in trying to fulfill the nationalist claims first and then to work out the precise nature of rights and responsibilities of Moroccans, both Muslim and Jewish. Most of Morocco’s Jews were more concerned about the rising anti-Semitic threat and political developments in Europe in the mid-1930s, however, than the aspirations of the Moroccan nationalists. In an article reporting on a meeting of the *Ligue Internationale Contre L’Antisémitisme*, the Moroccan nationalist leader, Ahmed Bouhlal, urged Jews to remain loyal to the Moroccan nation, assuming the same rights and responsibilities as Muslims in Morocco:

> We have called to them and we will not cease to call to them to remain in this great family which is the Moroccan nation, where, under the protection of Muslim monarchs, from the weakest to the strongest, they have lived in mutual understanding with their Muslim compatriots.

Bouhlal exhorted them focus on preserving the “indissoluble union between Muslims and Jews, in a strictly Moroccan national framework, for the good of our common patrie, for served as Vichy minister). While the Left called for his dismissal, he enjoyed the support of the *Croix de Feu* and other French rightist parties that had been formed in Morocco during the Protectorate.  

the general interest of our collectivity.”55 Another article, two months later, chastised young Moroccan Jews for being enamored with socialism:

Young Jewish comrades whose cries of enthusiasm are “Vive Trotsky! Vive Léon Blum! Dedicate some to our sovereign Sidi Mohamed and our young prince Moulay Hassan. Young comrades, be conscious of your duties as Moroccan citizens, try to understand your Muslim compatriots, create sporting groups and clubs where the Moroccan youth can learn of the duties of man.56

The article, significantly, was titled, “The Jews and Us,” implicitly drawing a distinction between the two groups, Jews and Muslims. At the same time, it urged Jews to recognize the common sovereign over both, which symbolized the unity of the Moroccan people.

In the next issue of the Fez-based paper, A. Samoun, the secretary general of L.I.C.A. in Morocco, responded that Morocco’s Jews did not feel fully included within the nation: “We are neither Moroccan, nor French. We have the situation of being Moroccans to whom you freely attribute burdens but not the least privileges. The day when you tell us exactly what we are, attributing to us our duties as well as our privileges as a citizen, will be the day we will take a position.”57 Though legally defined as Moroccan, Samoun complained that Jewish nationality was second class. He called on the Young Moroccans, in turn, to fight anti-Semitism, citing the circulation of Goebbels-written Nazi propaganda in Arabic translation in the Fez medina that had been sent by Moroccan nationalists in Tetouan via the British post. The response to this letter, written under the pseudonym, “El Mesquine,” reiterated the central nationalist grievance that France was treating Morocco like a colony, rather than a Protectorate, and chided

Moroccan Jews for wavering in their identification with the Sultan and the Moroccan nation:

We cannot, in effect, accept that there is a difference from a national point of view between Arabs, Berbers, and Jews. We want all to be Moroccans. And this title we freely attribute to you. You also said that a November 21 dahir fixed your nationality. Yet, it is not possible to declare: “We are neither Moroccan nor French.” Moroccans you are: French? That is not even a question. France, by the way, is not here to make the Jews of Morocco into French citizens, but to help our country in its national reform and to help the Sultan consolidate his authority over the whole Empire. You must recognize that authority. And when you blurt out that “the Sultan is nothing but a figure-head,” we start to understand you.58

In an example of the tension created by Jewish assimilation into French culture, very few Muslim notables (though many were invited) attended a soirée benefit held by the alumni association of the Rabat A.I.U. school for those suffering from the drought and famine in Morocco’s south. One of the invitees, known for his sympathies with the Moroccan nationalists, publicly refused to come because the invitation was written in French not in Arabic.59

The Jewish community, on its side, was highly sensitive about the apparent collusion of Tetouan-based Moroccan nationalists, including Abdelhalek Torrès, in disseminating anti-Semitic tracts and publishing anti-Semitic columns in the northern nationalist press. There were also complaints by the Jewish community in the French zone about the circulation of anti-Semitic propaganda in the Fez and Rabat medinas. In August 1936, a tract was reportedly circulated in the medina of Rabat, allegedly given by Mohamed Lyazidi to a former editor of Es-Sa’ada for distribution, that warned “Muslim

59 MAE-Nantes, Direction de l’Intérieur (DI), Questions juives, Dossier 24, Bulletin de Renseignements, Région de Rabat, (August 17, 1937.)
brothers” that France had fallen into the hands of Jews (referencing the rise of the
Popular Front headed by Léon Blum, who was Jewish) and that, in Palestine, the Jews
were “assassinating Arabs after despoiling them of their lands,” with British protection.60
This last bit of propaganda could likely have been authored by French members of right-
wing parties upset about the elections, as the Moroccan nationalists, during the summer
of 1936, were in fact doing their utmost to curry favor with Blum’s administration, not
spread anti-Semitic propaganda against it.

While the rise of a Jewish Prime Minister in France probably did not generate
antagonism from the Moroccan nationalists, the outbreak of the Arab Revolt in Palestine
in 1936 certainly did. Literature originating in the Middle East was circulated in
Moroccan cities, detailing the threat towards Muslims posed by Jewish immigration to
and settlement in Palestine. Moroccan pilgrims who had performed the hajj to Mecca
that year brought back tracts written by the “Committee for the Protection of the Al-Aqsa
Mosque and Holy Places of Islam in Jerusalem” that warned of threat to the al-Aqsa
mosque posed by Zionist settlement and activity in Palestine.61 Locally, Muslim-Jewish
relations were also strained in the aftermath of the September 1937 cycle of contention in
Meknes instigated by the controversy over the Boufekrane waters. After the
confrontation, in which the municipal police force violently attacked the Moroccan

60 MAE-Nantes, Direction de l’Intérieur (DI), Questions juives, Dossier 24, Report from Civil Controller,
Région de Rabat, to Director of Political Affairs, No. 605, “A/S Tracts anti-juifs”, (August 7, 1936.)
61 The tract was taken from a Tijani sharif, Si Mohamed Zemrani of the Gzennaia tribe, who had picked it
up during a visit to Fes. It had apparently been imported by pilgrims returning from Mecca. MAE-Nantes,
Direction de l’Intérieur (DI), Questions juives, Dossier 24, Report from General Lauzanne, Région de Taza,
to Director of Indigenous Affairs, (May 25, 1938).
demonstrators, the crowd returned to the medina and turned on the mellah, damaging forty-three businesses.

The significant increased activity of rightist French organizations in France as well as in Morocco in the 1930s also increased a feeling of insecurity on the part of Morocco’s Jewish population. In Meknes, one of the fascist strongholds for the French colon population, anti-Jewish graffiti was repeatedly written on the city walls in the ville nouvelle and the medina, including the slogans: “Here is a Jewish house, a house of profiteers;” “Jews belong to a different race than ours; they form a vast nation of exploiters and thieves;” “The Jewish congregation has taken more than half of our riches. We must confiscate the fortune of the Jews, made through exploitation and thievery, to pay back the French workers.” In addition to these anti-Semitic threats in Morocco, the Jewish community was intensely concerned about the gathering clouds of war and repression against Jews in Europe. During the mid-1930s, the International League Against Anti-Semitism (L.I.C.A.), which had been founded in Paris in 1927 was able, after facing years of hostility from the Residency, to found committees in 1935 in Fes, Rabat, Casablanca, Meknes, Mogador, Marrakesh, Oujda, and Tangier. The organization was aligned with other leftist organizations with branches in Morocco including the League for the Rights of Man and Citizen (Ligue des Droits de l’Homme et du Citoyen) and the Socialist Party. With the rise of the Popular Front, L.I.C.A. made several efforts in 1936 to unite a common front with Muslim organizations, though this initiative lost momentum as the conflict escalated in Palestine. L.I.C.A. also became

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62 MAE-Nantes, Direction de l’Intérieur (DI), Dossier 24, Renseignements No. 559, (May 18, 1938).
active in calling for boycott of German products following the issuance of the Nuremberg laws in 1935.\textsuperscript{63}

In 1938, another concerted effort was made by the Jewish community in Morocco to embargo all German and Japanese products within the Protectorate. In addition, a campaign to counter the Nazi propaganda that was infiltrating the Protectorate via the Spanish zone was also launched. Clearly, Moroccan Jews put their hopes in France’s ability to forestall the Nazi threat. An anti-German tract distributed in the French zone in December of 1938, for example, reads:

\begin{quote}
You must know that:
Those that work with Germany are responsible for the massacre of your brothers.
Each one who gives a penny to Hitler forges a weapon against you.
Every purchase from Germany prepares your death.
The boycott against German products, that is your motto, as noble as it is sacred
Buy French and you make the free nation that protects and defends you.\textsuperscript{64}
\end{quote}

When the war broke out for France and its empire in 1940, however, Jews in Morocco quickly faced a transition to Vichy rule that would destroy their confidence that the “Protector” could be trusted. This experience seriously challenged any remaining hope that cultural assimilation would yield political rights.

\textbf{Vichy and the Statut des Juifs: Jews, NOT Frenchmen}

The lead-up to the war in the fall of 1939 reactivated the critical question of whether Moroccan Jews would be allowed to serve in battle for any “nation,” whether France or Morocco. In October, a campaign to enlist Jews in the French zone as

\textsuperscript{63} MAE-Nantes, Séries Maroc, Cabinet Diplomatique, Carton 29
\textsuperscript{64} MAE-Nantes. Séries Maroc, Cabinet Diplomatique, Carton 670. Note de renseignements : Politique anti-allemande, (December 30, 1938).
volunteers for the war effort was instigated by S.D. Levy, a businessman, Raphael Benzaref, a journalist, and Helen Cazes-Benattar, a lawyer. Over 1,300 signed up in Casablanca and more offices were opened in major cities. Facing this broad-based campaign to mobilize Jews in North Africa to enlist, the French Ministry of National Defense sent out a memo to the commanders in the three countries specifying that non-naturalized Jews, primarily those in Tunisia and Morocco, were under the same status as native Muslims, which created obstacles to their direct incorporation into the French military. While an exception was made so Tunisian Jews could be admitted to the infantry division being formed in Narbonne (certain medical specialists were also allowed to join regiments forming in the Toulouse), the Moroccan Jews, as subjects of the Sultan, could not be admitted at all into the French forces. They were also not able enlist and join Moroccan Tabor regiments being formed due to restrictions on the participation of Jews in the military.65

The Residency commissioned the noted sociologist, Robert Montagne, to do a study on the potential use of Moroccan Jews in the war, which he submitted in October 1939. His recommendation was generally favorable to the proposal, but he worried about where they would be placed in the army. As subjects of the Sultan, they could not be incorporated into metropolitan units because Muslim Moroccans could not either. It would also be difficult, in his view, to incorporate them with Moroccan units of tirailleurs (indigenous sharp-shooter regiments) or spahis (indigenous light cavalry

units), due to their different “mentality” which would require different modes of instruction. Creating a Moroccan Jewish regiment was also not practical because it would take too much time, and he also advised against putting them in the Foreign Legion. Late in the fall, the Moroccan Jewish volunteers were finally told they would not be able to serve, reinforcing the uncertainty of their position in the Moroccan nation. Moroccan Jews were, by definition, excluded in part when the Sultan, in his November 18th, 1939 Throne Speech, urged all Moroccans to strongly support France in the war and to send encouragement to Moroccan troops serving on the front in France.

From the other side, the fall of France in June of the next year and the subsequent consolidation of Vichy rule dealt a serious blow to the assimilationist option for Morocco Jews. As the legislative machinery of the regime started to operate during the summer of 1940, a series of laws began to articulate a redefinition of the French nation along ethnic lines, which had major repercussions for Jews living in metropolitan France and for the large Jewish communities living under French rule in North Africa. While Germany’s swift victory in May-June 1940 demythologized French military power in its colonies, the Vichy regime’s legislative oeuvre dealt a similar blow to the France’s image as a “liberal” beacon of human rights and emancipator of the Jews.

On August 27, 1940, the Vichy government abrogated the 1938 Marchandeau law punishing any attack through the press against a racial or religious group, a key move that opened the floodgates for anti-Semitism in the French press. In October, the French government enacted its first comprehensive anti-Jewish legislation, the statut des Juifs (literally “Status of Jews”), creating a second-class category of citizenship for French
Jews that forbade nearly all Jewish participation in public life. Essentially Nuremberg Laws à la française, the statute’s racial classification (more inclusive even than that of the Nazis) defined a Jew as an individual with three Jewish grandparents, or just two if one’s spouse was also Jewish. Jews were banned from any public posts in the government, the military (except for veterans of World War I or those who had distinguished themselves in battle in 1939-1940), or any other positions of public influence, which included positions in the media.

In North Africa, the statut des Juifs was implemented unevenly, depending on various local circumstances in each country. It was implemented the most swiftly and comprehensively in Algeria. Just four days after the statute was passed in France, the Crémieux decree was abrogated on October 7, immediately depriving Algerians Jews of their French nationality. The developments in Algeria were welcomed by Muslims and French colons and viewed with indifference by the majority of Moroccan Jews. Algerian Jews living in Morocco, however, faced a dramatic reversal of fortunes, as they no longer enjoyed the privileges of French nationality which allowed them to enroll in French schools and to be under the French legal jurisdiction. In an ironic twist, because

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66 The measure was passed in France on October 3 but was not immediately enacted in the empire, as the local colonial administrators were charged with its application. In North Africa, the Algerian Governor General acted quickly to enact it, while the Resident Generals in Tunisia and Morocco took more time, as the statutes had to be negotiated with the local rulers, the bey and the sultan.

67 Security reports on reactions among the population to the decree in Oujda and Meknes state that many French and other Europeans felt the decision put North African Jews “back in their place at last.” This sentiment was echoed by Muslim who resented the double-standard applied to Algerian Jews, as exclusively having a right to French citizenship. For Moroccan Jews, there was some sense of satisfaction that Algerian Jews were now in the same place as them. MAE-Nantes, Direction de l’Intérieur (DI), Statut des Juifs, Dossier 5, Notes de Renseignements, No.217 and No. 432.

68 Provisions were made in the Statut for Jewish veterans of World War I, or between 1939-1940, to retain their French citizenship. In February 1942, however, these stipulations were tightened and only decorated veterans or those injured in the war (and their progeny) could retain their status as French citizens.
there had never been a Crémieux decree for Morocco’s Jews, they actually ended up in a better position than Algerian Jews during the Vichy period. The Sultan actively moved to “protect” his Jewish “subjects” from the faux French “Protector” which was implementing anti-Semitic measures.

It took a month to negotiate the Moroccan version of the *statut des Juifs*, which was finally signed on October 31, 1940. In the Moroccan version, the definition of Jewish identity was amended from that used in the Vichy France to simply read “*tout israélite marocain*,” or all Moroccan Jews. The key difference in this definition was that, instead of the racial classification used by Vichy (which did apply to non-Moroccan Jews residing in the French zone), Moroccan Jews were designated as a “religious” category at the insistence of the Makhzen. Due to the precedent established in Lyautey’s strict classification of Moroccan Jews as subjects of the Sultan, the Sultan retained this leverage over Residency officials during the war. As “Commander of the Faithful,” he was obliged to protect Morocco’s Jews as *dhimmi*. Equally, the Sultan insisted on a sectarian definition of “Jewish” identity, at least for Moroccan Jews, because he also had an obligation to protect Jewish converts to Islam. The racial classification used in Europe would nullify the meaning of conversion within Muslim society.

The Vichy legislation in Morocco regarding the status of Jews further laid bare the Protectorate’s hierarchical status system which had been the target of the Moroccan nationalists’ ire throughout the 1930s. In this colonial apartheid, economic, political, and

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69 The dahir was published in the *Bulletin Officiel*, No. 1463, November 8, 1940, pp. 1054-1055. The Jewish Status was delayed even longer in Tunisia.
legal rights were tied to one’s ethnic status\textsuperscript{70} as access to education, jobs, legal systems, and even health care was determined according to whether one was French, non-French European, indigenous Jew, or indigenous Muslim, whether Berber or Arab (not to mention the restrictions based on gender discussed in the next chapter). Algerian Jews living in Morocco were forced down a rung in this hierarchy under the \textit{statut des Juifs} and were no longer admitted into the “European hospitals.” They were forced to use the “indigenous” health care facilities, just like Moroccan Muslims and Jews, unless there were extenuating circumstances in which a certain type of care was only available in the European medical system or there were political priorities necessitating special treatment.\textsuperscript{71} While Moroccan Jews had already been denied these services as “indigenes,” the anti-Semitic legislation resulted in their being purged from jobs working for the Protectorate administration (where many held positions in the postal and transportation ministries) and from positions including teachers,\textsuperscript{72} journalists, and those involved in cinema.

In the midst of these Vichy-inspired measures, the Makhzen itself also launched an initiative in the spring of 1941 aimed at restoring a lost social order in Moroccan society.\textsuperscript{73}

A circular letter (apparently instigated by the Grand Vizier, Mohamed El Mokri) was sent

\textsuperscript{70} The expression of this system in urban geography is thoroughly examined in Abu-Lughod, \textit{Rabat, Urban Apartheid in Morocco}.

\textsuperscript{71} MAE-Nantes, Direction de l’Intérieur (DI), Statut des Juifs, Dossier 5. Circulary letter from Direction de la Santé Publique et de la jeunesse (June 16, 19410), “Hospitalisation des juifs algériens.”

\textsuperscript{72} Special provisions were made for separate educational centers, however, including the AIU system, where Moroccan Jews were allowed to continue to teach.

\textsuperscript{73} In citing this example I do not intend to equate the Makhzen with the Vichy regime. It does, however, reveal a desire, at least among some in the Makhzen, to exploit an opening to reassert controls that were perceived to be lost since the founding of the Protectorate. This period in the negotiation of how Moroccan Jews fit in a Moroccan Muslim society had critical legacies in the subsequent decade leading up to independence, leaving many with the lingering feeling of less-than-full incorporation in the Moroccan nation being defined in the independence struggle.
out instructing pashas and qaids to enforce a ban on Muslim women working in other peoples’ homes (namely Jews) as domestic servants. The justification provided in the letter for this prohibition provides insight into perspectives within the Moroccan government about the position of Jews, and of “Muslim women,” in society and the inappropriateness of crossing social boundaries:

This situation [Moroccan women working in Jewish home], of which you cannot be unaware, threatens the respect of the Muslim woman and debases her dignity. In addition, it creates a reputation for her that our religion condemns and which tends to encourage Jews to disdain Muslims and forget their condition as dhimmi. Under no circumstances must they, under penalty of exposing them to the dangers that they apprehend, depart from their traditional life and the limits in which they have been always been placed.

In order to follow in the glorious paths of our august ancestors, may God hallow their souls, we have preserved the security of Jews; we have permitted them to live with our Muslim subjects, in an atmosphere of calm and peace.

Also, pressed in part by our wish to safeguard the dignity of the Muslim woman, and in other part, due to the fear that this situation might provoke grave troubles, we ordain you to formally prohibit Muslims from working, publicly or in secret, in the homes of Jews and to ensure that this prohibition will be rigorously and effectively observed.74

In this order, the position of Moroccan Jews within the nation remained relegated to a second-tier dhimmi status, protected to some extent but not on equal footing with Muslims.

The fiction of a French “Protector” further dissipated for Morocco’s Jews in 1941 as Vichy repression escalated. In March, the Vichy government in France created a General Commission for Jewish Questions, headed by Xavier Vallat. Vallat, upset about the lack of thoroughness with which the previous statut des Juifs had been applied, issued a new version on June 2, 1941, which required a census of all Jews and their property in

the Free Zone (this had already been carried out by the Nazis in the northern zone).

Vallat was particularly interested in ensuring that the census was carried out in French North Africa and that the new “Jewish status” laws were fully implemented there. It took until the end of the summer for the legislation to be worked out in Morocco, where four dahirs were signed on August 5th and published in the *Bulletin Officiel* on August 11th regarding its application. The new status added to the list of professions from which Jews were banned, but a special provision was made to exempt artisanal industries, due to fears of the impact of destabilizing this critical sector in which many Moroccan Jews worked. The decrees called for a census of all non-Moroccan and Moroccan Jews, including a declaration of their “Jewish identity according to the law, their civil status, their family situation, their profession, and the state of their property.” The decree about the census caused intense consternation among the Jewish community, which was aware of the progress of the “Final Solution” in Europe. That fall, the census was carried out with varying degrees of efficiency in different parts of Morocco.75

Despite these attempts to more systematically implement the Jewish status laws in 1941, it is important to note that the Residency remained hesitant for fears of disrupting the already fragile war-time economy in the Protectorate, several sectors in which Jews

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75 In the reporting on the census back to the Residency, it is clear there was a very high degree of variability in how the census was carried out. In some regions, including Fes, it was rather random, while in the Casablanca region (the one with the largest Jewish population), it was much more thorough. In Casablanca, the census was taken between September 20-25 and detailed information on the nationality, professions, and property of all Moroccan and non-Moroccan Jews were tallied. It is interesting that, in the report for the Civil Controller of the Casablanca Region, thirty-four different nationalities were registered for Jews living in Morocco (in addition to French and Moroccan). Out of these nationalities, only American Jews living in Morocco were exempted from the census and did not have to declare their property. “Recensement des juifs, résultat des opérations,” (May 1, 1942), MAE-Nantes, Séries Maroc, Direction de l’Intérieur (DI), Dossier 6, “Statut des Juifs pendant la Seconde Guerre Mondiale (August 1940-May 1945).”
had influential positions. These economic concerns consistently overrode a strict implementation of the Jewish status regulations, and a system of appeals was created in the fall of 1941 for Moroccan and European Jews to request special dispensations. Exemptions were granted for exceptional services rendered to France and for Jews functioning in professions deemed vital to the economy of the Protectorate. The appeals process was left up to regional heads, however, who were given latitude to make decisions based on the “personality, morality, activity, and influence” of the requestor and, of course, based on the economic repercussions envisioned. The Direction of Political Affairs for each region was in charge of creating and maintaining files on each of the requestors.76

In 1942, an official described the sensitivity involved in intervening in the situation of “Moroccan Jews” and how this might affect the Muslim indigenous population:

Even if it is true that there is higher interest in eliminating the French or foreign Jews from certain professions, in Morocco, without a doubt, the Moroccan Jews form an integral part of the autochthonous population, and we must see if it is necessary to apply the legislation with less rigor. In fact, their activity might prove indispensable for the economy of the Protectorate.77

To assess the degree to which Moroccan Jews were indispensable to the Protectorate economy, after having completed the census, officials tried to process the data based on region, professions, and the commercial and industrial situation to determine the impact

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77 MAE-Nantes, Séries Maroc, Direction de l’Intérieur (DI), Statut des Juifs, Dossier 6. Circulary No. 7 from Director of Public Security Services, Cordier, to Secretary General of the Protectorate, (April 20, 1942).
of a full application of the *statut des Juifs*. In many cases, officials tended to towards pragmatism in actually applying the Jewish status. For example, when French parents complained that a Jewish woman (born in Oran, Algeria and who claimed her father was French), Madame Poizot, was teaching at the rural French school in Inezgane, the Director of Public Instruction responded that if he made her leave, he would have to shut the school down. He stated, “The inhabitants of Inezgane should be happy to have a teacher, even if her origins are suspect.”\(^78\)

At the same time, the Protectorate also sent disturbing signals exacerbating an increasingly insecure overall situation for the Jewish community in Morocco in 1941-1942. In July 1941, the Direction of Political Affairs in Rabat devised a plan, ostensibly to solve the “overcrowding” problem in Casablanca, to sequester Jews that had moved into the *ville nouvelle* since 1939 back into the medina. In memos, Protectorate authorities counted on the Moroccan tradition of Jews living in “ghettoes” to justify their expectation that the measure would generate little protest among the Moroccan population, and officials hoped this could be the first step towards having all of the Jews move back into the *mellah*\(^79\). Later that month, on August 22, 1941, an official dahir was issued forbidding Jews to live in the European sectors of cities in all of Morocco; the problematic decree forcing Jews back into the *mellah* was applied in Fes and Meknes,

\(^78\) MAE-Nantes, Séries Maroc, Direction de l’Intérieur (DI), Statut des Juifs, Dossier 5-6. Letter from Director of Public Instruction to Secretary General of the Protectorate. “Objet: A/S de Mme Poizot,” (February 9, 1943).

though in Casablanca, the fact that the Jewish population was so much larger created logistical challenges that limited how thoroughly the decree could be implemented.\textsuperscript{80}

In contrast to the increasingly repressive legal measures directed at Jews in the French Protectorate, Jews in the Spanish zone lost none of their rights. The Spanish government actually disseminated propaganda during the war calling on Sephardic Jews in occupied Europe and in the French Moroccan zone to apply for Spanish nationality. In a twist on \textit{limpieza de sangre}, these appeals were based on an argument that differentiated between “national” Spanish Jewry versus “international” Jewry: only the former, Sephardic Jews, were part of the pure Spanish race and were welcome in the nation. Ironically, using this type of racially \textit{inclusive} criteria created a natural interest among Jews to apply for Spanish nationality due to the inferior status they had been subjected to under French rule in North Africa and elsewhere in Europe. In many respects, this Spanish “nationalization” of Jews mirrored the Makhzen’s struggle to maintain a distinction between Moroccan Jews and all other Jews in the Protectorate and a strenuous rejection of legislation treating the two as the same.\textsuperscript{81} This turning of the tables also created an incentive for the Moroccan Jews to take refuge in their \textit{dhimmi} status in the French zone, allying with the Makhzen against the Residency.

\textsuperscript{80} The Director of Political Affairs at the time, Augustin Guillaume (who would later be appointed Resident General in 1951) instructed municipal authorities to delay enforcing law passed in August until after the Jewish High Holidays in September. Another problem in Casablanca was that Jewish refugees from Syria had moved into vacant homes in the \textit{mellah} and there was little to no room for families that had left. MAE-Nantes, Direction de l’Intérieur (DI), Statut des Juifs Dossier 5-6. “A/s recasement de certains juifs dans les mellahs.” (September 14, 1941).

\textsuperscript{81} MAE-Nantes, Séries Maroc, Direction de l’Intérieur (DI), Statut des juifs Dossier 5-6. Letter from Director of Political Affairs to Secretary General of the Protectorate, “Objet : Statut des juifs : Extension au Maroc de la législation métropolitaine postérieure au 2 juin 1941,” (May 9, 1942).
In the French zone, the situation for Jews deteriorated further in the summer of 1942 as the shock troops of the Vichy-inspired French national revolution, the *Service d’Ordre Légionnaire* (S.O.L.), grew in strength in Morocco. That fall, November 15 was fixed as the date for the beginning of an active campaign against Morocco’s Jewish population. Posters around Casablanca invited the public to gather outside of the *mellah* the night of the 15th, to begin the process of purifying France. In addition, the week before, one of the major French newspapers, *La Vigie Marocaine*, ran the first of a series of articles titled, “Le S.O.L. est pour la pureté française contre la lèpre juive” (The S.O.L. is for French purity and against Jewish leprosy) on November 7th. These plans were foiled, however, on November 8th, as the Anglo-American invasion of North Africa, “Operation Torch,” dramatically shifted the balance of power and forestalled the further escalation of anti-Semitic persecution under Vichy rule.

In this context, the arrival of American troops in Morocco, understandably, was ecstatically welcomed by Moroccan Jews. The anti-French sentiment prevalent at this moment was evident in a Judeo-Arabic song that circulated through the country’s *mellahs*, “Get out O French, Morocco is not yours. America has come to take it, your domination is over!” Despite this enthusiasm, the arrival of Anglo-American troops did not signify an end to French rule or even the immediate end to Vichy rule in North Africa, as the Allies chose to keep the French administration in place. The *statut des Juifs* itself was not immediately revoked either, and it took significant pressure from Algerian Jews (who had lost the most due to the Jewish status laws) on Allied

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82 Assaraf, *Une Certain Histoire*, 455.
83 Ibid, 466.
commanders in Algiers to have their French nationality reinstated. One significant development that did result directly from the fact that the United States entered the European theater via North Africa was that the plight of North African Jews moved to the center of focus for American Jewish organizations, and it was pressure on Roosevelt from the Jewish American press that finally led him to force the French Commander of North Africa, Henri Giraud, to break completely with Vichy, including a measure that abrogated all racial legislation in North Africa, in March 1943.

In addition to increased American attention to Moroccan Jews as a result of the contingencies of the war, Zionist organizations were also faced with a dramatic opening to expand their activity in Morocco in the mid-1940. As the North African Jewish community grappled with the failure of the assimilationist option in the aftermath of the Vichy experience, Zionist representatives sent to North Africa sought to exploit the increased attraction, particularly for the youth, of their own appeal to Jewish nationalism. An effort was made, despite an official ban on the creation of Jewish sporting clubs or organizations in place since 1930, to encourage the formation of Zionist-oriented sporting teams in soccer and basketball under the auspices of the alumni organizations of the A.I.U., which were allowed. Outreach to youth was also carried out in the creation of sections of the French Scouts (Eclaireurs de France) with only Jewish members: in 1945 these existed in Rabat, Casablanca, Marrakesh, Fes, Oujda, and Mogador. Several separate scouting troops were also created for Jewish girls, and summer camps were organized in the Middle Atlas for both groups. While the only officially recognized Jewish youth organization was the Association de la Jeunesse Juive Charles Netter (an
assimilationist organization founded in 1928), in the mid-1940s several secret pro-Zionist organizations were also functioning in Morocco, including a section of Beitar, the Revisionist Zionist youth movement, called *Tel Hai*.

Which Istiqlal? Caught between Moroccan and Israeli Independence

The Vichy interlude dealt a serious blow to assimilationist hopes for Morocco’s Jews; the anti-Semitic legislation which revoked the citizenship for naturalized Jews and the evidences of French collusion with the Nazis decreased the attraction of this option in the years immediately following the war. Instead, the community faced the dilemma of being caught more and more between two the rival allegiances of two nationalist movements, Zionist and Moroccan, whose mobilization was accelerating towards independence. After the war, Zionist organizations began much more aggressive activities in the region, including the facilitation of clandestine immigration in limited numbers from North Africa to Palestine. At the same time, Istiqlal, which had been created at the end of 1943 with the support of the Sultan, and which had delivered the Manifest of Independence on January 11, 1944, had begun to openly and actively press for “independence.” Despite the assurances in the Manifest of Independence about the granting of equal civil rights in the Moroccan state, hostility between the Muslim and Jewish communities increased in Morocco in the period between the end of the war and

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the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, which further intensified the already ambivalent question of Moroccan Jewish identity.

Though the Vichy threat to the community had subsided after the Allied landings, a sense of insecurity increased throughout the course of the war and afterward, as Jewish-Muslim tensions also mounted and broke out at intervals into violent episodes. One of the first of these occurred in the summer of 1944 in Sefrou, a small city where the Saiss plain southeast of Fes begins to rise into the Middle Atlas mountains.\(^8\) On Sunday July 30, 1944, many Sefraoui Jews were participating in the *Tisha B’Av* commemoration of the fall of the Temple in Jerusalem to the Romans in 70 C.E. In the *mellah* at 11:30 A.M, there was an altercation between a Jew and a Moroccan colonial soldier (*goumier*). A fight broke out when the *goumier* refused to go to the local police station and began beating up the Jewish man’s sister. A neighbor, Ichoua Keslassi, then tried to intervene to protect the woman. As the fighting escalated, a group of four hundred *goumiers* from a military camp outside the city arrived and began to attack, with clubs and large stones, sections of the city in the *mellah* and the *ville nouvelle* in which Jews lived. One of the most violent focal points was the *Em Habanim* building in the *ville nouvelle* where a large group of Jews were praying. The door was broken through just as the head of the

\(^8\) Sefrou is the site where Clifford Geertz and a team of anthropologists, including his wife, Hildred, and student, Lawrence Rosen, from the University of Chicago carried out extensive field work between 1965-1971. While Geertz references his findings in Sefrou in many of his works, the book that came out of these studies is Clifford Geertz, *Meaning and Order in Moroccan Society: Three Essays in Cultural Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979). Sefrou is also the town in which Paul Rabinow was based for his fieldwork in the late 1960s, which he discusses in Paul Rabinow, *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977)
local police arrived and fired his pistol in the air to get the goumiers to stop. In the aftermath, the Pasha of Sefrou had over two hundred Jews arrested, twenty-five of whom were condemned to prison terms ranging from a few months to a year. Only three of the goumiers involved in the attacks were condemned. In addition to their heightened sense of vulnerability after the attack, the apparent double-standard in the disproportionate punishments meted out provoked an intense protest by the Jewish community in Sefrou and in other Moroccan cities.

A couple of months later, this sense of vulnerability was reinforced with another attack on an urban Jewish population, this time on Rosh Hashana in the mellah of Meknes on September 23, 1944. Again, an argument was the spark catalyzing a broader, more systematic pogrom. This time, a Jew in the mellah asked a Muslim policeman to expel his sister’s ex-husband from his house. The gendarme took both men to the station, then arrested the brother who had complained and freed the ex-husband. When the jailed man’s brother came to get him out, the Muslim policeman went outside and called for the Muslims of the city to come to his aid against “Jews who had insulted Islam.” Hundreds headed through the medina to the mellah and began sacking houses and small shops, until, several hours later, the French municipal authorities sent in Senegalese troops to stop the pogrom. In Casablanca, the following year, in the midst of “Victory in Europe” day celebrations on May 8th, 1945, fights broke out between Muslims and Jews leading to eight arrests, and on the same day in Marrakesh, an altercation between Jewish and

86 MAE-Nantes, Séries Maroc, Direction des Affaires Chérifiennes (DAC), Carton 323, “Émeutes à Sefrou” (August 3, 1944).
87 MAE-Nantes, Séries Maroc, Direction de l’Intérieur (D.I.), Dossiers 24, Report from General de Division Suffren, Chef de la Région de Fès, to Director of Political Affairs, regarding “Incident du 30 Juillet à Sefrou,” (September 4, 1944).
Muslim youths escalated into a huge brawl. Jews in the crowd had to flee, passing back through the Gueliz neighborhood towards the mellah, where the gates had to be locked in order to prevent a wider riot breaking out in the medina.

Residency officials were highly sensitive to how far French prestige had fallen among the Jewish population in the country following Vichy-rule. This hostility was clearly evident in the refusal of many of the Jewish communities, including the mellah of Fes, to display any signs of celebration upon the liberation of Paris in August 1944. The anti-Jewish riots in Sefrou and Meknes and a perceived tacit tolerance by the Protectorate administration only exacerbated these feelings. In reports on the état d’esprit of the Jewish population, French authorities expressed concern that the youth were turning overwhelming towards Zionism. A November 1944 report by the Department of Political Affairs reported the following on Morocco’s Jewish youth: “They consider, first of all, the fact that for the moment, they are deprived of a nationality, as the Muslims consider them not as Moroccans, but as simple protégés of the Sultan (dhimmis)”\footnote{MAE-Nantes, Direction de l’Intérieur (DI), Questions juives, Dossier 2 (1944-48), “Note de Direction des Affaires Politique : Au sujet de la réorganisation des comités des communautés israélites,” (November 30, 1944).} In an attempt to respond to Jewish concerns, the Residency initiated a reform of the committees of the communities that had been established in the 1920s, creating a more representational structure in which members were elected, the number on the committee was also expanded, and they were given a more representational role in the Protectorate administration.
These attempts by the Residency to win back loyalty from the Moroccan Jewish community in the post-war milieu had to compete both with Zionist outreach emanating from Palestine and the much increased activity of American Jewish organizations in North Africa after the war. In November 1944, a Moroccan delegation attended the World Jewish Congress in Atlantic City where they presented reports on the situation of Morocco’s Jews in terms of education, housing, social problems, the reform of community organization, and political rights. Following the war, the World Jewish Congress and U.S.-based Jewish organizations became much more proactive in pressuring the French diplomatically, specifically to change the legal status of Moroccan Jews, renewing a campaign to grant Jews rights as French citizens. In a letter to the French ambassador to the United States, Henri Bonnet, the Secretary General of the W.J.C., Leon Kubowitzki, complained that, as “subjects” of the Sultan with less than full citizenship rights, the position of Moroccan Jews was actually worse under the French Protectorate than at other times in Moroccan history. Under the French, while positions were reserved for Muslims and French in the Sharifian government, Jews were prohibited from serving in the civil service. The letter went on to complain that Jewish courts had lost their autonomy since the arrival of the French, due to the fact that their jurisdiction had been limited to civil status cases, with all matters devolving to the Sharifian courts. He concluded by calling for the Residency to put all Jewish civil and commercial cases under French law.89

89 MAE-Nantes, Direction de l’Intérieur (DI), Questions juives, Dossier 2. Letter from Dr. Leon Kubowitzki, Secretary General of World Jewish Congress to Henri Bonnet, French ambassador to the United States, (July 11, 1947).
Following the war, North Africa’s Jewish population, and Morocco’s large community in particular, became a major preoccupation for the Zionist movement. After the Holocaust, the importance of this potential reservoir of immigrants was dramatically increased, and there was a sharp expansion of Zionist activity among the Moroccan Jews. The Residency finally approved the creation of an independent Moroccan branch of the Zionist Federation, with Prosper Cohen serving as the first Secretary General. As tensions mounted in Palestine in 1947, however, Zionists working in Morocco were forced to conduct most of their activities in secret, due to the sensitivities of the Moroccan Muslim population.

The contest between Zionism and Moroccan nationalism for the loyalty of Morocco’s Jews intensified throughout 1947 and 1948. During the Sultan’s landmark visit to Tangier in 1947, the city’s Jewish leadership pledged their allegiance to the sovereign during a ceremonial tea with Moulay Mohamed. In the aftermath of the speech, which provoked a strong response from the French government in Paris, Morocco’s Jews were disturbed by the escalating showdown between the Residency and the Palace leading to the dismissal of Eirik Labonne and his replacement by Alphonse Juin as Resident General. The open affiliation with the pan-Arabism of the Middle East by the Sultan, and his strong emphasis on Morocco’s Muslim character created worries for the community. Explicit warnings by the Sultan in private audiences with Jewish leaders that advised them to remain loyal and faithful subjects, distancing themselves from Zionism, also did not help assuage these concerns.
After the announcement of the United Nation’s Palestine partition plan in December 1947, Istiqlal began organizing an anti-Zionist campaign in the spring. Tracts were disseminated attacking the plan and affirming Moroccan identification with the Palestinian Arabs; these also attacked the Residency for forbidding Moroccans from volunteering to help fight. The ambivalence of Istiqlal about Morocco’s Jews was evident in the organization of a boycott against Jewish businesses in all of Morocco’s cities and of European business suspected of pro-Zionist sympathies, despite official proclamations that warned against anti-Jewish sentiment in Morocco. The boycott targeted pharmacies, cinemas, bus companies in Fes owned by Jewish owners, and eventually included a boycott of all American products, after the United States recognized the state of Israel. In these campaigns, Moroccan nationalist women took a leading role, including the wife of Allal al-Fassi, who held regular gatherings of the notable women in Fes to encourage the boycott. Women also contributed to the Palestinian cause by donating jewelry to Istiqlal’s fund raising effort on behalf of the Arab cause.90

A week after the declaration of independence by the state of Israel, the Sultan delivered a radio address on May 23, 1948, strongly cautioning his subjects against any violence against the Moroccan Jewish population and urging them to distinguish between the events in Palestine and the situation of the Moroccan national community: “They [Muslim subjects] must know that the Moroccan Jews—who for centuries have resided in the country under the protection of its rulers, receiving the best welcome, and who have

faithfully testified to their complete loyalty to the Moroccan throne—are different than the uprooted Jews who have been led from all the corners of the world towards Palestine, which they have unjustly and arbitrarily seized.” In a note of warning that immediately followed, however, the Sultan warned his Jewish subjects to “avoid any sensitive act of supporting the Zionist aggression or manifesting any solidarity with it, because by doing so, they will threaten not only their individual rights but also their Moroccan nationality.”

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In the summer of 1948, the war in Palestine became a central issue for the Moroccan nationalist movement, a cause that they seized upon as a means of mobilizing popular support. In this mobilization framing, the distinction emphasized by the Sultan between the events in Palestine and the position of Morocco’s own Jews was purposefully blurred, with anti-Jewish sentiment targeted at the local population. In one of the newspapers of the Partie Démocrate de l’Istiqlal (P.D.I., the branch under the leadership of El-Ouezzani), Al-Ra’i al-‘Amm, the call for a boycott against Jewish products in Morocco was renewed, with the author asking: “From a religious point of view, does the Quran not say that Jews are the most implacable enemies of the believers? It is necessary to avoid all business with these Jews who exploit you and despoil you of your property, and then support your enemies and the enemies of your religion. All cooperation with these impudent Jews, after their massacre of our brothers and the conspiracy against our homelands, will be an unpardonable crime.”

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91 Speech quoted in Assaraf, Une Certaine Histoire, 521.
92 MAE-Nantes, Direction de l’Intérieur (DI), Question juives, Dossier 26, Clipping from Ar-Ra’i Al-‘Amm, (May 12, 1948).
That summer, the eastern Moroccan city of Oujda, a key point through which clandestine Jewish immigration to Palestine via Algeria and Marseille passed, witnessed the most intense episode of anti-Jewish violence during the Protectorate period. On the morning of June 7, 1948, three policemen had to intervene to free a Jewish barber, Albert Bensoussan, from a group of Moroccan nationalist activists who were beating him up after accusing him of carrying hand grenades and of attempting to cross the nearby Algerian border to emigrate to Israel. A little later, an argument about Palestine between a Jew and Jewish convert to Islam, Mr. Ben Kiran, in the covered textile market turned violent, and Ben Kiran was stabbed. Gravely injured, Ben Kiran went to a nearby boutique owned by the Marciano brothers, two Jews, who tried to bandage him up. A police inspector arrived and began to question them, and at the same time, a rumor spread from three cafés at the Attarine and Figari squares that “A Jew killed one of our brothers!” Very quickly, a pogrom commenced in Oujda, with a systematic pillaging of Jewish businesses in the ville nouvelle and in the mellah. The Mokhzani (Moroccan troops) sent in to quell the attacks joined rioters. The French Foreign Legion troops stationed in Oujda had been engaged in exercises outside of the town, and took awhile to arrive on the scene, first posting a guard around the European section of the city before intervening in the medina. By the time the pogrom was stopped, there were five deaths, fifteen injured, and 200 million francs of Jewish property had been destroyed.93

Authorities in Oujda relayed news about the riots to the nearby mining town of Djerada, where no immediate disturbances were reported. Around seven in the evening,

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however, two buses arrived from Oujda. According to the official investigation, several of the passengers began to spread rumors that Jews had killed Arabs in Oujda and that the minaret of the grand mosque had been destroyed. A large crowd then began to form in the market, and at about 8 p.m., children began throwing rocks at two Jews at the *fundouk* (inn) and at a kiosk owned by another Jew on the square. When the owner of the kiosk sold a losing lottery ticket to a Muslim, the man started kicking the kiosk and throwing stones at it. This set off the crowd (which had grown to close to two thousand people), who set the kiosk on fire and, armed with sticks and mining axes, began to attack and pillage Jewish establishments in the *mellah* and *kissaria* (covered market). The entire community of Jews in Djerada, numbering 117, was threatened, and many took refuge with Muslim neighbors while others fled to the European quarter of city. By the end of the attacks, thirty-seven Jews were killed (including ten women and ten children) and twenty-seven were injured. Afterwards, the French authorities arrested C.G.T. union leaders who they believed had received an order to instigate the attacks from the Istiqlal leadership in Oujda.

The attacks in Oujda and Djerada created a widespread sense of fear among all of the Jewish communities in Morocco and particularly those living in isolated pockets in eastern Morocco, including Debdou, Taourirt, and Berkane. Several days later, tensions between Istiqlal and the Sultan over the exploitation of anti-Jewish sentiment in mobilizing nationalist support were demonstrated in the murder of the pasha of Oujda.

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94 MAE-Nantes, Séries Maroc, Direction de l’Intérieur (DI), Questions juives, Dossier 26, Report from Civil Controller of Oujda to Resident General Juin, (June 19, 1948), 7-12
95 Confédération Générale des Travailleurs.
On June 11, Pasha Hajjaoui, who had energetically fought to put down the earlier riot, delivered a speech in the name of the Sultan harshly condemning the rioters and calling for a solemn homage for the dead in Djerada. After the speech, he went to perform prayers at the Grand Mosque and, while kneeling, was stabbed in the back by Mohamed Ben Touhami Berreheli, who had ties to the Istiqlal leadership in Oujda. The extreme volatility of Muslim-Jewish relations in Oujda was further demonstrated when, after the attack, another rumor spread that the Pasha had actually been attacked by a Jew disguised as a Muslim and that a bomb had been planted that was going to blow up the minaret of the Grand Mosque. The French Civil Controller had to immediately send criers around town to tell the truth to the population in order to avert the risk of further attacks.

These isolated incidences had a profound psychological impact among Morocco’s Jews, undermining the vestiges of trust they placed in the Protectorate administration, which they blamed for failing to prevent the attacks and for delaying in stopping them, and in the Sultan and Makhzen, whom they blamed for provoking the attacks with the speech delivered in May after Israeli independence. After the events in Oujda and Djerada, the Makhzen instructed the qaids and pashas in Morocco’s cities to meet with the Jewish committees to reassure of them of their protection. But, they also were to remind them that they were forbidden to demonstrate in favor of Zionism or the state of Israel. Istiqlal itself also issued an official statement that the enemy was Zionism not Moroccan Jewry. Despite these assurances, the rate of Jewish immigration to Palestine began to increase in 1949. That year the Resident General legalized Zionist immigration activity, approving the opening of a registration office in Casablanca and the opening of a
transit camp at Mazagan by the Zionist organization, Kadima, which began sending more than six hundred per month to Israel, a number that increased throughout the early 1950s.

Conclusion

The plight of Morocco’s Jews during the Protectorate was directly impacted by the confrontation between competing appeals to their loyalty emanating from France, Morocco, and the Zionist state being constructed in Palestine. While the “status” of Morocco’s Jews had been in flux since the 19th century, with the creation of a protégé class of Jews with special capitulatory privileges that differentiated them from dhimmi and the assimilationist cultural outreach of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, the four decades of the Protectorate accelerated a profound revolution in the social, cultural, and economic position of the majority of the Moroccan Jewish population. In the midst of these transformations, the question of their “status,” be it dhimmi, protégé, or citizen, became an increasingly problematic issue for the Moroccan Jewish community.

On the assimilationist side, despite the rapid “Europeanization” of much of the urban Moroccan Jewish community during the Protectorate, cultural identification with France did not translate into political rights. Initiatives to naturalize Morocco’s Jews as French citizens were steadfastly blocked by Residency officials intent on preserving the status quo with the Moroccan Sultan. Jewish confidence in the French “Protector” was severely shaken after the Vichy interlude in which their “Jewish status” had deprived them of most of their rights. At the same time, though grateful for the efforts of the Moroccan Sultan to shield them from these initiatives, many Moroccan Jews remained
skeptical about throwing their lot in completely with the Moroccan nationalists. Doubts lingered that, in the Arabo-Islamic core framing of Moroccan identity, they would truly be included as equal members of the nation, despite attempts by the nationalists and the Makhzen to assure them of the promise of equal citizenship. Zionist activity in Morocco aggravated these tensions about the loyalty of Morocco’s Jews. The appeals to a “Jewish nationalism” created a tension in Moroccan society that increased dramatically with the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 and the subsequent efforts to recruit Jewish emigration from North Africa to Palestine in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

These tensions continued unabated in the last years of the Protectorate, as the Moroccan nationalist movement and the Sultan himself clearly aligned the cause of Moroccan independence with the pan-Arab movement led by Gamal Abd Al-Nasser in Egypt. The Arab-Israeli conflict increased the uncertain position of Moroccan Jews, who were caught between Moroccan and Israeli nationalism. Their position in the Moroccan nation forced the question of how the national community would be defined: despite guarantees of equal rights and duties within the Moroccan nation, the dominant Arabo-Islamic cultural framing of Moroccan identity continued to marginalize Moroccan Jews outside of that boundary. While there were significant leaders and groupings

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96 For instance, on July 14, 1952, a nationality law was passed by the Israeli Knesset which naturalized all Jews living in Palestine, who has not expressed a desire otherwise, as Israeli citizens. This caused a diplomatic problem for the French, as Protectors of Morocco. According to Moroccan law, Moroccan subjects, including Jewish subjects, have a perpetual allegiance to the King, and could not lose their nationality, even if they become Israelis. It also caused a dilemma over whether the French would offer diplomatic protection to Moroccan Jews living in Israel. Another question raised was how the French would deal with a situation in which other Arab states started to naturalize Moroccan Muslims living in their countries. MAE-Nantes, Séries Maroc, Direction des Affaires Chérifienennes (DAC), Carton 325, Note No. 188 of the Cabinet Diplomatique, “Juifs marocains en Israël,” (June 23, 1952). This note also states that French Jews living in Israel would still retain their French nationality under the 1945 Code de la nationalité.
among Moroccan Jews that firmly declared their allegiance to the Moroccan sovereign
during his exile between 1953-1955, and which have subsequently played significant
roles in the life of independent Morocco, the vast majority of Morocco’s Jewish
community emigrated out of the country to Israel, France, or North America in the 1950s
and 1960s.
CHAPTER 5: A WOMAN’S PLACE IN THE NATION

The “Woman Question” and Defining Moroccan National Identity

The previous chapters have examined the struggle between rival constructions of the Moroccan nation, specifically in how ethnic and religious parameters of nationality identity were contested with regard to Morocco’s Berber and Jewish minorities. This chapter focuses on another disputed category of identity delineated in rival colonialist and nationalist attempts to define the nation: “the Moroccan Woman.” In the framework of Lyautey’s Protectorate imaginaire of “Two Moroccos,” Morocco’s women were firmly ensconced on the tradition side of the modernization-traditionalization binary. This chapter begins by tracing how this traditionalization imperative informed two main areas of Protectorate policy used to demarcate the place of Moroccan women in the nation: legal status and education. It then examines how the nationalist movement took up the “Woman Question” beginning in the 1930s as a means to strengthen its own rival narrative, using the status of Moroccan women as a metric by which to prove that the French had not truly fulfilled their obligation, under the Treaty of Fes, to help Morocco develop as a “modern” state and society. In their counter-framing, the Moroccan nationalists (both men and women) argued that an Islamic legal framework, intentionally contrasted with French and customary tribal legal systems, offered the best path for the advancement of the Moroccan woman. From the 1940s forward, this emancipatory narrative was integrated into the Istiqal collective action frame demanding independence
as a prerequisite for reform and affirming that the “Moroccan woman” had an integral role in helping create a modern, Muslim Moroccan society.

In addition to analyzing the interactive process in which the “Woman Question” was framed by various involved parties including colonial administrators, nationalist ideologues, and the Palace, this chapter also, to the extent possible from limited source material, explores how women themselves sought to shape debates about their own identity in the struggle to define Morocco. Though rival Moroccan and French discourses reified the “Moroccan Woman” as a unitary concept, this usage obviously obscured the multiplicity of Moroccan women’s experiences, perspectives, and agencies. It is essential to recognize the diverse manners in which Moroccan women of various socio-economic, ethnic, and geographic backgrounds coped with and resisted processes of colonialist and nationalist state and nation-building during the Protectorate period.

It is also important to note that, while the “feminine” was explicitly referenced in the competing discourses of gender in play during the Protectorate, clearly these same discourses carried implicit constructions of masculinity. Most of the attention in this chapter is focused on the former, with hopes that this preliminary foray into exploring the issue of gender during the Protectorate period would encourage other more comprehensive treatments of the subject.¹ Similarly, this chapter represents a modest step towards addressing huge gaps in our knowledge and understanding of women as actors in Moroccan history in general, and specifically within the colonial period.

¹ Abdellah Hammoudi explores some of these questions in Chapter 4, “The Colonial Elaboration of Authoritarianism,” in Master and Disciple: The Cultural Foundations of Moroccan Authoritarianism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).
Among the challenges in this venture are that Morocco’s women lagged well behind their peers in the Middle East in the interwar period in terms of education and literacy, associational life, and participation in journalism and publishing. While comparable studies exploring the connections between gender, state-building, and nationalism in the colonial period in Egypt, Syria/Lebanon, and Palestine have drawn on extensive primary sources written by women from early in the 20th century, in Morocco these written sources do not exist, or are extremely meager, as it was not until the late 1930s and 1940s that a handful of educated women began to produce texts. This chapter seeks to incorporate the voices of these literate elites, but also, to the extent possible, to reflect the diverse experiences of other largely illiterate Moroccan urban and rural women—Arab, Jewish, and Berber—in this period of colonial state-building.

In their analyses of the relationship between gender and nationalism, Anthias and Yuval-Davis have identified five central ways women have participated in processes of nation-state building: 1) as “biological reproducers” of the ethnic collectivity, 2) as reproducers of ethnic and national boundaries, 3) as central agents in the ideological and cultural reproduction of the national collectivity, 4) as “signifiers of ethnic/national

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6 One of the best attempts thus far at this two pronged approach, and one that this study has benefited great from, is Alison Baker, *Voices of Resistance: Oral Histories of Moroccan Women*, SUNY series in oral and public history (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998). Baker conducted oral interviews with women from a broad range of social classes to reflect how urban women participated in the nationalist resistance of the 1940s and 1950s.
differences” both as a “focus and symbol in ideological discourses used in the
construction, reproduction, and transformation of ethnic/national categories,” and 5) as
“participants in national, economic, political, and military struggles.” Several of these
major themes are important analytical points in considering the Moroccan case, as both
the colonialists and nationalists explicitly recognized the potential of “the Moroccan
Woman” as the biological and ideological reproducer of the nation and as a primary
symbolic marker of either difference or unity within the Moroccan national collectivity.
Over the four decades of the Protectorate, rival legal and educational systems were
proposed in attempts to define a woman’s place in the Moroccan nation. At the same
time, in light of the fifth category mentioned above, large numbers of Moroccan women
of all backgrounds (though more urban than rural) actively participated in the nationalist
struggle, particularly during the wave of armed resistance against the French that broke
out during the two years of the King’s exile (1953-1955). The politicization of women’s
status and of women’s participation in the public sphere remains a subaltern history in
our knowledge of the colonial period but is vital in understanding the current
renegotiations of a Moroccan “woman’s place in the nation” that have been at stake in the
debate over the revision of the Mudawanna (Moroccan personal status code) that was
approved in 2004.

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Moroccan Women and the Protectorate Colonial State

The Christian chief registered the women in his log / I attended the operation. It was my lawful wife who was at the head of the line.8
El Buhali L-Bourezzouni El Mtiri

The expansion of the colonial state in the first two decades of the Protectorate introduced an unparalleled level of governmental intrusion into Moroccan society. For the first time in many areas of the country, the state became involved in daily life in new ways from the registration of births, marriages, and deaths to the imposition of standards of hygiene and child care. While incorporating the blad al-siba and the blad al-makhzen within the bureaucratic machinery of the colonial state, the highest priority for the Residency, on the “indigenous” side of the “Two Moroccos,” was the stabilization of a patriarchal political and social order, rather than any sort of “civilizing mission” that would radically transform the status of women in Moroccan society.

The Moroccan Palace at the 1931 Colonial Exposition, discussed in Chapter 1, provided telling visual representations of how Moroccan women fit into the colonial order envisioned in the Protectorate construction of Morocco. In fact, the means by which the displays themselves were fabricated also clearly demonstrated preferred gender roles under the colonial state. A year earlier, the Director of Public Instruction, Henri Brunot, commissioned the directors of the écoles des filles musulmanes (Muslim girls schools that had been founded in multiple Moroccan cities in the previous two decades) to make a large number of figurines wearing appropriate clothing in order to depict the various “traditional” Moroccan types that were used in the Hall of Honor and elsewhere.

The Direction of Public Instruction’s room itself contained a display case in the center with a complete taxonomy of the Moroccan population, according to the colonial vulgate, that included male and female urban dolls in typical traditional dress (from Rabat, Marrakesh and Fes; Jewish and Arab; notability and bourgeois) as well as rural dolls in appropriate traditional regional dress (from north to south; mountains and desert; Berber, Arab, and Jewish). 9 Besides the dolls, the handiwork of the “Moroccan woman” was evident throughout in Palace in displays of decorative carpets, rugs, and embroidery with “traditional designs” that had been made in the girls schools. In a doubly ironic representation of the place of the Moroccan woman in the Protectorate imaginaire of the nation, the section of the room devoted to girls’ education contained a diorama, made by one of the girls, with a woman figurine making a carpet in a workshop.10

In the representations of Moroccan women in the Palace of Morocco, the legacy of Lyautey’s “museumification” orientation towards “traditional” Moroccan society is clear. In addition to revealing the ethnic and religious divisions that the French enshrined in the colonial order, the displays represented the gender divisions maintained by the Protectorate that strove to preserve “traditional” spheres of male and female activity, both in the legal and educational structures. From dress to legal status to vocational skills, the

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9 MAE—Nantes, DIP, Carton 92, “Exposition Coloniale” circular letter from Gabrielle Rousseau to directors of girls schools (Casablanca, Marrakesh, Mogador, Safi, Oujda, Mazagan, Fes, Meknes, Sefrou, Rabat, Salé), February 6, 1930. The dolls were to be between 34-40cm tall. Detailed instructions specified exactly how the dolls should be dressed (burnous, djellaba, or caftan) and what accessories they should have (shawls, scarves, belts, babouches, jewelry).

10 This corner also had picture albums of girls being trained in school, workbooks in which they had completed homework, samples of native designs embroidered by students, and samples of European lingerie adaptations that the girls had made. MAE—Nantes, DIP, Carton 92, “Circulaire au sujet de la participation des écoles de l’enseignement musulman à l’Exposition Coloniale de 1931,” from Brunot, Chief of Education Service.
colonial state was intent on ensuring that Moroccan women “reproduced” a stable, even
dynamic, Moroccan society with no disruption of the existing social order. The next two
sections discuss how this orientation was expressed in legal and educational initiatives to
define this place for the “Moroccan woman” in the colonial construction of the nation.11

Defining Civil and Legal Status for Arab, Berber, and Jewish Moroccan Women

As has already been discussed, the Protectorate framework attempted to preserve
preexisting legal structures, but the expansion of the state bureaucracy dictated an
increasing systematization and codification of legal systems that had previously been
much more pliable. While French courts were set up for the French and other Europeans,
the indigenous Moroccan population fell under three jurisdictions based on
ethnic/religious affiliation: Sharifian courts adjudicated using Islamic law for Muslims
(“Arabs” and some “Berbers”12); tribal councils ruled according to customary law in so-
called Berber areas; and rabbinical courts ruled according to halacha, or “Mosaic” law,
for the Moroccan Jewish population. For Moroccan women, the maintenance of these
three legal systems and their subsequent regulation and rationalization under the colonial

11 Julia A. Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda, Domesticating the Empire: Race, Gender, and Family Life in
French and Dutch Colonialism (University of Virginia Press, 1998).
12 While the French maintained customary tribunals in so-called Berber tribal areas, in fact, all of the
regions under Glaoui control, to the south of Marrakesh and in parts of the Souss, used Islamic law. Thus,
a large proportion of Morocco’s Berbers always remained under Islamic law. Likewise, there are cases of
“Arab” tribes being classified as under Berber customary law. While two separate systems were
maintained, the reality ground was much more complicated in terms of which tribe might fall under the
jurisdiction of one or the other.
state had direct consequences, as each delineated very different legal rights to women that became embedded in the codification of personal status laws.\(^\text{13}\)

Because they used gender as a primary criterion in delineating rights within Moroccan society,\(^\text{14}\) the different legal systems’ personal status laws became directly linked to rival constructions of Moroccan identity. In the French colonial state building project, the legal status of women served as an important signifier of ethnic difference within the Moroccan national community, particularly with regard to the Arab-Berber distinction that many in the Residency sought to preserve. One of the major components of the Berber myth valorizing the Berber over the Arab derived from the stereotype that Berber women, who (like most rural women in Muslim societies) went unveiled, enjoyed a much higher degree of autonomy and rights as opposed to the Arab women in the cities on the plains who were sequestered in a harem and required to wear a veil. In his 1925 book called *Le Maroc de demain*, Paul Marty, an official in the education administration, emphasized the superiority of the Berber woman over the Arab, stressing her “liberty” and the fact that Berbers were largely monogamous.\(^\text{15}\) The “higher” status of the Berber

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\(^{13}\) On the pre-colonial administration of Islamic law, with specific reference to cases involving women in the Middle East, see Judith E Tucker, *In the House of the Law: Gender and Islamic Law in Ottoman Syria and Palestine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). Her recent monograph also addresses this paradigm shift in the codification of Islamic law, with specific reference to how it impacted women, Judith E Tucker, *Women, Family, and Gender in Islamic Law* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008)

\(^{14}\) The personal status laws used gender as a primary criterion in delineating rights within Moroccan society, with different provisions for men and women in matters of dowry, divorce, paternity, inheritance, testimony, and ownership.

\(^{15}\) The issue of polygamy was particularly sensitive for Moroccan nationalists, and by the 1940s, monogamy had become a social norm in the urban milieu. Fatima Mernissi writes, “The nationalists, who were fighting the French, had promised to create a new Morocco, with equality for all. Every woman was to have the same right to education as a man, as well as the right to enjoy monogamy—a privileged, exclusive relationship with her husband. In fact, many of the nationalist leaders and their followers in Fez already had only one wife, and looked down on those who had many. Father and Uncle, who espoused
women signified that Berbers were much more amenable to “progress” than Arabs, who were “shackled” by the constraints of Islam:

Do we not see, for example, such liberty for the woman, despite the severity of her civil status, and also that the monogamy practiced in Barbary ensures that the Shleuh16 have a chance for rapid social reconditioning? We well know that it is precisely this polygamy and above all the confinement and state of servitude of the woman that has kept generations of Islam, one after another, in a desperate stagnation.17

Despite their favorable disposition to the Berbers, the French administrators in Morocco did express concern about the “severity” of the Berber woman’s legal status, as Marty observed above. In Algeria, where the Kabyle tribal statutes had also been maintain parallel to Islamic law, the Governor General convened a commission in 1925 to research measures that could be taken to improve the condition of the “Kabyle Woman.” In the deliberations,18 the commission detailed the legal status of Kabyle women as of 1900, which were similar to that maintained in the Berber customary law areas of the Middle and Central Atlas in Morocco: no inheritance rights, few to no property rights, no right to consent, no minimum marriageable age, and no right to divorce. In addition, the husband could divorce without specifying any reason, could demand a “ransom” payment before his divorced wife could remarry, had no legal responsibility to provide alimony, and had total custody rights over the children. On the nationalist views, each had only one wife.” Fatima Mernissi, Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co, 1994), 35.

16 Shleuh is the generic Moroccan collective noun for “Berber.”
18 In the transcript of the commission’s deliberations, one of the members, Duchene, started off the meeting with what amounts to a brilliant synthesis of the Kabyle myth: “We all know the Kabyle. He is a Berber Muslim. He is proud. He wants to remain free. He guards his traditions. But he is smart, very aware of his interests, capable of adopting any innovations that do not harm him, if they appear advantageous to him. He loves to debate; he knows how to choose. From Islam he has not accepted a purely religious doctrine, desiring to continue to work out a civil legislation himself, in a parliamentary democracy, a rough mountain dweller, farmer or merchant, attached to his tribe, village, and land.” CAOM, Carton 10H 90, “Réforme du statut de la Femme Kabyle.”

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death of the husband (or of a woman’s father or other male relative if she was not married), a woman was considered part of the property included in the estate. Laws in 1903 and 1921 had initiated some reform, but the 1925 commission recommended several other amendments setting the minimum marriageable age at fifteen and forbidding the placing of a ransom on repudiated women. These were finally passed in 1930 with additional provisions for the Kabyle women to be able to ask for divorce and to obtain some inheritance rights on the death of a male relative.

The Direction of Indigenous Affairs in Morocco carefully instructed its officers in the field to record the customary law of each tribe, in order to have a reference for the tribal councils. In 1930, the “Berber dahir” was intended to further reinforce the legal provisions of this system, though, in contrast to the decree passed that year in Algeria, the administrators in Morocco made little to no effort to reform the status provided for Berber women by these customary laws, which resembled those described above for the Kabyle region. The relative difference between Moroccan women under Berber customary law as opposed to Islamic law became a central issue in the nationalist campaign that grew out of the 1930 protests against the French Berber policy.

While it did not generate the political firestorm caused by the Berber personal status laws, the differing legal weights and measures used in the Moroccan legal system under the French Protectorate also had ramifications for the country’s Jewish women. In the previous chapter, a case was described in which the probate rights of the daughter of a
Jewish man who had died in Rabat were disputed. 19 Her right to inherit differed under French and Jewish law, but, because of the ambiguity regarding her legitimacy, she fell under neither system and never inherited anything from her father’s estate. In the late 1940s, in the Azilal administrative circle in the central High Atlas, another case dragged out for a year in which a Moroccan Jewish women, Rachel Ben Soussane (née Ihouda), was petitioning to have her conversion to Islam officially recognized. Rachel, born in 1928 in the mellah of Foum Djemaa was married to a Jewish man named Isaac Ben Soussane, who, in 1949, lived in Casablanca and had married another woman. In the summer of 1938, Rachel had been caught “en flagrant délit” with a Muslim man; she then, reportedly due to worries about repercussions from the Jewish community in the mellah where she lived, declared her desire to convert to Islam, said the shahada, and put herself under the protection of the village’s Muslim population. Her husband brought a case of adultery against her before the rabbinic court in Marrakesh, but she was acquitted because one of the two witnesses required to convict refused to testify against her. Though accusing his wife of adultery, Isaac Ben Soussane would not divorce her; this was actually what Rachel desired, so her conversion could officially be registered and she could marry a Muslim man. In a further twist, in August, Isaac tried to have the local court forbid her from aborting the child with whom she was pregnant, which he claimed was his own. By May of the next year, the situation remained unresolved: Rachel was still “Jewish” and still married. While we do not know the final outcome, the case

19 For a comparative treatment on these ambiguities within the French empire, see Jean Pederson’s chapter, “Special Customs: Paternity Suits and Citizenship in France and the Colonies, 1870-1912,” in Clancy-Smith and Gouda, Domesticating the Empire.
demonstrates the type of tensions over personal status jurisdictions generated under the multiple legal maintained during the Protectorate. The local French civil controller was incensed that the local qadi had unilaterally recognized the woman’s conversion and declared her free in terms of marital status, in contravention of a viziriel order (No. 12794) issued the previous year; the qadi, in turn, accused the civil controller of blocking conversion to Islam. Due to her status under Jewish law, which French administrators had little inclination to change Rachel, Ben Soussane had no recourse to pursue a divorce. This restricted her right to remarry and even her freedom of religion in choosing to convert.  

For all Moroccans, the Protectorate’s legal structure inscribed a differentiating “otherness” by maintaining separate French, Islamic, Berber, and Jewish systems. For the Moroccan woman, however, the additional factor, clearly demonstrated in the struggle by Rachel Ben Soussane to convert (similar to the struggle of Isaac Ben Harrar discussed in the previous chapter), was that the maintenance of separate legal categories based on gender was directly tied to maintaining (and preventing movement between) these separate categories of identity. This legal construction of identity intimately tied to the status of the Moroccan woman (in essence, in which she enjoyed fewer rights than her male counterpart) had a legacy beyond the Protectorate, being inscribed into the post-

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20 SHD-AT, Carton 3H 1975. This carton contains a dossier on all of the mixed marriages (exclusively Moroccan men with foreign women) in the Azilal circle between 1935-1954, most of which were between Moroccan men (that had been stationed in France) and French women after World War II. The case of Rachel de Soussan, documented in the dossier titled “Affaire Rachel Soussan, a/s conversion à l’Islam,” was exceptional in that it was a mixed marriage between a Muslim and Jewish convert that generated a controversy within the community. Unfortunately, the file contains no documentation on how the case turned out in the end.
independence construction of the nation in the 1957 iteration of the Mudawanna, or Personal Status Code.

**Educating the “Moroccan Woman”**

While the tripartite indigenous legal system was a major area in which the colonial state sought to use gender as a means to differentiate between separate ethnic groups within the Moroccan nation, education was the primary vehicle through which the Residency sought to shape the Moroccan woman’s ideological capacity to reproduce the nation. Within the first few years of the Protectorate, *écoles* and *colleges musulmans* for the sons of notables and trade schools for the sons of the lower classes had been created in Morocco’s major cities,\(^ {21}\) with a Berber *college* created in Azrou in the 1920s as an extension of the separate Franco-Berber educational system. Between 1911 and the early 1920s, the Direction of Public Instruction also opened schools for indigenous Moroccan girls (mainly “Arab” Muslim girls, as Jewish girls were channeled into either the Franco-Israelite or A.I.U. schools and no girls schools were opened in the “Berber” countryside) in several cities. While the scope of educational initiatives directed by the French Protectorate at indigenous children, and particularly for girls, was pitifully limited, the overriding priority in what was implemented was to standardize and systematize instruction for young girls in traditional Moroccan handicrafts historically produced by women. This emphasis was clearly aligned with the Lyauteian gradualist civilizing mission that sought to preserve traditional structures, while *very* slowly “modernizing”

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\(^ {21}\) The most elite of these were the *Collège Moulay Idriss* in Fez and the *Collège Moulay Yousef* in Rabat, both of which were founded in 1916.
Moroccan society. Also among the mixed altruistic motives involved in this initiative was a desire to help Moroccan women “better” their position in society by maximizing their economic potential and increasing the amount of capital they could earn individually.

It is telling that the Direction of Public Instruction (D.I.P.) itself was attached to the colonial state’s Direction des Beaux Arts et Antiquités, reinforcing that indigenous education was firmly oriented towards the “tradition” side of the modernization/traditionalization binary. As was evident at the International Colonial Exposition, Lyautey and other French colonial administrators believed themselves to be “preservers” and “protectors” of indigenous culture, and thus the educational system intentionally sought to safeguard traditional Moroccan artisanal and handicraft industries. This pedagogical orientation was especially pertinent to the educational outreach towards filles musulmanes. In the fall of 1913, a French woman named Bouillet, a graduate of the Ecole des langues orientales vivantes in Paris who was in charge of the Arabic courses at the French girls school in Salé, began investigating the state of education for Muslim girls in the city on behalf of the D.I.P. In her report, Ms. Bouillet judged the intellectual capacity of the Arab women of Salé as follows:

In Salé, as in all of the Muslim countries still distant from European civilization, the Arab woman carries on an existence highly conformed to tradition, that is to say, a life of seclusion. Nothing exists for her outside of the familial circle, which marks the extent of her conception of the world and society, and in which she spends the sum total of her practical knowledge, that has been transferred from mother to daughters. Her intellectual knowledge is of limited scope, and, even if there are women superior to others in terms of rank, quality, distinction, or intelligence, they are all equals in terms of their perfect

22 This ministry oversaw excavations, including the dig at Volubulis, as well as preservation projects and zoning decisions for “protected” heritage sites such as the medina in Fez.
However, Miss Bouillot observed that, despite the “impossibility, right now, of fixing their attention on a serious subject,” the Salé women did “recognize our superiority over them” and would willingly receive counsel, “especially in matters of hygiene and household care.” She concluded the report saying that “the Moroccan woman, in terms of her intelligence, was capable of being educated” and that education would have the “moral utility” of awakening her curiosity, which would first distract her, then interest her, and finally instruct her.

Bouillet also stressed that the most important utility of offering educational opportunities to the “Moroccan woman,” particularly for the lower classes, was the practical benefit in being able to sell what she produced for higher prices. At the time, the embroidered and woven products they created were sold for little, in order to buy incidental items such as jewelry or clothes, and not for a profit. Bouillet observed that the Muslim girls schools in Tunisia were getting higher prices for these types of handicrafts, which proved their “real value” was much higher. Her recommendation was to standardize production, saying, “Is there not a real economic interest in organizing, in a regular fashion, women’s labor in a country in which local industry has never lost its originality?”

24 In contrast to Russell’s study of Egypt, note that in Morocco, initially, the emphasis in shaping the “Moroccan Woman” in the French educational system was as a “producer” rather than a “consumer.” Mona L. Russell, *Creating the New Egyptian Woman: Consumerism, Education, and National Identity, 1863-1922*, 1st ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004)
taught young girls how to do various textile trades, but these resulted in almost no excess production for sale. The problem, lamented Miss Bouillot, was to convince the local Muslim women that there was no shame in making a living through their work. It was also necessary to work on creating picturesque designs and a means of producing them practically and regularly in order to be able to market them abroad.

Bouillet was also highly concerned about the hygienic conditions of the existing workshops training young Moroccan girls. In the one she visited in Salé, which was run by a woman named Mallem Slimana, a group of twenty-five to thirty pupils sat on a single mat in an ill-lit and stuffy room. Bouillot observed that the girls, fearing a caning, were forced to work from morning to night without speaking or moving, except for a noon meal. She cited a litany of health problems she observed among the students caused by the poor working conditions. In her conclusion, she wrote that “indigenous woman needs to be able to work, to improve her state and that of her family. But, without addressing the prejudice of which she is a slave, it is impossible for her to gain enough from the exercise of her craft at this time.” Her recommendation was to first remove the social stigma attached to working, teach the women how to most effectively profit from their work, and then ensure that local production had an outlet for sales abroad. The intervention in the workshops was only a first stage, however, for Bouillot, who hoped for further expansion of educational opportunities for Muslim girls, remarking: “In any

26 A ma’allem is a person with a particular professional skill, and in this instance, was the seamstress in charge of training the young girls.
case, it is important to not forget that the young Muslim girl will never enter the school until after having crossed the threshold of the workshop.”

Bouillot cautioned that the French had to be careful, however, about what kind of influence they exercised on Moroccan women in their educational projects. In a follow-up report, she explained the strategic significance of the Moroccan woman in the French nation-building project in Morocco, which necessitated the most gradual evolutionary process towards equality with her Western “civilized sisters” in order to not upset the traditional Moroccan social order:

Since the Moroccan woman must remain the soul of her home for a long time, our duty to her is to help her and to bring her the most happiness and well-being possible. Since this home is not going to change apart from her, and because she, herself, the faithful guardian of the spirit of her race, should not stop pleasing the young Muslim man who seems to be away, let us be careful not to divert her mentality too much by introducing the “woman of tomorrow.” We cannot overemphasize this: she will remain what she is. We will enlighten her only on a practical level—hygiene, household care, etc… Make her less totally ignorant of world events, less naive in her judgments, more capable of entertaining herself—that is all she is in need of right now to aid in the slow evolution which, much later, will make her the equal of her “civilized” sisters.

The report concluded with a statement that could have been the slogan of the entire Protectorate project in Morocco: “Evolution and not revolution: this must be the watchword, for it would be unfortunate, for a bit of science that still would be useless [to her], to trouble the beautiful harmony of the Moroccan home today.”

Coming at the very onset of the colonial nation-building project, Bouillot’s recommendations had a lasting impact on the educational policy of the Protectorate over the next two decades. In a letter to the Resident General, Lyautey, the military adjunct

for the Rabat-Salé area, Battalion Chief Bussy, commented: “I agree entirely with the ideas of Miss Bouillot on the means to employ in winning the indigenous female milieu over to our cause. Like her, I believe the young Muslim girl will not enter the school until after first crossing the threshold of the workshop. It is thus towards the creation of workshops that we must direct our efforts.” After opening the school in Salé, he commented, “we will then study the creation of professional workshops for the Protectorate and the creation of an indigenous school for girls.” This task would have the goal “not only of penetrating the feminine indigenous milieu, but also of giving to Muslim girls and women the means to make a living.”

The Salé municipality and the D.I.P. took action and gave Mallema Slimane space in a building that had previously served as the Franco-Arab school for boys (they moved into a new building); Miss Bouillot was appointed as an advisor. The school opened on November 30, 1913 with a group of students ranging in age from five to thirteen years old, and focused on traditional Salé-style embroidery. The problem, Bouillot reported, a year after the school’s opening, was that Moroccan women prefer European styles, not seeing the value of their local hand-made crafts. The particular civilizing mission for the French in Morocco, according to her, was to protect the Moroccan’s own heritage and convince them of its value:

This art, given its originality, is worthy of being preserved from the decline that threatens it. The Moroccan woman prefers to use European fabrics made by machines, and it is up to us, who appreciate and search for these pieces which are now only found in antique shops, to take responsibility and make her return from her error. We must repeat to her that we prefer the work of her needle because it belongs more to the framework of indigenous life; to show her that it is more durable and that, even used, it keeps a value.

29 MAE-Nantes, Direction de l’Instruction Publique (DIP), Carton 25, Letter from Battalion Chief Bussy to Resident General, (November 20, 1913).
that is never matched by a substitute. This is the role of each individual involved in the Moroccan milieu. Encourage the teachers and, when one of the most respected of them is identified in a place, help her materially, so she does not have to quit teaching, and put her in the best conditions for attracting as many students as possible around her. This is the role of the directors of the services and those who are in charge of helping the indigenous labor evolve.30

The embroidery workshop provided, according to Bouillot, an opportunity to slowly but surely shape the female moral and intellectual milieu in Salé, and she envisioned adding French instruction to the practical instruction eventually. She also proposed starting another workshop which would focus on the production of carpets, a skill that was carried out more by the lower classes. In all of these endeavors, Bouillot reminded her superiors of the political importance of educating indigenous women, remarking that, “While awaiting the completion of these educational projects, the political influence of these constant interactions with the indigenous world, with children and the women who—particularly at this point—show a curiosity about external events, cannot but be a help to French peaceful penetration.”31

Over the next decade this “peaceful penetration” was replicated in other Moroccan cities with the creation of more hybrid workshop-schools offering a professional education in handicrafts and, later, offering instruction in Arabic and basic French. More than a decade later, a 1929 newspaper article in L’Echo du Maroc about

31 Ibid.
in Meknes in 1916)\textsuperscript{32} lauded the success of the French educational outreach to Muslim women:

What could be a more beautiful, more fruitful, propaganda for our France than that which we have achieved in a few years in penetrating all the way to the harem. For if the man has begun to learn how to appreciate us and eventually to understand us, the indigenous woman, by her isolation, has understood our mentality with much more difficulty up until now. We congratulate Madame Renée Ravés who has been building bridges in this country between the manners of Western and Muslim women.\textsuperscript{33}

The clear paternalist bent of the initiative was also evident in how the D.I.P. regulated production in the schools and in how the schools themselves sought to socialize the students in terms of hygienic standards. As mentioned earlier, the D.I.P. was itself attached to the Service for Beaux Arts and Antiquities. In Rabat, this service would determine the standard “traditional” patterns and designs that were to be produced in each workshop, intentionally seeking to preserve the stylistic distinctives of each locality. As was evident in Bouillot’s remarks, the administration felt a responsibility to “save” Moroccan culture, whether through the preservation of the medinas or in quality controls over textile production. A study of the handicraft industry in Meknes in 1915 reported that embroidery production in the city had almost completely ceased because of a sharp decrease in demand for traditional Meknassi patterns, which had been abandoned for Fassi styles, and because many Muslim women had begun buying European-made damasks, which previously had been a Meknassi specialty.\textsuperscript{34} In response, the D.I.P. ran a command “craft-economy,” dictating the types of designs to be produced at each school,

\begin{itemize}
\item[33] “Une école musulmane,” \textit{Echo du Maroc}, February 2, 1929. Madame Renée Ravés was the director in charge of the Meknes girls schools.
\item[34] MAE-Nantes, DIP, Carton 16, Letter from Commissioner of Indigenous Girls’ Education in Fez-Meknes Regions to Director of Education, Rabat, December 16, 1915.
\end{itemize}
typically according to locality. While the schools were free, the “traditional” textiles, carpets, and rugs were sold at an annual exposition and the proceeds from the sales went into the Treasury. The director of the Oujda school summed up the dual goals of the schools as being to give “a profession to the young Muslim girls, to help them make a living, and to develop artisans capable of maintaining the reputation of Moroccan arts, the decline of which is certain without government intervention.”

In addition to this economic role of the “Moroccan woman” that the Protectorate hoped to reproduce, these schools also consciously focused on reproducing the type of wife and mother officials believed the Moroccan household needed. In the mid-1920s, Paul Marty, a colonial educational administrator, described how French schools should form the future spouses of the “Moroccan man:”

The solution is to open schools and to shape the girls who remain…in their traditional state, but who gain from their French teachers the qualities of order, economy, domestic labor, family education, and even elementary instruction, that they are lacking right now and which will make them the true companions of which we [men] dream.

In a 1924 letter to Henri Bruno, the head D.I.P. chief in Rabat, the director of the Oujda girls school observed: “What is our goal? To prepare the Muslim girl for her role as mistress of the house, in her cloistered life and in the native society, taking into account the evolution that pushes each individual towards the best she can be.”

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35 There were exception, though; for example, the Oujda school made patterns from Tetouan, Rabat, and Salé.
36 A. Cavel, “L’école musulmane de jeunes filles,” Le Maroc Oriental, December 20, 1934, p. 1. This Oujda school had been founded in 1924, starting with 157 students, a number which had grown by 1934 to 280 students.
37 Paul Marty, Le Maroc de demain, 196.
38 MAE-Nantes, DIP, Carton 17, Oujda Region, Letter from Director of Muslim Girls School in Oujda to the Director General of Public Instruction, Beaux-arts and Antiquities, Rabat, about “Organisation de l’École des filles musulmanes à Oujda,” October 30, 1934.
One of the primary elements of domestic order that the educators sought to instill in the mistresses of Morocco’s households concerned hygiene. In a newspaper article about the Oujda girls school from 1934, it was reported that: “Hygiene and health are a constant concern of the Direction. A visiting nurse examines the small colony every week and is in contact with a doctor if there is need.”

On a daily level, administrators were careful to require regular showers and the frequent disinfection of clothes. Though some of the school administrators experimented with introducing other subject material, including French and Arabic literacy, the dominant emphasis in the first decades was on household management and child care. This imperative was driven home in a response by Bruno to the Oujda director’s trimester report in 1924. He affirmed the school’s priorities with the following bullet points:

1. Reading and Writing: This teaching should only be done for those children whose parents have completely accepted French culture.
2. Housekeeping Education: This education must take priority. Your school is a housekeeping school.

He then ended the letter saying, “I well know your conviction [about teaching the girls to read and write], but I must insist that you make sure never to overemphasize in this direction.”

Perspectives among the French administrators and Moroccan parents had begun to shift however by the late 1930s, and the D.I.P. was forced to reevaluate the exclusive curricular focus on handicrafts and housekeeping in the Franco-Muslim girls schools. In 1939, the Direction of Public Instruction did an internal study to determine how to adapt

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40 MAE-Nantes, DIP, Carton 17, Oujda Region, Letter from Director of Public Instruction, Bruno, to Director of Muslim Girls School, Oujda, 1924.
the Algerian curriculum for indigenous girls education to the Moroccan context, soliciting reports from the directors of schools in Moroccan cities (Salé, Rabat, Fes, Sefrou, Mazagan, Taza, Camp Marchand, and Oujda). The directors returned feedback about the proposal’s major sections on Physical Education, Hygiene, Medical Care, Moral Education, Domestic Education, Manual Labor, and French. The responses to this questionnaire reveal the goals and experience of the French women who directed these schools, including their perspectives on the “Moroccan social milieu” in which they worked.

The directors frequently referred to the ambivalence they sensed about girls education from Moroccan families wanting a modern curriculum but hesitant about entrusting their daughters to a French-run educational system. In their report, Mesdames Le Beux and Brunot, two teachers at the lycée of Fes, commented:

It is extremely difficult to know what the Moroccan families want. For some, it seems they are ready to raise their girls like their boys, but others want to hear nothing of this. Whether they are for or against girls education, they send me their daughters for the most part, only with a great deal of repugnance, and only continue to do so with a great deal of pressure from us."41

The director of the Sefrou school also foresaw difficulties in providing girls educational opportunities similar to that afforded to boys:

As for the girls themselves, they are certainly as intelligent as their brothers…Placed in a favorable ambiance, adapted to their manners and customs, it is possible to get the same results from them as from their brothers. But the reality of the social milieu, and in particular the excessively conservative, feminine milieu, is that it reacts strongly against any progress. And when it permits them to take one step forward, they are quickly put ten steps back.42

41 MAE-Nantes, DIP, Carton 85, Report from Le Beau and Bruno, teachers at Fes Lycée, to Head of Muslim Education., June 13, 1939, on “Program for Muslim Girls Schools.”
42 MAE-Nantes, DIP, Carton 85, Report from Director of Muslim Girls School, Sefrou, to Head of Educational Service, Rabat, (April 1939).
In a more hard-line response from another director, Renée Duval reiterated the traditionalization view that the educational goals of the Protectorate administration were not to emancipate Moroccan women or disturb the social and class structures in place, but to help preserve the existing order:

We should not forget that the Moroccan girl must be raised in view of her duty which, after leaving school, is marriage and maternity. First and precious messenger of our civilization, she must bring her family the principles of a sound and sustainable evolution, and not an abrupt emancipation that might easily shake up the harmony of the family and the society in which she must live. It would also be imprudent to give an equal instruction to all of the Moroccan girls without taking into account their social and familial situation. Take for example a needy girl whose parents are destitute, what will become of them when they leave school? If the education does not create a situation for her, she will no longer accept the miserable condition of her family and perhaps will escape the slums and the hunger by turning to prostitution…"43

The director of the Muslim girls school in El Hajeb presented the slightly different perspective of running a more rural school with Arabic and Berber speaking children. This school, which had only been created in 1932, received daughters of notables from the rural areas, but these only stayed a short period before being married off or were being brought back home for domestic work. She did note, though, that in the past year she had seen a significant increase in the number of students enrolled and that their parents had requested they be taught French and math, in addition to practical skills.44

The D.I.P. also solicited input from the Moroccan alumni associations of the Muslim colleges in Fez and Rabat. In their responses, the older “brothers” of girls in the schools strongly urged the administration to teach them at exactly the same level as boys.

44 MAE-Nantes, DIP, Carton 85. Letter from Director of Muslim Girls school, El Hajeb, to Principal Inspector of Muslim Education, Rabat, (May 20, 1939).
The president of the Fez alumni association responded to the Algerian proposal remarking:

The essential goal of this program seems to be the creation of good house cleaners, able, above all else, to perfectly fulfill their domestic duties. While not denying the usefulness of this type of education, our view has always been that our girls should not just be instructed in a professional or house-keeping culture. In accordance with the opinion of our general assembly gathered on last December 4th, we conclude that instruction for Muslim girls should not be envisioned, for the primary cycle, as a different issue than that proposed for Muslim boys.

Consistent with these sentiments, several of the directors emphasized that, in contrast to the Algerian program, Moroccan parents demanded that the girls be taught Arabic and Islam as a component of the curriculum.

A 1945 report on Moroccan women revealed that this pressure to reform the system and provide girls a more comprehensive modern education continued to increase in Moroccan society in the early 1940s:

The young men educated in the schools of the Protectorate demand the opening of schools for girls. They want spouses who understand them. It is impossible to have the family evolve without a mother that has evolved. They are the ardent supporters of education for girls. The Sultan strongly supports the movement, going against the opinion of his old viziers.

As reflected in this report, the issue of what type of educational opportunities should be afforded to Moroccan girls became a central concern for increasing numbers of Moroccan parents, particularly in the cities, and also constituted a political issue of increasing importance for the nationalist movement and, perhaps even more so, for the Palace in their calls for reform. Within these discussions and debates over education within

Moroccan society between reformers and traditionalists, and between Moroccans and the

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45 MAE-Nantes, DIP, Carton 85, Letter from President of Alumni Association of Collège Musulman of Fez to Director General of Public Instruction, Beaux-Arts, and Antiquities, Rabat, March 22, 1939.
French administration, it is clear that by the 1940s the question of a woman’s place in the Moroccan nation had became a major concern for all parties involved in the colonial struggle to define Morocco.

**Moroccan Nationalism and the Woman Question**

The “Woman Question” began to be addressed in the first phase of reformist anti-colonial nationalism that claimed the French had treated the Protectorate as a framework for colonization rather than a joint Franco-Moroccan state building project. As related in Chapter 3, the two major pillars of French policy the Moroccan nationalists attacked in their anti-colonial framing were the Protectorate’s legal and educational systems. The previous section examined how these were also the two primary areas in which Protectorate policy sought to define the “Moroccan woman” as a signifier of an ethnic boundary between Arab and Berber (and to a lesser extent, Jewish) and as a reproducer of a desired “traditional” Moroccan social and economic order. In the wake of the Berber Dahir protests, the Moroccan nationalist ideologues focused first on the legal framework differentiating between Arab and Berber in the early 1930s. Considerable effort was spent attacking the customary (‘urf) legal system implemented in Berber areas and defending the superiority of the Islamic (shari’a) system by explicitly comparing what rights each afforded to the “Moroccan woman.” In terms of educational policy, the nationalists’ first priority was expanding the Arabic and Islamic components of the curriculum (as was discussed in Chapter 3) for boys, but the lamentable state of Moroccan women’s education was also an integral part of their indictment of the
“Protector’s” failure to fulfill its obligation in modernizing and developing the Moroccan nation. By the 1940s, these demands had evolved into more specific demands that the Residency offer advanced certificates—primary, secondary, and baccalaureate—beyond the workshop curriculum that the Protectorate had implemented in the *écoles des filles musulmanes*.

**Islamic Law and the Berber Woman**

The “Woman Question” was discussed by the nationalists, including women authors (under pseudonyms or initials), within the first nationalist journals that began to be published in 1933. Given the prominence of the Berber question in the nationalist framing, it is not surprising that the “Berber woman” became a major concern in the nationalist press. Redefining the Moroccan nation required redefining the Moroccan woman. In this discussion, the Arabophone urban nationalist ideologues directly attacked the French valorization of the “free” and “liberated” Berber woman, based on the fact that she was not veiled and enjoyed freedom to move about the countryside. Within diatribes against the French policy of preserving Berber identity through the maintenance of customary law courts, nationalists specifically attacked this stereotype of the Berber woman, emphasizing her repressed condition under *‘urf* as compared with *shari’a* law.

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47 The word Amazigh (masculine) and Tamazight (feminine), which was used in the Middle and High Atlas tribes to refer to Berbers carries the meaning of “free” and in the Moroccan Berber myth, the French Berberophiles stressed the Berber passion for freedom and autonomy, a stereotype that extended to their ideas about Berber women.
The May 1934 edition of *Maghreb*, dedicated to the fourth anniversary of the Berber dahir, contained an article titled “The Berber Woman” that used this tack to indict French Berber policy as a whole. The author, writing under the pseudonym “N.B.,” decried how customary law infringed on the rights of Berber women, arguing that, by maintaining this separate judicial system, the French condoned the “barbaric” treatment of women. Berber customary law represented an example of *jahiliyya*, the “ignorant” age before the advent of Islam, and she pointed out that according to Berber custom, women are considered a piece of property. Historically, she claims, in Morocco “shari’a law completely replaced this barbarous custom. The woman of the mountains, like her urban system, became a person of her own will.” Instead of customary law, N.B. argued that all Moroccan women, both urban and rural, deserved the superior status conferred by Islamic law. However, the author did not totally disparage Berber customs, affirming the fact that Berber women do not wear the veil, have near total control over the internal affairs of their households, and play a vital role as custodians of Berber poetry. N. B. proposed fusing the two Moroccan women: “if you combine the legal liberties afforded by shari’a law with the freedom of activity enjoyed by the Berber woman, you would have a truly liberated woman.” In the conclusion, as befitted the occasion of the Berber Dahir, she reiterated that the French Berber policy was trapping the Berber women under a “barbaric tribal custom” and had to be rejected.

48 It is highly likely that N.B. stood for N. Benjelloun, the wife of a nationalist activist, Abdelkader Benjelloun. I have thus far been unable to confirm this, but if true, she would have been the first Moroccan woman to write in the nationalist press.

In a 1933 issue of the Fez-based *L’Action du Peuple*, another author directly addressed French Berber policy in an article titled “The Berber Woman: Is She Free?” The piece was written by a former secretary of a Berber customary law council, Othman Al Fayache, in response to a previous article by an Indigenous Affairs officer, Jouffray, in the *Depeche de Fès* that had lauded France’s role in preserving the freedom of the Berber tribes in the bled. In denigrating the backwardness of Berber culture and asserting the superiority of Muslim and Arab culture, he writes, “The Berber woman, contrary to the canards of certain adversaries of Islam who try to make us believe in her perfect happiness, is not free, as Mr. Jouffray claims. On the contrary, the Berber woman is very unhappy and more of a slave than many of her sisters.” He explains that she is a piece of property owned by her male relatives and proves this by citing the current bride price which included the *l’amargeb* (a ritual sacrifice of an animal and an exchange of butter, sugar, and tea), the *rechoua* (a tip paid by a fiancé to his future father-in-law, brother, or cousins) and the *hedya* (a financial gift between 250 to 1500 francs.) According to Berber custom, Al Fayache explains that a woman has no right of consent to marriage and no right to divorce. He also comments that in the past fifteen months he had heard of four cases of suicides by Berber women trapped in marriages they did not want. He concluded the article by claiming that “The Quran is more humane, more logical, and less complex, and it clearly determines the legal rights and duties of a woman.”

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Nationalism and Educating the Moroccan Woman

In addition to these attacks on the inferiority of the French-sponsored construction of the Berber Woman in terms of legal status, the other major field in which nationalists contested the colonial delineation of the place of the “Moroccan woman” was in terms of educational policy. As discussed above, in the late 1930s and early 1940s, the issue of reforming this educational system for girls became an increasingly important issue for the Moroccan nationalist movement, and for the public at large. Many Moroccan parents, and brothers who had been educated in the French system, demanded that their daughters and sisters be taught Arabic, French, science, math, and Islam in a primaire and collège system similar to their boys (private “Free Schools” were also established for this purpose during this period). In the early 1940s, a women’s movement closely aligned with the Istiqlal party began to focus on the advancement of women’s education and literacy, and an Islamically-oriented feminist discourse became a major component of the nationalist framing of Moroccan identity.

One of the earliest women's voices to begin to speak out about the issue of women’s education in Morocco was N. Benjelloun, the wife of Abd-el-Kader Benjelloun, another nationalist who wrote for the Paris-based Maghreb. In February 1933, she penned an article, under the pseudonym, “Romeikya,” detailing Gandhi's emphasis on reforming the status of women in India. In September, another of her articles, published in the Fes-based L’Action du Peuple, addresses the issue of education for the

51 As mentioned earlier, Benjelloun is possibly the author who wrote under the initials “N.B.” Halstead, who interviewed dozens of the early nationalist leaders, confirms that the wife of Abdelkader Benjelloun did write the articles signed “Romeikya,” but unfortunately does not mention her first name. Halstead, Rebirth of a Nation: the Origins and Rise of Moroccan Nationalism, 1912-1944, 209.
Benjelloun begins by declaring that the overall educational system in the Protectorate was a disaster, with not enough schools, and that those that existed neglected the importance of Islam and the Arabic language. With these more systemic problems, she observed it was not surprising that the particular problem of girls’ education had been neglected: “But today, where a burning thirst for instruction has seized the young men, the Moroccan woman can not remain indifferent to this serious question.” She observed that other Muslim states had set the example by linking national renaissance to the education of women, showing “that the rebirth of a people must proceed in tandem with the intellectual elevation of the woman.” Morocco, in her view, did not need European-style schools where girls are prepared for exams but remain ignorant of their “natural role,” but schools teaching practical skills where she learns “the rationalization, the simplification of household tasks, manual labor.” The major goal of her education should be how to raise a child in terms of hygiene and moral education, which required knowing how to read Arabic and knowing a bit of history and geography. “The primary role of the woman inside her house and her direct influence on the development of children are alone enough to prove the absolute necessity of giving her instruction.” Benjelloun castigated the Protectorate administration for their meager efforts to educate girls and for the unfortunate results from the moral point of view. Similar to the overall emphasis of the nationalist movement at this point, the call here was not for the overthrow of the institutions created within the colonial state but for a better administration within them, including a call that basically agreed in principle with

the type of pedagogical emphasis employed in the French schools for Muslim girls. She called for more schools and, most importantly, increasing the teaching of Arabic and Islam to protect against moral decay.

In November, another article in *Maghreb* addressed the “condition of the Moroccan woman” with a salafi influenced explanation of why Islam dictated that women be guaranteed rights and educational opportunities. The argument appealed to Islamic law, the example of the early Muslim community, and also looked at Egypt and other Arab countries to the east as exemplary models for how to improve the condition of Moroccan women. According to the author, the Moroccan woman could not continue to live in a lamentable situation of intellectual inferiority to men, arguing that this was against Islam:

> If Islam has given her rights, we, the men, have usurped them, reducing them to nothing. We have made a near slave out of she who Mohamed, the legislator, designed as free. A woman is not a minor as in the Napoleonic code, but we have taken away from her every freedom of speech and movement. She is at our mercy. 55

The author went on to complain that even well-raised Moroccan women are not taught how to read or write for fear they will correspond with a lover. He says women used to be able to take walks outside of the walls of the city, but now, when going to visit the cemetery outside Bab Ftouh, they must be veiled from head to foot. The rest of the week they are a prisoner of their house. To underline this point, the author pointed out that, in Rabat, the pasha, Bargache, was going to forbid women from going out alone, even with another woman. In response to these restrictions he states, “The virtue of a woman does

not depend on the thickness of her veils, but on her own honesty. Give a good education to our girls and let them go free; their self-esteem will guard them from any abasement.”

On the issue of veiling, the author presses for a liberal perspective, saying: “Let us liberate our women, though not in the manner of the Turks which seems radical, but little by little. Why should we inflict on our young ten-year-old school girls the torture of the veil? Let them breathe freely.” Then the Salafi modernist-reformist argument resumes:

The Muslim law instituted in Medina thirteen centuries ago is perfectly flexible and ready for all of the reforms that respond to our actual needs. We have many things to learn from Egypt. The emancipation of women, which a handful of intellectuals have courageously led in the East, cannot leave us indifferent. 56

The author was encouraged that the cause of reform was being led by Morocco’s youth and urged his readers that, if the old guard, “les vieux turbans,” resisted, they should continue to march forward.

These public discussions about the place of a Moroccan woman in the nation in the mid-1930s were shut down after the 1937 French crackdown on the nationalist movement, which shut down the Arabic and French nationalist press and exiled much of the leadership. However, beginning in late 1943, when the Sultan and nationalist leadership collaborated in organizing the Istiqlal party, the woman question returned as a very prominent strand within the nationalist framing of Moroccan demands for independence. While the legal questions regarding a woman’s status in the Moroccan nation were less prominent in this framing, the issue of education for Morocco’s women

56 Ibid.
became a significant component of the nationalist collective action frame as efforts to incorporate and mobilize women by the nationalist parties were greatly increased.

Malika Al-Fassi was one of the most prominent early spokeswomen for the women’s movement who emerged in the 1940s. Al-Fassi was from one of the most esteemed families in Fes, the cousin of the nationalist leader, Allal al-Fassi, and wife of Mohamed al-Fassi, the former tutor of the crown prince, president of the Qarawiyin University, and future Minister of Education after independence. She herself had been educated at home, beginning in the late 1920s, and growing up in such a political household, had been very engaged in the mobilization of the nationalist movement after the 1930 Berber Dahir. In 1935, she was among the first Moroccan women to publish in the nationalist press; her first article, published in the Arabic-language newspaper, *Al Maghrib*, in March 1935, was titled, “About Girls’ Education.”57 In it, her goal was to convince Moroccan men of the need for their girls to have an education, which she justified because women are the first teachers of the next generation: “These youth will become the women of tomorrow, the leaders who will run the country.” Though Al-Fassi supported a complementary understanding of gender roles rather than total equality, she did demand, quite boldly for that time, that girls should be able to attain a high school degree. In October, she responded to letters to the editor from readers claiming education would corrupt young girls with Western values by pointing to the example of Middle Eastern countries, who were far ahead of Morocco in terms of women’s education. She then asked: “How can an educated [Moroccan] youth accept a wife and be comfortable

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57 Baker, *Voices of Resistance*, 64. Baker includes a translation of the article from *Al Maghrib*. 
with her, and give her the reins in socializing their children, when he has dealt with
knowledge and formulated ideas, and gained enough learning to make him despise an
ignorant woman?"\(^{58}\)

In response to these calls from Al-Fassi and reflecting widespread demand among urban pro-nationalist families, the Free Schools also began to accept girls in the late 1930s.\(^{59}\) Girls studied alongside boys and were able to attain a primary certificate initially. The number of girls involved in the Free Schools was very small, however; between 1943 and 1953 only fifty-two Moroccan girls achieved a primary school certificate through the system. Most girls were taken out of school at age twelve or thirteen because it was considered shameful (hshuma) for them to be seen in public after they reached puberty.\(^{60}\) This resistance within Moroccan society to reshaping the role of the “Moroccan woman” continued to be a challenge to nationalist framing. In May 1944, Mohamed El ‘Arbi Al-Zaggari, argued that Islam itself enjoined educating women in an article in the Tetouan-based nationalist paper, *Al Wahdat al-Maghribiya*:

> The woman is the fundamental element in society. From his mother, the child integrates the essential principles of his education; the men, who together will form the nation to come will have received their first ideas from a woman. The cultural and moral development of Morocco and of its future generations rests on the education of the Moroccan woman. They must not be ignorant. They must be given a sound, useful, and virtuous education. Islam has never denied education to women. On the contrary, it has recognized the obligation to instruct girls, provided that this education is carried out in a pure religious framework.\(^{61}\)

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\(^{58}\) Ibid., 66.

\(^{59}\) Mernissi describes her own transition into the nationalist schools in *Dreams of Trespass*.

\(^{60}\) By 1953, the number of girls who attained a primary certificate had only risen to 150, and four had achieved a baccalaureate degree. Baker, *Voices of Resistance*, 48

\(^{61}\) Mohamed al-‘Arbi Al-Zaggari, *Wahda al Maghribiya*, May 14, 1944. As described in Chapter 3, at this point, the Spanish zone was the only place in which any nationalist press was allowed to be published.
Al-Marah al-maghrebiyya in Allal al-Fassi’s al-Naqd al-Dhati

The most influential and articulate spokesperson for this religious justification, and even injunction, to educate the Moroccan woman and reform her legal status was Allal al-Fassi, the Qarawiyin-trained scholar who emerged in the 1930s as the figurehead and a principal nationalist ideologue expressing the salafi-inspired Islamic reformist hybrid form of Moroccan nationalism. Following his exile between 1937 and 1946 to Gabon, he returned to Morocco but, after clashing with the Sultan and Istiqlal leadership, lived in self-exile in Cairo and Tangier. He continued, however, to write extensively in the Moroccan press (which was allowed to publish again in 1947), in Al-‘Alam and the Tangier-based Risalat al-Maghrib, as well as the mainstream Arabic press published in Cairo. In 1948, he published two books aimed at framing the case for Moroccan independence. The first, intended primarily for the international diplomatic community, was a history of the nationalist movements in North Africa, Al-Harakat Al-Istiqlaliyah fi Al-Maghib Al-‘Arabi (The Independence Movements in the Arab Maghreb) that explained the evolution of these movements and made a case for the legitimacy of their claims against the French. The second book, al-Naqd al-Dhati (Self-Criticism), was intended for a Moroccan audience and contains a systematic exposition of his critiques of Moroccan society and his vision for the islah, or reform, of this society as it evolved toward independence. One of the key thrusts of his prognosis for reform was the need to ameliorate the condition of the Moroccan women from an educational and legal perspective.
After laying out an epistemological and methodological framework in the first two sections, Allal Al-Fassi then turns to the economic and social spheres, identifying weaknesses and ways Morocco can progress forward. While drawing mainly from his own Islamic reformist background, Al-Fassi’s critique also dialogues with European philosophers, sociologists, as well as French colonialist thinkers, who are the immediate target of his rebuttals.\(^{62}\) In the last section on “Social Thought,” Al-Fassi builds his model for a healthy Moroccan society, starting with an affirmation of the nuclear family (‘*usra*) as the basic unit of the nation (*watan*). In this section, the Moroccan woman, because of her central role within the family, receives significant attention, as Al-Fassi discusses the threat of prostitution within Moroccan society, the protection of the family accorded by *shari'a*, and the necessary reforms regarding woman’s rights, in terms of polygamy and divorce, that needed to be implemented.

Chapter 6, titled “The Moroccan Woman between *Jahili* Tradition (‘*urf*) and Legitimate Action (*al-‘amal al-shar'i*)\(^{314}\),” contains Al-Fassi’s central exposition about the place of the woman in the Moroccan nation, which he grounds in a contrast between the “Berber woman” under customary law versus the Muslim woman under Islamic law. At the beginning of the chapter, Al-Fassi’s declaratively asserts: “The woman is the pillar of the family, and any building whose pillar is not straight will fall down.”\(^{63}\) He then builds his argument about the need to reform the condition of the Moroccan woman by first recounting how Islam had transformed the position of Arab women in the seventh

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\(^{62}\) While in exile in Gabon, Al-Fassi had learned French, though previously he had read widely in Arabic translations of European works.

century. During the period of *jahiliyya*, women were treated as property to be bought, sold, and inherited (here he quotes a hadith by Bukhari about women being treated as part of the estate upon the death of the husband or father in pre-Islamic Arabia). The poor status of women, signified in her treatment as chattel and deprivation of any right to consent in marriage, is a primary sign of the degree to which a society is trapped in *jahiliyya*. Al-Fassi then turns to present-day Morocco and laments the persistence of *jahiliyya* in Berber areas, saying, “And it is unfortunate that when we look at the present, among a portion of our own country, we find that these *jahili* customs are still followed, and women in what are called customary regions are not given the least amount of respect or honor.”

Al-Fassi acknowledges the historical legacy of relations between rulers and tribal groups and why customary law was allowed to continue, but he argues that for Morocco to move forward, these customs have to be abolished: “No reform for the Moroccan family is possible without a reform of the condition of the woman. And no reform will come to our woman while Berber customary law continues to be imposed in our country.” Instead, he calls for the uniform application of a reinterpreted *shari’a* for Morocco. Al-Fassi, trained as an ‘*alim*, uses *hadith* and *fiqh* to argue that Islam accords both men and women a right to consent and that future spouses should be able to meet each other before being married. He also addresses the issue of head covering for women, arguing that almost all of the four Muslim legal schools permit a woman to expose her face, hands, and extremities. He explains that the underlying issue concerns

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64 Ibid., 210.  
65 Ibid., 211.
the threat of fitna (literally connoting a temptation or test, but also referring to discord or chaos within the community), but Al-Fassi points out that there is debate over whether the responsibility in this matter should devolve to women or to men themselves. He concludes by saying that veiling is a matter of custom, not a clear-cut issue dictated by shari’a. In other sections he argues the law should require a minimum age of fifteen for both boys and girls and that, before marriage, the state should require that both parties should have to get tested for infectious diseases and terminal illnesses.

In a later chapter, Al-Fassi lauds the superiority of Islamic law by demonstrating how it gives women more rights than other ancient and even contemporary law codes. Under shari’a, women are guaranteed property rights and rights of inheritance. They also retain their own “personality” in marriage, keeping their own name rather than taking that of their husband. Al-Fassi points out women have equal religious duties and are enjoined under shari’a to pray in mosques like men. In this section, an implicit criticism is directed at how custom has denigrated the position of women, with the official sanction of the French Protectorate authorities. This support of customary law is contrasted with the true application of shari’a. He finishes this section by arguing that the Moroccan woman must be accorded her full religious, social, and economic rights, including a right to education.66 In the final paragraphs of the book, his concluding bullet points reiterate the basic distinction he has drawn, centered on the condition of the Moroccan woman, between the desired Islamic social order and the corrupt system supported by the colonizer: “1. Give woman the place she deserves in society and in the

66 Ibid., 229.
family. 2. Free her from the bonds of *jahili* customs that colonization has supported in what are called the regions of Berber custom.\textsuperscript{67}

**Royal Patronage: Lalla Aicha and the Moroccan Woman**

In 1943, the Sultan himself moved to the forefront of this mobilization for improving the position of Moroccan women, taking the lead in incorporating a discourse of women’s advancement as a component of an independence-oriented reformist critique of colonial state building. That spring, the Sultan called a meeting of the Council of Viziers and invited the presidents of the alumni associations from the Fes, Rabat, and Marrakesh *collèges* to discuss the issue of girls education in the Protectorate. Though the number of girls enrolled in Franco-Moroccan Muslim girls schools had increased from 450 students in 1922 to 6,619 in 1943, the Sultan was very concerned because this still only represented a small fraction of the Muslim population.\textsuperscript{68} After a long discussion, the council resolved that the instruction given to Muslim girls needed to have the same goal as that offered to boys, a certificate in primary studies. It also decided that Arabic instruction for girls should be standardized, with Arabic professors chosen by the *majlis al-‘ilmi* at the Qarawiyin for the Fes schools, by the ulama of the Ben Youssef mosque-university for Marrakesh, and by local qaids for other areas. In order to assure skeptical parents of the moral trustworthiness of the male Arabic teachers appointed to teach their

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., 334.
\textsuperscript{68} MAE-Nantes, DIP, Carton 85, Report titled, “Le publication du Dahir du 10 Octobre 1943.”
daughters, each of these would be personally approved by the Sultan himself. On October 10, 1943, a dahir enacting these reforms was signed.

During his Throne Speech a month later, the Sultan announced the signing of the dahir and specifically stressed the need for Moroccan girls to be educated. In the speech, he also emphasized that the girls primary system would have the same curriculum as boys, including instruction in “religious culture including the concepts of tawhid (unity), fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), and also Arabic grammar” in addition to the necessary instruction they need for child-care and house-keeping.” He also assured the Moroccan nation that he personally would supervise the selection of male teachers of Arabic in the Franco-Moroccan public girls schools until female teachers were trained. That winter, after the speech, the Sultan sent Mohamed Belarbi Alaoui, the famous and well-respected theologian trained at the Qarawiyin, with his daughter, Princess Lalla Aicha, on a speaking tour throughout Morocco to promote education for girls. After the princess spoke, Alaoui would stand up and deliver a religious defense, citing examples from the Quran and Hadith, to support the religious injunction for parents to have their daughters educated.

By 1945, there were 7,000 girl students in Morocco in comparison with 20,000 boys. The royal family, including the Crown Prince Hassan and Princess Lalla Aicha, were regularly sent to promote education, both in the D.I.P. system and the Free Schools,

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69 MAE-Nantes, DIP, Carton 85. Letter from the Director of Political Affairs, Guillaume, to the Director of Public Instruction, May 24, 1943. The Residency was aware of the fact that this initiative was part of a larger push by the Palace to exercise more direct control over education under the Protectorate. The issue of girls education was particularly appropriate for this, as the gender issue had always been sensitive for the D.I.P.’s Muslim girls schools.

70 “Khutab al-’arsh,” Es-Sa’ada, December 19, 1943.

71 Baker, Voices of Resistance, 51.
by delivering speeches at ceremonies for school openings. On October 17, 1945, the Sultan was himself present to inaugurate the École des filles de notables marocaines, the sister school of the Moulay Youssef school for the sons of notables, in Rabat. This school contained six classes for modern curriculum instruction and two workshops to train girls in embroidery and lace-making. Two hundred students between the ages of five and thirteen were enrolled in the program which led up to a primary certificate. French was taught by French teachers, Arabic was also taught, and a faqiha was in charge of moral and religious instruction. On November 5th, 1945, the promised teaching school, the École normale d'institutrices was opened in Rabat, with thirty-two of the instructors designated to train Moroccan teachers for Muslim girls education. In the Spanish zone, a similar training school was created in Tetouan in December to develop a group of female teachers to replace male teachers.

The Sultan set the example for his reformist activism with regards to Morocco’s next generation of women in the education he provided his own daughter, Lalla Aicha. She was taught, with a group of other girls, in the palace. One of her classmates relates that the day began with prayer and the reading of the Quran at six in the morning, and then bilingual instruction in Arabic and French with a modern curriculum followed. The girls were also taught some English and Latin. In 1943, this group constituted the first cohort to receive a primary certificate of studies. In the mid-1940s, Lalla Aicha became

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72 After the closing of the Guessous Free School in Rabat, the students and faculty of which had actively supported the anti-French demonstrations in January 1944 following the arrests of the nationalist leaders involved in signing the Independence Manifesto, the Residency considered confiscating the school building and using it for the École Normale. In the face of ardent protests against the initiative, however, this plan was discarded.
73 Baker, Voices of Resistance, 51. Interview conducted with Aicha Terrab, who studied with the princess in the palace.
the most high profile advocate for women’s education in Morocco, articulating a salafi modernist justification for teaching women Arabic, Islam, and modern subjects in order to strengthen the Moroccan nation. In April 1947, Lalla Aicha accompanied her father and brother on the historic trip to Tangier. The day after her father’s controversial speech, the 17-year-old delivered a speech herself in Arabic, French, and English. The content of the speech reaffirmed Morocco’s ties to the Arab east, the importance of the Muslim religion, and urged the “liberation of the Moroccan woman” within the framework of Arabo-Islamic nationalism. The speech also contained the first open allusion, by any representative of the Palace (including the Sultan himself), to the “independence” of Morocco. In a deliberate symbolic gesture orchestrated by the Sultan, his daughter delivered the pro-nationalist and pro-women’s emancipation speech unveiled.74 The speech was attended by thousands of women from Tangier, Tetouan, and other northern cities, it was broadcast over the radio, and all of the Moroccan press carried stories of the speech—all of which contributed to the importance of this event as a major symbolic turning point for women’s activism in Morocco.75

Moroccan Women and Active Resistance

Over the next ten years, and particularly in the years of the exile of the Sultan and the royal family between 1953-1955, Moroccan women of many backgrounds became

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74 The Istiqlal Arabic daily Al-’Alam ran a picture of the Princess, whom they labeled “zaima al-nahda” wearing a formal Western gown, with the full text of the speech printed beneath (April 11, 1957).

75 Ten years later, Time magazine featured Lalla Aicha (unveiled) on the cover of the magazine and ran a lengthy article on the recent progress of Muslim women. Time, November 11th, 1957. In March 1965, her brother, King Hassan II, appointed her as the first Moroccan woman to be named ambassador, sending her as the Moroccan envoy to Great Britain.
increasingly active in the nationalist movement and in direct resistance against the French Protectorate administration. In previous decades, women had also been involved in direct resistance, though in less organized forms. During the pacification, French officers often cited the participation of Berber women in battles in cheering on their warriors with *you-vous* (ululation), poetic encouragements (and threats), and sometimes by throwing rocks and rolling boulders down on enemy troops. In Chapter 2, we saw the types of poetic commentary Berber women contributed in the *jihad* against the French occupier. In urban areas in the 1930s, women also participated, though not at the forefront, in the Latif demonstrations and subsequent anti-colonial protest. One example was the intense outrage expressed in against the 1937 proposed decree forbidding women to go out into the city unaccompanied by a man. Other decrees attempting to regulate the type of dress worn by Muslim women, sparked vocal protests by women in the medinas in the late 1930s.76

The very first Moroccan women’s political associations began to be formed in the mid-1940s.77 In 1946, the Istiqlal party formally recognized the creation of a women’s association within the party, and Malika Al-Fassi served as its first president. The *Akhawat al-safa* (Sisters of Purity) was also created shortly thereafter as a women’s association for the rival P.D.I. party, and it held its first congress in Fez in May 1947. Both organizations prioritized literacy campaigns and worked to increase the

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76 French intelligence reports noted the outrage expressed by women in the medina in response to regulations banning the wearing of the *jellaba* (the traditional male Moroccan outer garment) instead of the *haik* (the cumbersome and voluminous wrap traditionally worn outside of the house) and in decrees dictating what kind of shoes women could wear or not wear.

77 One of the first women’s associations in the Protectorate was formed by the Communist Party, which established the Moroccan Women’s Union in 1944, though this was composed mainly of Jewish and French women, and was not affiliated with the Moroccan nationalist movement.
opportunities for girls to have access to higher education. Both organizations also aimed to get women directly involved in the independence struggle.

While the early involvement in the 1940s in the nationalist movement by women was dominated by elites, who had been fortunate enough to have access to an education in the house and later in the Free Schools, the activities of the women’s associations did intentionally aim to cross class barriers and create a solidarity among Moroccan women of all backgrounds. It is important to qualify this, though, by noting these outreaches were done primarily within urban areas and rarely crossed over into the bled. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, women’s meetings were organized in homes of the wives of the prominent leaders of the nationalist movement. One woman who participated, Ftoma Skalli, recollects the meetings at Hajja Mekouar’s house in Fez, the wife of Ahmed Mekouar, in the 1940s: “At our gatherings, we would have very rich women, and we would seat them next to poor women. And we used to tell them that if they didn’t like it they’d better not show up the next time.”\footnote{Baker, \textit{Voices of Resistance}, 56.}

Women also began to directly participate in anti-French demonstrations in 1944, joining in the riots that broke out in response to the French arrests of Istiqlal leaders in January after the delivery of the Manifest of Independence. According to a Fassi nationalist, Mohamed Tazi, when the French closed off the Fes medina and began occupying it in early February, women went out en masse on the rooftops where they began to ululate (French intelligence reports often commented on the \textit{you-yous} of women while crowds were demonstrating) and some took basalt rocks used to hold down drying
laundry and dropped them on soldiers in the streets below.\textsuperscript{79} After the attacks on the Moroccan demonstrators by the colonial troops, women also took in the wounded and helped distribute food during the blockade of medina. As mentioned in the previous chapter, women were also highly active in the organization of the anti-Jewish boycott in response to the 1947 U.N. partition plan and the 1948 Arab-Israeli war that followed, as well as in initiating collections for the families of arrested nationalists and for the Arab cause in Palestine.

By the early 1950s, women also participated actively in union demonstrations and strikes in the major coastal cities. In August 1952, the textile workers in Rabat, more than half of whom were women, went on strike for a month. The general strike that was declared by Istiqlal that December was also widely supported by women working in the labor force. When the conflict between the Residency and the Palace culminated in the exile of the Sultan on August 20, 1953, women entered a new phase of active struggle on behalf of the “nation.” The exile of the royal family provoked an immense outpouring of emotion across many levels of the Moroccan female population, many of whom claimed to see the King’s face in the moon.\textsuperscript{80} Beyond this broad-based intensification of emotional attachment to the “Commander of the Faithful,” the outbreak of armed revolt against the Residency also provided Moroccan women an opportunity to actively join the armed nationalist resistance, exploiting French gender stereotypes about the indigenous

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid, 25.
\textsuperscript{80} Mernissi writes, “In Morocco that summer of 1953, the news spread throughout the country, from the north to the south to rise up. The exiled King, symbol of dignity, of renewal, of the rebirth, appeared in the moon. He is present, he is with us, the poor. One would prevent this dream of liberation? We put it there where we could: in the moon. Look - Mohamad al khamis fel qamar.” Fatima Mernissi, Chahrazad N’est Pas Marocaine: Autrement, Elle Serait Salariee! (Casablanca, Maroc: Editions le fennec, 1988), 56.
“Moroccan woman” as openings for them to help in the struggle. While largely ignored in the official nationalist histories written after independence, novelists, including Driss Chraibi’s *La Civilisation, ma mere*! (titled *Mother Comes of Age* in English)\(^{81}\) and Leila Abouzeid’s novel, ‘*Am al-Fil* (The Year of the Elephant),\(^{82}\) were among the first to depict Moroccan women’s agency during the struggle for independence.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has analyzed a woman’s place in the nation, first, in how French colonial policy intended to define ethnic difference by reinforcing separate legal classifications in which the different statuses of Arab “Muslim,” Berber, and Jewish women were primary signifiers. It also examined how colonial education policy for indigenous girls sought to reproduce a “traditional” Moroccan social order, with Moroccan women fulfilling fixed roles in the production of handicrafts and as mistresses of their households. It then turned to how the nationalist movement directly addressed the legal and educational dimensions of the colonial construction of the Moroccan woman with their own calls for reform. Within the Arabo-Islamic framing of Moroccan identity articulated from the beginning of the 1930s, the legal position of the Moroccan woman within the nation was to be determined by Islamic law (reinterpreted for modern times), rather than customary law. The nationalists rejected the “barbaric” Berber marker of identity because of the repressive legal status it afforded women and defended the


\(^{82}\) The novel was published in English in 1989, *The Year of the Elephant* (Austin, TX: Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Austin, 1989). For another perspective, see Fatima Mernissi’s *Dreams of Trespass: tales of a harem girlhood*, (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., 1994) which recalls the author’s own experience growing up in a nationalist family in Fes in the 1940s.
superiority of *shari’a* because of the progressive status it guaranteed the “Moroccan woman.” However, the implicit logic of using any legal system to delineate identity by marking out separate, and unequal, legal rights based on gender was never questioned. The nationalists did argue for gender equality in terms of education, pushing for a much more progressive educational curriculum comparable to that offered to Muslim boys. In the 1940s, the King himself became the most ardent proponent of reforming the position of the Moroccan woman through educational reform and through the public symbolism of his own politically active daughter, Lalla Aicha.

In the nationalist counter-frame, often propagated by elite nationalist women themselves, the goal of the emancipation of the Moroccan woman was directly tied to the strengthening of the Moroccan nation: defining and improving the place of the Moroccan woman in the nation was instrumentally oriented towards making her a better guardian of Moroccan identity and social values within the family. While many Moroccan women fully participated in the nationalist struggle, gaining great self-esteem from their contribution and experiencing soaring hopes that their participation would expand their rights in the nation after independence, this generation was disappointed by the post-independence compromises, particularly in the writing of the Moroccan personal status laws, the *Mudawanna*, that maintained a gender line delineating separate and unequal conservative Malekite interpretation of legal rights for the Moroccan Muslim woman.

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83 Mounira Charrad explains this post-independence crystallization of a patriarchal as a function of the degree to which the King had to rely on rural notables with a vested interest in patrilineal patriarchy. *States and women’s rights: the making of postcolonial Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001). To further the conversation about why Morocco ended up with the most repressive women’s status laws in the Maghrebi countries, it is necessary to explain why this still took place when the King himself had been such an ardent supporter of women’s advancement. In addition to the Weberian
and in the “forgetting” of these contributions in the nationalist historiography that took shape in the post-independence period. It is only in the past two decades, and partly under the official patronage of the palace, that a woman’s “legal” place in the nation has begun to be renegotiated in Morocco in the campaign to reform Morocco’s Mudawanna.
CHAPTER VI
RETURN OF THE KING

The Treaty of Fes enshrined the founding principle of the French intervention in Morocco in the early 20th century in international law: France was to “protect” the legitimate Moroccan ruler, the Alawite Sultan, and assist him in nation-state building in order to ensure the economic development of Morocco. The point of the “Protectorate” was for the “Protector” to strengthen the central government, the Makhzen headed by the Sultan, against the threat of a tribal siba, or insurgency. Chapter 2 examined the “pacification” campaign (1907-1934) against this siba that brought the “Berber mountain” under the control of the colonial state, including the implementation of policies to ally the “Berber bloc” directly to the French administration through the mediation of the Direction of Indigenous Affairs, customary law courts, tribal councils, and the colonial army. Chapter 3 focused on the “urban siba” that followed in the 1930s and the subsequent development of an organized anti-colonial Arabo-Islamic nationalist movement challenging sovereign control of the colonial state.

This concluding chapter considers the endgame struggle to define Morocco in the final decade of the Protectorate, as the main competing discourses of Moroccan national identity, French colonialist and Sultan-centric Arabo-Islamic nationalist, came into direct conflict. In this last act, the main players, including the Sultan-cum-King Mohamed V and last two prominent Resident Generals, Juin (1947-1951) and Guillaume (1951-1954), battled openly over sovereign control of the colonial state. This confrontation climaxed in August 1953 when the Residency ordered troops to surround the royal palace in Rabat,
and Guillaume forced the “protectee,” the Sultan, to abdicate. He and his sons were escorted at gunpoint to the airfield outside of the palace, flown to Corsica, and then exiled to Madagascar with the rest of the royal family. Two years later, facing a widespread urban insurgency, the threat of a rural *siba*, and the outbreak of war in Algeria, the Fourth Republic government in Paris resolved to negotiate the return of King Mohamed V. The King arrived back on November 16th, 1955, and Morocco achieved formal independence the following spring in March 1956.

The Alawite dynasty’s post-colonial endurance in Morocco presents a remarkable exception, given that most *ancien régime* royal families which had been in place, or had been put in place, under French and British control in North Africa and the Middle East did not survive anti-colonial independence struggles or revolutionary upheavals afterwards. This chapter explores the evolution of Sidi Mohamed ben Youssef from 1927 to 1956: from colonial figurehead, chosen as a pliable daahir-stamping sovereign in the 1920s, to nationalist hero, the “Commander of the Faithful” who, from the mid-1940s embodied Moroccan aspirations for independence. The “return” of the King, figuratively, in his active engagement in pressing for Moroccan autonomy from the early 1940s to his open confrontation with the French Residency after 1947, and literally, in his return from exile to an ecstatic welcome from the Moroccan population in November 1955, had a profound impact on the construction of Morocco that prevailed at independence. Why did King Mohamed V and his successors succeed in consolidating dynastic power while many other ruling monarchs in the “Arab world” were eventually tainted for collaborating with the colonial powers and fell to officer-led coups or to
charismatic nationalist party leaders?

**From Sultan to King**

Mohamed ben Youssef was born in Fes on August 10, 1909. Three years later, his uncle, Moulay Abd al-Hafidh was forced to sign the Treaty of Fes and then abdicated on August 13, 1912. Moulay Youssef, Mohamed’s father, was chosen by Lyautey to succeed Abd al-Hafidh and, after the obligatory *ba’ya* of the Fassi ulama, was proclaimed Sultan several days later. The youngest of his father’s sons, Mohamed was raised in the royal palace in Meknes, with almost no contact with the outside world other than his Algerian tutor, Si Mammeri, who taught him Arabic and French. One of the few breaks in this isolation occurred in 1926 when his father took him on a state visit to France with his other brothers in August to dedicate the newly-built Paris mosque and the Islamic institute. Upon his father’s unexpected death on November 17, 1927, Mohamed ben Youssef, having been put forward by Theodor Steeg, the Resident General who succeeded Lyautey, was acclaimed by the Fassi ulama as Sultan the following day. The Residency continued to restrict the young monarch, who was only eighteen at the time he ascended the throne, to the confines of the royal palaces, while affairs of state were

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1 Due to hyper-sensitivity about the royal family, almost no official Moroccan archives about Moulay Youssef, Mohamed V, Hassan II, or Mohamed VI are open to the public. Not surprisingly, a critical biography of Mohamed V remains to be written. The following biographical details are drawn from works by authors with personal access to the King including Charles-André Julien's chapter on Mohamed V in *Les Africains* (Paris: Éd. J. A., 1977); Rom Landau, *Mohammed V, King of Morocco* (Rabat: Morocco Publishers, 1957); and Hassan, *The Challenge: The Memoirs of King Hassan II of Morocco* (London: Macmillan, 1978). This chapter also relies on official French archival records pertaining to the monarchy that have recently been declassified.

2 Memories of this trip were the reason behind Moulay Ben Youssef’s insistence that the young prince Hassan accompany him on his official visit to Paris in 1931 for the International Colonial Exposition.
largely mediated to the Sultan through the experienced Makhzen old-hand, the eighty-year old Grand Vizier, Mohamed El-Mokri. ³

_The Berber Dahir and Relationship to Nationalist Movement in the 1930s_

One of the decrees that passed through the Grand Vizier to be affixed by the Sultan’s royal seal was the May 16, 1930 dahir regarding the reorganization of customary law courts in Berber areas. The Berber crisis that ensued that summer precipitated the initial contact between the Sultan and the nascent nationalist movement leadership; he received a delegation from Fes in August that presented a list of grievances related to the “Berber Dahir.” Julien reports that, after the meeting, the King told Allal al-Fassi he had been misled and promised “I will no longer cede a single right of our country.”⁴ Despite the uproar over the decree and the apparent sympathy of the Sultan, the customary law system remained in place, with small modifications, until the end of the Protectorate.⁵

For most of the 1930s, the Sultan continued to remain sequestered, to a great extent, away from the general Moroccan population. One of the most critical developments during this period was the initiative by the nationalist movement in 1933 to organize the first Throne Day, celebrating the anniversary of the Sultan’s accession to the throne on November 18. This “invention of tradition,” which the Residency reinforced by attempting to co-opt the holiday themselves, anchored the Alawite monarchy firmly as

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³ El-Mokri served as Grand Vizier for the entire length of the 44 year Protectorate, dying shortly after independence in 1957.
⁴ Julien, _Les Africains_, 213.
⁵ An exception was allowed for tribes desiring to place themselves under Islamic law in the fall of 1930 and the most controversial aspect, the transfer of criminal cases to the French courts, was amended in 1934 and the Makhzen appointed cadis regained their jurisdiction.
the central mobilizing symbol for the Moroccan nationalist movement. A few months later, in May 1934, the Sultan’s ceremonial visit to Fes to the mausoleum of Moulay Idriss (the founder and patron saint of the city) served as a critical catalyst the nationalist leadership sought to channel to mobilize a mass demonstration of public enthusiasm. Upon his entrance to the medina (Fes al-Bali) through the Bab Boujeloud on May 10, the boisterous crowd welcomed the Sultan chanting, “Yahya al-Malik,” “Vive le Roi,” “Vive le Maroc!” “Vive l’Islam!” “Vive le Sultan des jeunes!” “Vive notre Roi indépendant!” Reportedly, after the Sultan returned to the palace, a group of young demonstrators with Moroccan flags marched to the regional office of the Indigenous Affairs administration shouting “À bas la France!” and pulled down the French flag.\textsuperscript{6} When the Residency insisted that the Sultan be surrounded with colonial troops the following day in his walk down the \textit{Tala’a l-Kbirah} through the medina to say prayers at the Qarawiyin mosque, the Sultan reportedly refused, worried that the troop presence would lead to a violent confrontation with the crowd. He returned instead to Rabat. The Residency publicly declared that the Sultan had disapproved of the trouble-makers and issued a statement castigating the nationalist element in the city. In subsequent travels throughout the Protectorate in the 1930s, however, nationalists continued to exploit the Sultan’s visits to affirm national unity, as the arrival of the Sultan drew large crowds waving Moroccan flags and chanting slogans about the King and the nation.

\textsuperscript{6} MAE-Nantes, Direction de l’Intérieur (DI), Carton 892, Letter from Delegate Minister of Resident General to Minister of Foreign Affairs, “A/S des événements du 10 Mai 1934 à Fès et de leurs conséquences,” (May 21, 1934). According to the French report, the enthusiastic demonstrators overwhelmed the guard around the Sultan, separating him from the other viziers. When the Pasha tried to intervene, he was thrown down to the ground (this latter detail is entirely plausible as their was no love lost between the nationalist activists and Bargache, who had thrown many of them into jail and had several others beaten.)
During the 1930s, like the nationalists, the Sultan did not broach the subject of independence, but remained committed to reforming the Protectorate relationship, resisting efforts by the French to treat Morocco as a colony and calling for a more equitable nation-building policy. The sensitivity to the “colonization” of Morocco was evident in 1934 when the Sultan vigorously opposed a proposal by the French government to reorganize the administration of Morocco, moving it from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Ministry of Overseas France; this was seen as a step towards annexing Morocco, as had been done with the three departments in Algeria in 1848.7 Despite certain sympathies with the nationalist cause, the Sultan did not openly ally with them in the 1930s, though, due to concerns about provoking the French authorities. Throughout the decade, Mohamed ben Youssef, despite secret contacts with the nationalist leadership up until the 1937 crackdown, remained a stolid ally of the French Residency (his ostensible Protector) and enjoyed a close personal friendship with Noguès. This support was evident in 1939 when the Sultan pledged Morocco’s support for the Protector in the war, saying, “We Moroccans must all support the common cause. We must not refuse France either our human or our material resources.”8

7 Ouezzani wrote an article in Maghreb about the proposal, strongly supporting the Sultan’s vociferous opposition: “Morocco, by the eloquent and authorized voice of its sovereign, has officially made known to those responsible its unshakeable attachment to the status quo, according to treaties. Being, despite the Protectorate regime, an autonomous and foreign country in regards to France, our country has the absolute right to suspect this type of “reform” and to repel anything that might imperil its destiny. It does not intend to improve this destiny in a manner that profits another country or colony and wants to guarantee the character of its status by its dependence on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.” He opposed treating Morocco the same as Algeria and Tunisia saying that despite geographic, ethnic, and moral similarities, the three countries had different populations and interests. Ouezzani, “A propos du Ministère de la France d’Outre Mer: Protectorat et Colonie,” Maghreb, April 1934, 10.

8 Hassan, The Challenge, 27 The complete text of the speech was made available online at: http://www.mohammed5.ma/. For the fiftieth anniversary of the “Revolution of the King and the People,”
Towards Isthiqal—World War II, the Anfa Conference, and the Manifest of Independence

The onset of World War II introduced a historical contingency radically transforming the political opportunity context in Morocco and reshaping the playing field on which the struggle for independence would be carried out afterward. Though the Sultan did not swerve from his assurances of loyalty at the onset of the war to the French Protector, the fall of France in 1940 and the transition to Vichy rule in the early 1940s distinctly altered his relations with the Residency. Even before the landing of Allied troops in Morocco in November 1942, which obviously restructured how authority was mediated in North Africa, the Sultan had already begun to chart a more independent course, albeit subtly, in the first years of the war. Worried about Axis propaganda and the intrusion of the German Armistice commission, the Vichy administrators relied even more on the Sultan’s legitimization of their rule and encouraged him to make several well-publicized trips across the French zone in 1941-42 to bolster his, and their own, image. This period signified a new phase in Sidi Mohamed’s rule in which he began to subtly reassert his prerogatives as the Moroccan sovereign in the Protectorate relationship. This engagement was evident in his resistance towards implementing the most discriminatory of the *statut des Juifs* regulations imposed by Vichy; it was also, as described in Chapter 4, demonstrated in the instructions circulated by the Grand Vizier to

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the Moroccan government created a commemorative website in 2003 that includes photos, news clips, audio, and transcripts of many of Mohamed V’s speeches.

9 MAE-Nantes, Direction de l’Intérieur (D.I.), Carton 892, “Le Nationalisme sultanien,” (May 1945). These modern iterations of the *mahalla*, a tour of the country by the royal army to project central power and gather tribute, became a potent means to construct the symbolic image of the monarchy, as the convoy of vehicles passed through the countryside and made periodic stops for ceremonies at cities and villages. In 1941, the Sultan visited the Tafilelt region, where he visited the tombs of Alawite ancestors. He visited Marrakesh, Fes, and Oujda the next year in well-publicized trips.
qaid and pashas about forbidding Moroccan Muslim women from working as domestic servants in the homes of Moroccan or European Jews.

The educational policy of the Protectorate was one of the first major issues in which the Sultan began to take an active interest and attempt to directly influence. The last chapter examined how the Sultan, beginning in early 1943, pressured the Residency for reforms to provide higher levels of education to Muslim girls past the primary level and to have a more uniform curriculum for boys and girls. This proactive stance towards the Direction of Public Instruction bore fruit as the reforms recommended by the Makhzen went into affect with the signing of the October 10, 1943 dahir. Two years later, an expanded teacher training school was opened to help provide more Moroccan teachers, particularly female Arabic teachers, to staff a greater number of schools for Muslim children.

Less publicly, the Sultan also began to take an interest in the Berber educational system the Protectorate had implemented in the 1920s through the opening of Franco-Berber elementary schools and the Azrou College for sons of Berber notables. As discussed in Chapter 2, one of the main goals of this system was to prevent the “Arabization” and “Islamization” of the “Berber bloc;” the Franco-Berber system explicitly strove to preserve the Berber language (via the teaching a Latin-character based transcription system),\textsuperscript{10} to advance the francisation of the Berber (male) population, and to block the spread of Islamic teaching by urban-trained tolba. On December 24, 1942,

\textsuperscript{10} Roux and his interlocutors used this system to record the poems they collected among the Tamazight and Tashelhit speaking tribes. This system was also important for the tribal council secretaries, who needed to take down court proceedings and refer to Berber words.
while spending time at his house in the resort town of Ifrane in the Middle Atlas, Sidi Mohamed drove the 15km southwest to make an incognito visit to the Azrou College. At the school, the Sultan asked about the schedule and time reserved for Arabic instruction and whether the Arabic professor was French or Muslim. The Sultan also asked about what type of instruction was given about Islam and when and where prayers were said. Afterwards, the French school administrators reported their worries about the Sultan’s possible intervention, saying he could make “the particular instruction given in Berber country disappear and achieve the political and spiritual unity of the country.”

Beyond the visit to the Azrou College, the frequent visits of the Sultan to Ifrane (the mountain resort town close to Azrou and in the middle of the designated region of Berber customary law) also disturbed French officials in the D.I.P. and the Direction of Political Affairs who worried about protecting the Berber areas of the Middle Atlas from the Sultan’s influence. These fears were exacerbated by plans in the early 1940s to build a resort facility for Moroccan functionaries in the makhzen in the Ifrane city center. The proximity of these government officials and the Sultan would “make it difficult, in the near future, to guard the strictly Berber character originally given to the Azrou College.” The Sultan was also using Ifrane as a base from which to build connections with surrounding Middle Atlas Berber chiefs, who were becoming more and more oriented towards Rabat during this period. He also used the annual hedya ceremonies, re-ritualized in the first years of the Protectorate by Lyautey, to build stronger ties with rural

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notables when they came to present tribute. In the early 1940s, French officials became increasingly concerned about the viability of the Protectorate’s Berber policy, as many of these chiefs refused to send their children to the Franco-Berber schools. Instead, they want to send their children to Arabic schools in the major cities and tried to pressure the local Berber schools (in Sefrou, El Hajeb, Khemisset) to offer more Arabic and Islamic instruction.

Throughout 1942, the Sultan was also meeting secretly with nationalist leaders that had not been exiled, or who had been able to reenter the country, including Ahmed Balafrej, Omar Abdeljalil, Mohamed Lyazidi, Mohamed Ghazi, and Mohamed El Fassi. The meetings occurred late at night in a garage or another out-building of the royal palace in order to avoid detection by the Protectorate authorities. In these discussions, the agenda of the 1930s to press a reform of the Protectorate partnership, which had been the major goal of the Plan de Réformes, was abandoned; independence was clearly the new objective, though it was unclear how soon this could be achieved.

The Allied landings in November 1942 further reconfigured the balance of power between the Sultan and the French “protector,” opening up room for him to maneuver.

13 MAE-Nantes, Direction de l’Intérieur (D.I.), Carton 892, “Le Nationalisme sultanien,” (May 1945). This report notes that at the ‘Aid el-mouloud (celebrating the birth of the Prophet Mohamed) presented the Sultan, “an excellent occasion to maintain the real foundations of the Empire when the pashas and qaids of all the tribes gathered and were subjected to his policy of charm and attraction.”
14 MAE-Nantes, DIP Carton 30, Report by G. Germain, director of Collège Berber in Azrou, July 1943. Germain conducted a tour of centers in the Middle Atlas to recruit new students (including Khenifra, Moulay-Bouazza, Oulmès, El-Hammam, Itzer, Bounia, Tounfite, Enjil, Boulemane, Ahermoumou, Tahala, Ain Sbit, Immouzer Kandar) and reported that “Altogether, our tour confirmed the impression that it is difficult to get the notables to send their sons to the College, although many of the Bureaux have tried.”
15 Delanoë includes an appendix containing a memoire from Mohamed Bouabid, a native of Salé who had been recruited by the nationalists in late 1941 and rose in the ranks of activists. He was among the fifty-six signers of the Manifest of Independence in 1944. In the memoire, he recounts the process leading up to the issuance of the manifest, its reception, and the reprisals and unrest that followed. Delanoë, *Lyautey, Juin, Mohammed V, Fin D’un Protectorat*, 183.
The night of the landings he refused to withdraw from the royal palace in Rabat inland to Fes, despite the urgings of his personal friend, the Resident General Noguès. This independent course was reinforced at the Casablanca conference, held at the Anfa hotel at the end of January 1943, at which Churchill, Roosevelt, and Allied military commanders (including the French leaders, Giraud and De Gaulle) met to decide the next steps in the military campaign in North Africa. One night during the conference, after the Resident General and other French officials had left the dinner party, Roosevelt and Sidi Mohamed were left alone with a smaller group, including Churchill, the Crown Prince Hassan, and an American advisor, Robert Murphy. During the course of the conversation, Roosevelt spoke at length with the Moroccan Sultan, commenting that after the war he foresaw that Morocco would gain its independence, assured the Sultan that the United States would not stand in the way of this, and promised economic aid to the country.\(^{16}\) These personal assurances about Morocco’s post-war aspirations were allegedly reiterated in two letters sent from Roosevelt to the Sultan after the Anfa meeting.\(^{17}\) Whatever the specifics of the American pledges (they became moot after Roosevelt’s death in April 1945 and as American priorities shifted with the onset of the Cold War), this private conversation with Roosevelt was significant because it constituted the first face-to-face meeting between the Sultan and a foreign head of state, without the presence of a Residency official, since the founding of the Protectorate. Roosevelt’s warm support of the

\(^{16}\) No official transcripts were recorded of this conversation. While the discussion did not amount to a formal pledge by the United States government, according to all reports, it is clear the Roosevelt personally supported Morocco’s cause. King Hassan II’s first-hand recollection of the meeting is at least as reliable of other accounts. Hassan, *The Challenge*, 31

Moroccan cause undoubtedly emboldened Sidi Mohamed and contributed to his confidence in attempting to reassert his prerogatives in the Protectorate partnership.\textsuperscript{18}

In the fall of 1943, the Sultan encouraged the formation of the Istiqlal party and the drafting of the Manifest of Independence. This political mobilization was done in spite of the intransigence the Free French leadership in North Africa had demonstrated towards other aspirations for autonomy. In Tunisia, Mohamed El Moncef, had demanded reforms after becoming bey on June 19, 1942 at 62 years of age. After the Allied invasion in November, the Germans airlifted troops to Tunisia to maintain a foothold in North Africa, keeping the bey in power. When the Allies occupied Tunisia in May 1943, however, the French leadership, Giraud and Juin, deposed Moncef Bey, ostensibly for collaborating with the Germans, but in reality because he had challenged the Resident General, formed a national government at his own initiative, and tried to end direct French administration in Tunisia.

Nevertheless, later that year the Moroccan Sultan urged nationalist ideologues to draft a Manifest of Independence that called for the installation of a constitutional monarchy, with a national assembly elected through universal suffrage, and the constitution of local and regional assemblies. Due to resistance from threatened qaids and pashas, the wording about the “constitutional monarchy” and the “local and regional assemblies” was removed, but the final draft of the manifest did call for Moroccan independence within the framework of the Atlantic Charter, intentionally not mentioning

\textsuperscript{18} Hassan II reports the affect of the meeting, saying, “It was after the Anfa interview, and as a result of the promises that were made there to him, that my father led the Moroccan people resolutely on the road to independence.” Hassan, \textit{The Challenge}, 30.
France as the Protectorate power but trying to internationalize the Moroccan question by appealing equally to the U.S., Britain, France, and the Soviet Union. Reportedly, the Sultan himself coordinated its delivery to the Allied authorities on January 11, 1944. As related in Chapter 3, the French responded harshly, forcing the Sultan to fire two ministers favorable to Istiqlal, and arresting two nationalist leaders in Rabat later that month, which sparked widespread urban protests in early February 1944 that were brutally suppressed by colonial troops. The Anglo-American occupying forces made little effort to restrain the Residency’s crack-down on the movement during the war, prioritizing continued stability under French colonial rule over support for independence movements in Morocco or elsewhere in the French empire.19

At the end of the war, Charles De Gaulle invited the Sultan to Paris to participate in the celebrations, awarding him the Cross of Liberation on June 18, 1945. In conversations during the visit, De Gaulle reports the Sultan informed him that:

The Protectorate is accepted by me as a transitory stage between the Morocco of the past and a free and modern state. After the events of yesterday, before those of tomorrow, I believe that the moment has arrived to reach another stage towards this goal. That is what my people are waiting for.20

While De Gaulle reaffirmed that France also had the goal of moving Morocco forward, which was the fundamental principle embedded in the Treaty of Fes and pursued by Lyautey, he informed the Sultan that this was a process that would take time. Before he left, De Gaulle made sure to reaffirm France’s prerogatives in Morocco, asking the Sultan: “When, at Anfa, President Roosevelt put the sparkling marvel of immediate

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19 The British, of course, were not disposed to validating nationalist aspirations, as a colonial power themselves. They would intervene, for instance in Lebanon and Syria, in cases where the demise of French imperial aspirations directly benefited their own interests.

independence in front of your Majesty, what did he propose to you, outside of his dollars and a place in his clientele?" 21 Facing the fact that in postwar world order America was not going to intervene in France’s North African empire, the Sultan acceded that the progress of his country had to be accomplished with the aid of France. 22

While De Gaulle’s support for Moroccan autonomy, as well as the aspirations of the rest of France’s overseas holdings, remained tepid (and irrelevant after his departure from the political scene until the late 1950s), he did appoint a much more liberal, reform-oriented Resident General, Eirik Labonne in March 1946. Labonne, who had formerly served in Morocco under Lucien Saint, initiated a three-year plan to develop industries, expand education, and modernize the judicial system. These efforts to increase the benefits of the Protectorate for the Moroccan population generated intense resistance from the colon population, though, and Labonne had to back off of much of his agenda. In the fall of 1946, the Sultan approached the Resident General with a fateful proposal to take a trip to the Tangier zone, which had been returned to international control in September 1945 after being occupied by Spanish forces since June 1940. Labonne initially delayed the trip but eventually agreed it could be scheduled for April 1947.

**The Tangier Trip and Speech (April 1947)**

The Tangier trip by the Sultan represented a watershed in the history of the Protectorate, not simply because of the content of the speech delivered by the Sultan, but equally because of the symbolic importance of the trip itself. Since 1912, Morocco had

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21 Ibid.
22 Delanoë, Lyautey, Juin, Mohammed V, Fin D’un Protectorat, 97-98.
been parceled into multiple zones (the Tangier international zone, the Spanish northern zone, the French zone, and the Spanish-controlled areas in the south including the enclave of Sidi Ifni, Rio de Oro, and Seguia el Hamra). Throughout the colonial period, it was necessary to have a passport to travel between these zones in Morocco. By traveling to Tangier, the Moroccan Sultan, the first Sultan to visit the city since Moulay Hassan had come in 1889, sent a blatant political message reasserting the claims of the Alawite dynasty to all of territorial Morocco, in direct opposition with the geographic divisions that had been overlaid by the European powers. Towards this end, after leaving Rabat by train on April 8th, the royal cortège deliberately stopped for a ceremony in Asilah, meeting the Khalifa of the Spanish zone and speaking to a jubilant audience, before continuing to Tangier.

The next day he delivered a speech in the garden of the Mendoubia in the center of the Tangier medina, significant not only in what it said but also in what was left out. In the speech, the Sultan first stressed Morocco’s strong attachment to the Arab Middle East:

Morocco earnestly desires to acquire its full rights. It goes without saying that Morocco is a country attached by the strongest ties to the Arab countries of the East, naturally desiring that these ties grow stronger and stronger, since the Arab League has become an important organization that plays a great role in world politics. The Arab countries form a single nation; whether in Tangier or Damascus, this is but one nation.

For the French government, this open alliance with the newly created Arab League and expression of solidarity with the Arab nationalism emanating from the Middle East

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23 The garden surrounded the offices and residence of the mendoub, the Sultan’s delegated representative in the Tangier international zone.

(where France had lost its position in the post-war decolonization in Lebanon and Syria), was only one of the disturbing signals in the speech. Equally offensive was the warm support of the United States coupled with a thundering silence about the French Protector. Following the statement above, the Sultan continued, “I have much respect for the help the American republic has offered to the Arab countries and especially for its participation in liberating from oppression.”

The key line the Sultan had omitted from the approved draft of the speech was the obligatory acknowledgement of the beneficent French government, “enamored of this liberty that steers our country towards prosperity and progress.”

This cool attitude towards the French in Tangier, expressed in the speech and particularly in the omission of that last line, was undoubtedly an expression of the Sultan’s resentment about events in Casablanca that transpired days before. On April 7th, after an argument broke out near a brothel area, Senegalese troops went on rampage in the medina that lasted several hours, killing and injuring over a hundred Moroccans, before the French authorities sent in troops to stop it.

In fact, the Tangier speech was technically not the first public display by the Sultan of his disapproval of the French administration of the Protectorate and support for Moroccan aspirations to independence. When entering Marrakesh on a royal visit in 1945, the Sultan’s convoy had been greeted with signs saying, “We do not want a foreign

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25 Ibid., 52-54.
26 Ibid.
27 The United Press reported that a riot developed on April 7th after two Senegalese soldiers and an “Arab prostitute” became involved in “a street argument.” “Under a hail of stones, the two Senegalese retreated to their barracks. There they recruited fifty reinforcements. The soldiers broke open the magazine of their barracks and returned to the scene with rifles and Tommy guns. The Senegalese fired into the crowd. Screaming women ran for cover while Moroccans fought back with knives, pistols, and stones.” “Senegalese Soldiers Kill 58 Moroccans,” New York Times, April 9th, 1947, pg. 4.
Protectorate. By the Will of Allah, Morocco claims its independence.” Expected to condemn the slogans on the walls of the city, the Sultan instead responded in a speech with an expression, albeit understated, of sympathy for the nationalist sentiment, “Be assured that everything that saddens you saddens me; and that everything that you hope for I hope for, too.” While the French authorities were not provoked by these comments, they did take offense at the Tangier speech, which was delivered to an international and broad Moroccan audience via radio and published in the French and Arabic press in the Protectorate. The President Ramadier and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Georges Bidault, reacted swiftly and severely, blaming Labonne for allowing too much leniency which had let the Sultan get out of control. Labonne was summarily replaced a month later with a more hard-line Resident General, Alphonse Juin, who arrived on May 14, 1947.

**Juin, Guillaume, and the “Sultan of Istiqlal”**

Juin had risen within the military from modest origins, graduating from Saint Cyr and then fighting, and getting wounded, on the Western front. While posted in the Constantine region of Algeria, he married into an upper-middle class colon family, and then served as a staff officer under Lyautey in Morocco. During World War II, he gained fame as the commander of the French Expeditionary forces in the Italian campaign. In 1947, he was sent to Morocco with orders from the French Council of Ministers to rein in

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the Sultan. After four months in the job, Juin reported back to Georges Bidault, the Minister of Foreign Affairs:

I found the country in the grip of a veritable psychosis of fear. The uneasiness created by the unbridled agitation of the nationalists, managed behind the scenes by the Sultan himself, had only increased after the spectacle and verbal demonstration at Tangier. The French controllers, civil and military, saw their authority weaken more and more with regard to the vacillations, not to mention the hostility, of many pashas and qais perplexed by our cowardice and weakness, and naturally interested in safeguarding their own position.29

In those months, Juin had seen fit to show force to reestablish the validity and authority of the Treaty of 1912. He had no affection for the Sultan, suspecting that his attempts to reconcile with the Residency were simply trying to gain time, “for he is certainly colluding with certain agents from Cairo” and waiting for some type of incident that he could use at the United Nations. Juin concluded the report saying he thought the Sultan had foolish ambitions, “the gravest of which is that he has detached himself from France, little by little, to the point that he can no longer see us as anything but an enemy. For sure, we carry a great deal of responsibility, after having placed him on the throne as an adolescent, we let him grow up without taking care to form him properly, surrounding him with French companions of no quality.” 30

During the four years in which Juin presided as Resident General, the central conflict between him and the Sultan concerned not “if,” but “when” Morocco would become independent. On the issue of Morocco’s eventual independence, Juin reflected, “We are here by virtue of a Protectorate treaty of which it would be childish to imagine is

30 Ibid.
going to continue indefinitely through tacit agreement.” He recommended Paris work toward negotiating another pact with the Moroccan Sultan that would recognize Moroccan autonomy while still guaranteeing French economic and security interests in the country. However, consistent with the paternalistic attitude that permeated postwar French policy and contributed to hopes of reconstituting the empire as the French Union, Juin felt that though Morocco was headed towards independence, it had a long way to go. He thought the first stage of the evolution to independence would take twenty to twenty-five more years, to give enough time for Moroccans to progress far enough from their “medieval culture” towards getting the trained technicians and functionaries to run the government. He warned Bidault, however, that the Sultan had aspirations to be the “Great Sultan of Independence” and recommended:

> It is necessary to coldly consider the possibility of pushing him aside. Certainly the operation is extremely delicate and a little undesirable, especially after the precedent of Moncef Bey. But if a serious situation occurs, that leads for example to another global conflict, no hesitation will be permitted.

From the summer of 1947 through the end of his term, Juin and the Sultan clashed over Juin’s proposal to reform the municipal councils, making them an elected position for which both French and Moroccans would be allowed to vote. The Sultan rejected this proposal entirely because he claimed allowing the French or other foreigners to vote violated Morocco’s sovereignty. He did support allowing Moroccans to exercise their democratic liberties, but firmly rejecting extending suffrage, for Moroccan elected bodies, to non-Moroccans. That spring, the bad blood between the Residency and the Palace grew worse when the “Tract Affair” came to light in January 1948. In December,

31 Ibid.
an Arabic tract had been distributed by post to recipients throughout the country claiming
the Sultan was a bastard. The alleged culprit, Si Mohamed Ben Abd El-Kader Ferfera
was arrested on January 10, after his handwriting was matched with that on the tract. The
fact that Ferfera worked for the Direction of the Interior created a standoff on two fronts:
the Palace strongly suspected that the Residency was directly involved and there was a
battle over who had jurisdiction in the case.33 The Sultan claimed that, under the dahirs
of November 11, 1913 and June 24, 1935 forbidding disturbing the public order, the case
of Ferfera should come under the jurisdiction of the Sharifian court system; the
Residency claimed that Ferfera could not be arrested because he worked for a
Protectorate service.

Juin, on the other side, was disturbed by the open support the Palace demonstrated
towards the Istiqlal nationalist movement. In his regular report to Robert Schumann, the
Minister of Foreign Affairs, about the state of the Protectorate, Juin complained, in
December 1949, that the official propaganda office of Istiqlal, which (conveniently
enough) also served as a marketing and travel agency, the Société Maghrébine
d’Information, de Publicité, et de Voyages, was mixing in political messages in its print
campaign for Coca-Cola, which whom it had a contract for Arabic-language advertising
in the French zone. Apparently, the agency used the Sharifian Imperial Crown in Coke
advertisements, using the political symbol in commercial messages displayed on posters
and billboards across the Protectorate.34 In November, the French liaison officer between

34 MAE-Nantes, DI, Carton 892, Letter from Resident General Juin to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Robert
the Residency and the Palace brought up the issue of the nationalist advertising agency’s conflation of the Moroccan Crown and its client. This time the problem went the other direction; Coca-Cola was “sponsoring” the nationalists. Posters had been put up around Casablanca announcing a demonstration organized by the agency for that year’s ‘Aid el-‘Arsh (Throne Day), under the patronage of the Crown Prince, Moulay Hassan. The posters included a “Drink Coca-Cola” graphic. The French counselor showed the Sultan one of the posters and complained it gave the impression that, in celebration of Throne Day, the imperial family recommends that “Moroccans drink Coca-Cola.”

He warned the posters could “give rise to criticisms.” The Sultan politely expressed that, though he regretted it was impossible to remove the part of the poster with the Coca-Cola trademark, he supposed the organizers of the demonstration had to cover the costs of making the poster and expressed he was indifferent to any criticisms the poster might provoke. Apparently, the Moroccan nationalists and the Sultan enjoyed the irony of provoking the French protector by allying with the American soft drink maker whose “coca-colonization” of France had come under attack after being introduced in metropolitan France.

36 The Coca-Cola company’s expansion in Europe had exploded as a result of the war, during which the company supplied every G.I. a bottle for 5 cents. The U.S. government had subsidized the construction of sixty-four bottling plants worldwide during the war. These bottling operations were expanded in 1947 in the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg, and to Switzerland, Italy, and France in 1949. Political opposition to the brand in France created a firestorm of controversy in 1949-1950, and eventually an embargo was placed on the product. Interestingly, the American company tried to bypass the embargo by exporting the concentrate to bottlers in France from its Casablanca operation. See the chapter, “Yankee Go Home: The Left, Coca-Cola, and the Cold War,” in Richard F Kuisel, Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 37-69.
Final Conflict between Colonialist and Nationalist Frames of the Nation

While the colonial and anti-colonial politics of Coca-Cola’s marketing were brewing in Morocco and France in late 1949, a speech by Juin at the Academy of Colonial Sciences in Paris on November 18 further exposed the serious rift between the Resident General and the Moroccan Sultan. At his induction into the Academy, Juin spoke at length in defense of the words “colonialism” and “imperialism,” commenting that “can one forget that the Sharifian Empire could not have become a national entity except by our presence?” He reiterated the colonial vulgate, explaining:

As far back as we can reach in time, the Muslim epoch in North Africa always presents the same opposition between the cities and the countryside, the same Arabo-Berber dualism which has fixed a certain field of action according to a geographic equilibrium. This left the plains to the Arab feudalities and the mountains, the pre-Saharan, and the Saharan zones to the Berber feudalities.37

He then celebrated France’s successful fulfillment of the civilizing mission in North Africa, saying: “Peace everywhere, thousands of kilometers of railroads and roads furrow the three countries. The stations, ports, and air and sea lines have put the population in direct contact with the outside world. The clinics, hospitals, and schools dispense the advantages of our science and humanism everyday.” Included in this paean to France’s colonial benevolence, Juin publicly reiterated his proposal for renegotiating “Franco-Moroccan co-sovereignty,” which the Sultan immediately rejected. Giving French colons official representation in municipal councils and in a “Moroccan Assembly” represented an unacceptable affront to Moroccan sovereignty, and the Sultan retaliated by basically going on strike, refusing to sign the dahirs presented to him by the administration.

37 SHD-AT, Carton 237 K 3, Transcript of speech to Académie des Sciences Coloniales, November 18, 1949.
In May, in another report to Paris, Juin warned that the Treaty of Fes had become anachronistic and that a new arrangement had to be achieved in Morocco that preserved the Protectorate’s strategic value for Western security against the Communist menace. He advised the Sultan had to be brought on board, and that the Americans should be used as leverage towards this end, pressuring the Sultan to turn to the West for support against the “communist” threat emanating from revolutionary urban groups in Morocco hostile to the throne. If this did not succeed, Juin referenced the “Two Moroccos” in suggesting the Moroccan interior would have to be brought in as a counter-weight against the Sultan and the nationalists: “It is useful to also remember that there [the interior], the great majority of the Moroccan population was not subjected to the Sultan. It was to France alone that they conferred the trust to direct their destinies and never indicated that they would ever accept being subservient to an oriental minority the authority of which they have always rejected.” He warned the blad as-siba would revolt against the center and that it was “precisely to avoid the renewal of internal conflict that it was necessary to try to renegotiate a constitutional monarchy.”

Throughout the rest of the spring and summer the Sultan resisted the Residency by blocking the approval of qaids and pashas it nominated. He also demanded for more money to be budgeted towards education, specifically for the Moroccan Free Schools, and pressed for the right to form Moroccan unions, which the French resisted due to fears they would be used politically against them. In October 1950, the Sultan traveled to Paris to discuss the matter with President Auriol, presenting a memorandum calling for the

38 SHD-AT, Carton 237 K 3, Letter from Juin to Schumann, (May 1, 1950).
restructuring of the Franco-Moroccan partnership in a manner leading imminently
towards self-administration. These month-long meetings produced no tangible gains for
the Sultan, however, besides an authorization to create a commission to study possible
reforms. Though warmly welcomed back by the nationalists when he returned to Rabat,
the trip to Paris had been thwarted by Juin, who continued to argue the Sultan was
“blocking” the path to democracy. In response, in November, for the Throne Speech, the
Sultan countered this attack and reiterated his support for a Moroccan democratic system:
“Not for a single moment have we lost sight of the fact that the best regime under which a
sovereign and self-administered country can live is the democratic, such as we know it in
the world today. A regime of that kind does not contradict the principles of Islam.”39

Throughout 1950, the Sultan and the Residency faced off over the issue of
election reform, which came to a head in December, during a meeting of the Government
Council. During the meeting, two of the Moroccan nationalist members of the council,
Lyazidi and Laghzaoui, took turns criticizing the French administration for completely
ignoring Moroccan interests in how they ran the Protectorate. Juin, livid, expelled them
from the room, after which the remaining nine Moroccan members (all affiliated with
Istiqlal) also walked out and went directly to the palace. Later that month, the Pasha of
Marrakesh, Thami Glaoui, a stalwart ally of the Residency and personal friend of Juin,
presented himself on December 23, 1950 before the Sultan for the hedyia ceremony for
‘Aid el-Mouloud. Hassan II reports the Pasha shouted, “Thou art no longer Sultan of
Morocco! Thou art the Sultan of the Istiqlal! Thou art a communist and an atheist!”

39 Landau, Mohammed V, King of Morocco, 49.
before being removed forcibly from the palace. He was subsequently forbidden from appearing in the presence of the Sultan.40

After the Sultan again stopped signing dahirs in early 1951, Juin issued an ultimatum to that he must sign the dahirs presented to him and publicly denounce Istiqlal (with whom the other Moroccan nationalist parties had agreed to unify),41 or he must abdicate. In February, in collusion with El Glaoui the Residency orchestrated a dramatic display of the “blad as-siba” threat, bringing mounted Berber tribesmen to surround the palace in Rabat on February 24th, then stationing tanks and French soldiers around these, ostensibly to protect the Sultan against a “Berber revolt.”42 Under siege, and fearing bloodshed in the capital, two hours later the Sultan signed a document saying he would sign the dahirs (including approving qaids nominated by the French) and “denounced” the Istiqlal party.43 Afterwards, though, he gave an interview to a reporter, Mahmoud

40 Hassan comments that afterwards, “Nevertheless, the pasha mobilized his clients—tribes from the Atlas, pseudo-religious chiefs of communities and fraternities, hypocritical ulemas and needy scribes” Hassan, The Challenge, 42.
41 Four months later, on April 9, 1951 in Tangier, all of the Moroccan nationalist parties in both zones signed a memorandum creating the Moroccan National Front.
42 SHD-AT, Carton 237 K 3. In a letter from to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Robert Schumann, immediately after the incident (February 26, 1951), Juin tries to deflect suspicion that the Residency was behind the charade saying it was in fact a rupture between the King and his people: “It seems that in France and abroad this Istiqlal affair was a conflict between the Residency and the Palace, though this has been a long running grave difference between the Sultan and his people. The incident with the Pasha of Marrakesh [when he was banned from the throne room after chastising the “Sultan of Istiqlal”] set fire to the powder in unleashing a movement of disapproval that rapidly spread from the Berber mountain to the Arab plains of Fes, the Gharb, the Choaouia, the Oum Er Rbia and the Doukkala. After the break in negotiations, this disapproval reached such a degree that I took measures to protect member of Istiqlal. A vast appeal was submitted by the people of the countryside and certain cities to gather in Fes to call for the deposition and replacement of the despot, hated for his politics and his greed.”
43 Hassan II and other report the Berber tribesmen had no idea what their trip to Rabat was about, and after hearing about the Sultan’s defiance, supported him all the more. Hassan, Le Défi (Paris: A. Michel, 1976), 50.
Azmi, for the Egyptian newspaper, *Al-Ahram*, in which he explained that he had agreed to the demands only under pressure.\(^44\)

In the end, the Sultan agreed to Juin’s proposal to reorganize the government, but he continued to refuse to compromise on the matter of Franco-Moroccan elected municipal councils. While Juin was on a trip to Vietnam, Sidi Mohamed appealed directly to President Auriol, presenting his grievances without the presence of the Resident General. The government responded by proposing a Franco-Moroccan commission to investigate. Concerned about the turn of events in the spring (after the February “Berber revolt” at the palace, a gunman in the Tadla region in the High Atlas had shot several French tourists in late March), the American government voiced concern about the direction of France’s North Africa policy.\(^45\) In Paris, the Council of Ministers also became increasingly concerned about Juin’s leadership in Morocco and began discussing with him about his reassignment to a position as the Commander in Chief of Allied Land Forces in central Europe.\(^46\)

Upset by the rebuke and worried his “promotion” would be seen as a punishment for the events earlier that year, Juin pressed that his successor clearly be designated to continue carrying out his policies. He suggested August Guillaume, “A Moroccan by training who took an active part in the pacification and who already has experience in

\(^44\) SHD-AT, Carton 237 K 3. Letter from Juin to Schumann, (February 26, 1951).

\(^45\) SHD-AT, Carton 237 K 3. Letter from Schumann to Juin, May 24, 1951. Schumann advised Juin to be more proactive in his outreach to the British and American consuls to explain the French side and counter the nationalist lobbying against them.

\(^46\) SHD-AT, Carton 237 K 3. Letter from Juin to Henri Queuille, President of the Council of Ministers, (July 10, 1951).
military and indigenous affairs.**47** Guillaume, whom Paris did agree to designate as the next Resident General, had served as the Director of the Political Affairs bureau in Morocco and was responsible for the formation of the *goum* corps (Moroccan colonial units) that had fought in World War II and, since 1949, had been fighting in Indochina. In his swan song, Juin published an article in *Le Monde*, on September 1, 1951, in which he issued his final warning about the threat of Istiqlal’s brand of Arabo-Islamic nationalism:

> We can ask if it did not want to show, when the dissidence changes sides, that it always intended to carry on the dream of the first conquerors from the East, and to reap all of the benefits, for itself and towards the ends of Arab domination, of the unification of the Maghreb that the French accomplished for the first time in History. Already, in 1930, even before being openly spoken, it had under-handedly provoked an artificial emotion in the whole Arab world about the dahir regarding Berber justice, sealed by the Sultan himself, which was only an official recognition of the customary jurisdiction which had been practiced throughout the ages and which the Treaty obliged us to respect…France, which introduced the national idea into Morocco, cannot condemn the ideology of this party, but it can condemn its methods.**48**

At the end of the month, Juin left Morocco and was replaced by his chosen successor, Auguste Guillaume, who arrived on October 2, 1951. In a personal letter written from the former Resident General,**49** Noguès advised the Guillaume that the Protectorate framework would only work if it was done “in agreement with the Sultan and not against the Sultan,” and advised that Guillaume have one on one meetings in private to work out how to lead the Sultan “to understand that our common interests and

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48 SHD-AT, 237 K 3, Original draft of *Le Monde* article, published September 1, 1951, one month before Juin left his post as Resident General in Morocco.
49 Noguès was Resident General from 1936-1943. Having back Darlan and Giraud, he resigned before De Gaulle arrived in Algiers and retired to Portugal. He and Guillaume maintained a regular correspondence while Guillaume was Resident General, between 1951-1953, which is included in Guillaume’s file, SHD-AT, Carton 1 K 343.
that we can remain his best support.”  

While the Sultan and the nationalists had initial hopes that relations would improve with the Residency (they did improve on a personal level), Guillaume continued to press for the passage of a reform of the local councils and the co-sovereignty plan. Later that month, elections for the local and municipal councils were held on October 27, 1951, though Istiqlal and the Sultan called for the public to abstain. After the boycotted elections, riots in Casablanca left five dead and forty wounded.

On March 14, 1952, the Sultan sent another memorandum to Paris asking 1) that they lift the state of siege in Morocco, 2) grant Moroccans the rights to public liberties and trade unions, 3) represent the government with a Moroccan head of state, 4) and allow negotiations towards independence begin immediately. In the Throne Day speech on November 18, 1952, the Sultan bitterly criticized the Protectorate regime for not letting Morocco progress forward. Three weeks later, on December 7th, Ferhat Hached, the Tunisian trade union leader, was assassinated, and the primary Moroccan trade union called for a general strike in sympathy. On the first day of the strike, police fired on crowds that had gathered in Casablanca, and mass arrests were conducted of Istiqlal and union leaders. The next day, a large funeral procession that had formed for those killed earlier was also fired upon by police and soldiers with machine guns. Rumors spread throughout the ville nouvelle in Casablanca that there were rapes and murders of European women; in response, Moroccan workers gathered at the union headquarters were taken by the European crowds and lynched. By the end of the episode over fifty

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50 SHD-AT, Carton 1 K 343, Letter from Noguès to Guillaume, October 30, 1951.
Moroccans had been killed in the most violent episode of urban violence up to that point in the Protectorate.

In the spring, Thami El Glaoui, the pasha of Marrakesh and Abd el Hay Kittani, a prominent Sufi leader, both of whom were staunch allies of the Resident General and supposed leaders of le vrai (read rural and Berber) Maroc, mobilized against the Sultan in what became known as the “Qaid Affair.” On February 26, 1953, Thami El Glaoui assembled more than one hundred of the Makhzen’s qaids in Marrakesh and publicly called for the destitution of the Sultan. On March 18, a petition signed by twenty feudal and religious chiefs circulated, accusing Sultan of leading Morocco to ruin. Demonstrations against the Sultan were organized, with assistance from the Residency, on April 4th in Fes. On May 11th on the Tizi Ntriten plateau, Juin presented Guillaume a marshal’s baton in the presence of Berber veterans, in a display of support from la montagne berbère for the French authorities, at least from the veterans (anciens combatants) gathered for the event. In June, Kittani organized the Congress of North African Confraternity in Fes, which made a formal appeal to the French government to put an end to the “dissidence” of Istiqlal and the Sultan.

That summer, tensions between the Residency and the Palace increased to the breaking point; on August 13th, police and military personnel created a cordon around the palace. To buy time, the Sultan signed a co-sovereignty protocol, agreeing to the proposed reform of the municipal and regional assemblies and ceding his veto power by allowing decrees to not require his signature in order to become law. On August 16th, El-Glaoui and other leaders met in Marrakesh and declared one of the Sultan’s obscure
relatives, Mohammed Ben Arafà, to be Sultan; that same day, demonstrations broke out in all of Morocco’s major cities protesting the holding hostage of Mohamed ben Youssef. On August 20th, the day before 'Aid El Kebir, Guillaume asked for a meeting, arriving at the palace at 1:30 p.m. just after the midday meal. He told the king, “For reasons of security, the French government wishes you to abdicate. If you do so voluntarily, you and your family will be able to live in France in freedom, and highly esteemed.” In a moment of high irony given the wording of the 1912 Protectorate treaty to ensure “internal order and general security” on the Sultan’s behalf, Guillaume reiterated that he was empowered to exile him in order to restore “order” in the country. The Sultan refused, responding, “I am the legitimate sovereign of Morocco. I shall never betray the mission with which my loyal and faithful people have entrusted me. France is strong. Let her act as she thinks best.” Surrounded by cars, tanks, cannons, and machine guns aimed at the palace, the king and his sons were marched out at gunpoint, driven to the airfield at Souissi, and flown off in a Dakota airplane at 2:45 p.m. The rest of the family joined them at Corsica and then were sent to Madagascar.

**Exile and Return of the King**

During the next two years, in which the King and the royal family were maintained in exile in Madagascar (at their own expense), the French faced the increasingly difficult task of maintaining order in Morocco, as a general urban insurgency

52 Ibid., 50.
began to escalate, particularly in the coastal cities of Casablanca and Morocco, almost immediately after his departure. In the palace, the Resident General tried to establish the new Sultan, Ben Arafa, as a viable symbol of the Moroccan nation, though one with little to no leverage. One of the first decrees he signed, on September 5th, abolished the old Throne Day. He also signed a decree approving the municipal elections that had been a bone of contention before. A council of viziers and directors was also created, with fourteen Moroccans and sixteen French, which had the power to overrule the sovereign. The anti-Arafa response, however, was vigorous, including a mass boycott of the country’s mosques in order to protest saying prayers in the name of Ben Arafa rather than Ben Youssef. On September 11, Allal ben Abdellah tried to assassinate Ben Arafa and was killed himself by security forces. Istiqlal, and other secret networks unaffiliated with the party, began to attack Moroccan collaborators and also sabotage the public infrastructure including public buildings, railroads, and telephone lines. In addition, an economic boycott was launched by the nationalists against the cinemas, against French products, and against buying tobacco, which was under a French-controlled monopoly. In the first days of August 1954, the Fes medina staged a huge uprising.53 French reports estimated that 50,000 protesters, including large numbers of women and children,54 marched through the streets to the royal palace to protest the “faux Sultan.” The French militarily occupied the medina, using tear gas against the crowds and opening fire in

54 MAE-Paris, Afrique-Levant Maroc, 1953-1959, Dossier 6. This dossier contains telegrams from the Resident General Lacoste about the situation in Fes. French officials reported that four women and one child were killed by the tear gas exposure. The crowds chanted for Allal al-Fassi and for Princess Lalla Aicha and called for the return of the Sultan.
subsequent days in confrontations with demonstrators. Protests also broke out in Kenitra, Rabat, and Marrakesh. The November Throne Day following the Sultan’s deposition in August was celebrated with vigor across Morocco in contravention of the Residency’s prohibition.

In the Spanish zone, the Khalifa refused to recognize Ben Arafa, asserting that he continued to represent Sultan Mohamed V; prayers in the north continued to be said in Ben Youssef’s name. The Spanish zone also served as a refuge for nationalists, who were able to use it as a geographic base from which to operate. In 1954, the Moroccan Liberation Army was created, using the Rif as one of its staging areas, and carried out its first large-scale attacks against French colonial troops at Tizi Ouzli, Bouzineb, and Immouzer Marmoucha in October 1955. The French also faced increasing reprobation from the international community. At the end of December, the Arab League submitted a resolution to the United Nations demanding that Morocco be allowed to decide its own destiny and in January issued a resolution denouncing Ben Arafa as an illegitimate sovereign of Morocco. The international campaign against the French received further support at the Bandung Conference in April 1955, were a resolution was issued supporting “the right of the peoples of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia to self-determination and independence.”

With the outbreak of open conflict in Algeria in November 1954, the French began to reconsider their position in Morocco and Tunisia, attempting to find a way to resolve the crises in these two countries. With Morocco, the first strategy was to send a

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55 Landau, Mohammed V, King of Morocco, 70.
56 Hassan, The Challenge, 56.
delegation including Dr. Dubois-Requebert and a lawyer, Georges Izard, to Madagascar to warn the Sultan that his fortune would be seized if he did not abdicate. This heavy-handed tactic produced no results, however, and beginning in the summer of 1955, the French Prime Minister, Fauré, decided it was necessary to try to bring back Sultan Mohamed V. A French delegation opened talks in Madrid in July with Ahmed Belafrej, who wielded the leverage of continued urban terrorism to press for demands for the Sultan’s returns.57 Intense pressure from the right wing in France and in the Protectorate stalled progress, however, and a rapid succession of Resident Generals (Lacoste, Grandval, and de la Tour) proceeded through the Protectorate, producing no movement towards defusing the “siba” that had broken out in urban “terrorism” and the vigorous “anti-terrorism” of the French colon population. Finally, in August 23, 1955, the government in Paris convened Franco-Moroccan negotiations at Aix-les-Bains, in which it was agreed that Ben Arafa would be removed and that a Throne Council would be charged with forming a Moroccan government to negotiate the terms of Sultan Mohamed ben Youssef’s return.

That fall, Ben Arafa was sent to Tangier on October 1, but opposition in the government in Paris prevented the formation of the Throne Council which was supposed to oversee the transfer of authority back to Mohamed ben Youssef. That fall, active resistance began to break out, through the Moroccan Liberation Army, in the Rif and the Middle Atlas. The M.L.A. was encouraged by the vocal support of Allal al Fassi, who

57 MAE-Paris, Afrique-Levant Maroc 1953-1959, Dossier 4. The French negotiator, La Tournelle, reported that the nationalists demanded the return of the King and a French pledge setting a limit to the Protectorate regime and a “new deal” program of education, administrative, and social reform. He also related to his superiors in Paris that the nationalists counted on the diplomatic support of the United States, believing their own pledges to maintain air bases would help guarantee Moroccan independence.
was based in Tangier and actively broadcasting on the radio for the “resistance.” On October 15th, a Throne Council was announced, but it was repudiated by Istiqlal. On October 21, Glaoui called for the return of Sultan Mohamed ben Youssef and a week later, Ben Arafa informed the President of the French Republic, Réné Coty, that he was abdicating in favor of the Sultan Ben Youssef. On October 31, the Sultan was flown from Madagascar and arrived at Nice. He was taken to Paris and given one of the wings of the castle of Henry V at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, where the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pinay, the author, Francois Mauriac, the professor, André Julien, and leaders of the Moroccan nationalist parties visited him there. On November 6, 1955, negotiations were opened between the Sultan and the Minister of Foreign Affairs at Aix-les-Bains, where both sides agreed to total independence.

On Wednesday, November 16th, 1955, the King returned to Morocco, landing at 11:42 AM in the morning at the Rabat-Salé airport. In the Throne speech two days later, the King called for the creation of a constitutional monarchy and the creation of a Moroccan government that would carry out the administration of public affairs, for the creation of democratic institutions, and for the separation of powers, “granting Moroccans of all faiths citizenship rights and the exercise of political and trade union freedoms. It stands to reason that the Moroccan Jews have the same rights and duties as other Moroccans.”58 While the Sultan returned in November, the armed resistance continued throughout the fall and into the next year by the Moroccan Liberation Army. Al-Fassi parlayed his influence with the M.L.A. to establish his own position back in the

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Istiqlal, with which he had, as with the Sultan, had tense relations for much of the period since his return from exile.

On February 16th, 1956 the French and Moroccan sides negotiated the formal acknowledgement of independence, which was signed in March. On April 7, the Spanish also signed a document acknowledging the Sultan’s sovereignty in the northern zone, and on his first voyage to the north, the Sultan stopped at the checkpoint between the two zones at Arbaoua, on the way to Tetouan, which was destroyed in a public ceremony. All of the Moroccan tabor units that had formed the French colonial army in the Protectorate were formally transferred over to the Moroccan government, in which Hassan II had assumed control of the military. On May 14th, 1956, the newly constituted Moroccan Royal Armed Forces were reviewed by the King in Rabat in a parade. While there were still armed factions of the M.L.A. and other groups in the countryside that took some time to disarm, assimilate, and/or eliminate, the King, with the support of the army, was able to secure order, and establish a state monopoly on force, within a couple of years after independence.

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59 In January, the French had agreed to pay the Sultan an indemnity of 750,000,000 francs in recompense for the “injury against your personal interests during the period of Your exile.” MAE-Paris, Maroc 1956-1960, Dossier 29. Letter from Resident General to His Majesty Mohamed V, Sultan of Morocco, January 4, 1956.

60 French advisors were retained for several more years, and significant logistical and material support for stabilizing the Moroccan military under the control of the King was proffered in the transition to independence by the French.
Conclusion

The return of the King to Morocco and his subsequent success, after independence, in first, consolidating Alawite rule militarily over rural and urban Morocco and, second, in positioning himself politically over the nationalist parties (particularly after Istiqlal split into two factions headed by Allal al-Fassi and Mehdi Ben Barka), presents a rather anomalous case. As was pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, the success of a monarchy-centric Arabo-Islamic nationalism at and after independence is rather unique. With decolonization elsewhere in North Africa and the Middle East, most of the ancien régime monarchies gave way to republican-style governments led by officer cadres or charismatic nationalist ideologues.

This chapter has explored why and how King Mohamed V was different. While much historiography on Morocco emphasizes the continuity political and social structures in the country as a foregone conclusion, it is important to recognize the contingencies and agencies involved in the colonial state-building period conducted during the Protectorate. A complex set of factors played into the survival of the Alawite monarchy beyond colonization and independence, including 1) the French decision to pursue a makhzen policy in Morocco that retained the Sultan as a figurehead, 2) the rehabilitation by Lyautey of the Sultan as the symbolic focal point of Moroccan identity and reinvention of a rich panoply of public rituals reinforcing this symbology, 3) the strategic decision by the Moroccan nationalists in the early 1930s to try to beat the Protectorate at its own game by also claiming to be “protectors” of the Sultan’s sovereignty and to use him as the symbol of the unity and aspirations of the Moroccan Arabo-Islamic nation, 4) the
serendipity that Morocco fell under American control early in the war which helped preserve Mohamed V from the fate of Moncef Bey, 5) the timing of the Sultan’s movement to the forefront of the nationalist cause which was early enough to cement his legitimacy and late enough that he did not get deposed too early, and 6) the French negotiated Moroccan independence directly with the Sultan and then helped ensure the success of the transfer by carefully aiding the Moroccan military under his control. It cannot be denied, of course, that Mohamed ben Youssef’s own diplomatic instincts, political skills, and quiet charisma also played a significant role too in his success in returning as King and emerging as the winner of the colonial struggle to define Morocco.
CONCLUSION

The goal of this study has been to demonstrate how and why Moroccan national identity was defined at independence in 1956 as a nation bound together by the Islamic religion, Arabic language and culture, and the historic rule of the Alawite dynasty. While the dominant modernist paradigm in the study of nationalism overly emphasizes the contingent nature of identity in the construction of nations, studies of Morocco have a tendency to overly stress continuity: how Moroccan structures, institutions, social relations, and identities have endured for centuries, if not millennia. In view of the modernist-constructivist Scylla that unsatisfactorily dismisses primordial attachments on one side and the Charybdis that tempts a too sympathetic reading of anti-colonial nationalist redemptive teleology on the other, I have attempted to chart a course between change and continuity, the arbitrary and the necessary, and agency and structure in analyzing the colonial struggle to define the nation in Morocco. Towards this end, I have proposed a relational approach to national identity based on an assumption that specific articulations of national identity are defined through interactive processes in which competing actors frame the nation in ways that reinforce their own claims to sovereignty over the state.

In contrast to macro-theoretical generalizations, this historical-empirical method offers an effective framework for exploring the particularity of nationalism, why national identity gets defined in one way and not another in a given case. By first examining “how” nationalism functions as a category of identity, it becomes clear that the reason...
specific framings of national identity are not completely arbitrary is that, to be effective, they have to generate popular support, reinforcing or reinventing feelings of solidarity or ‘asabiyyah to buttress claims to control of the state. In the midst of a dynamic contentious process, competing actors draw on “repertoires of identity”—historical, religious, ethnic, linguistic, regional, etc.—to frame the nation in a way that both legitimizes their claims to sovereignty and mobilizes popular support for these claims. This framing process involves (sometimes considerable) improvisation, but the repertoires of identity are, in fact, bounded not infinite. Thus, national identity is neither purely fabricated nor fundamentally essential but, rather, is constructed and reconstructed from some sort of existing building blocks in efforts to legitimize state-building activity. While some approaches to national identity exaggerate the agency of elites in imagining or inventing the nation and others overstate the disciplinary power of the state, this study demonstrates how, in a colonial context, national identity is actually forged in interaction between the two. The framing of anti-colonial national identity to confront, combat, and contest the colonial imaginaire of the subjugated nation is itself indelibly conditioned by the very construction it seeks to subvert.

For Morocco, the critical time period for this process of forging national identity occurred in the contest for control over the colonial state that was constructed between 1912 and the mid-1930s under the French Protectorate. The French justified intervention in Morocco under the guise of creating political, economic, and military structures that would allow Morocco to develop from a medieval empire to a modern 20th-century state. The flaw in the Protectorate partnership, however, was that the French never seriously
considered a sunset provision in the Treaty of Fes; instead, they attempted to indefinitely preserve their “Protector” role of holding the “Two Moroccos” together by implementing multiple policies reinforcing ethnic, religious, and gender divisions in society to guard against the consolidation of a Moroccan nation-state. The 1930 decree systematizing an Arab-Berber legal binary dividing the nation on ethnic lines served as the catalyst used by an Arabophone Moroccan urban nationalist movement to first mobilize protest against the French hold over the colonial state.

The nationalist framing of Moroccan identity attempted to subvert the colonial vulgate by defending a narrative of historic Moroccan national unity, forged through Islamization and Arabization under successive Muslim dynasties. In an attempt to turn the pretext of Franco-Moroccan partnership embedded in the Protectorate agreement against the French, the Moroccan nationalists put the Sultan at the center of their claims, arguing the French were breaking their pledges in the Treaty of Fes to defend the Sultan as the legitimate spiritual and political sovereign in Morocco. From the 1940s, the Sultan himself began to leverage his symbolic capital in an attempt to gain more political control. The final rupture of the Protectorate fiction of Franco-Moroccan partnership occurred when the Resident General justified exiling the “Protectee,” the Sultan Mohamed V, in order to reestablish “order” in 1953. As the country broke out in the next two years into widespread siba protest against the French makhzen, first in the cities and then in the countryside, the French were forced to bring back the Moroccan “King.” In a bit of historical irony, despite the colonial exploitation that undeniably motivated French intervention in Morocco, the ostensible pledge in the Treaty of Fes to protect the
Moroccan Sultan was, in the end, fulfilled by the French. Through the intertwined processes of colonial state building and the framing of national identity in resistance to that rule, a rather successfully constructed Moroccan nation-state was handed over to the King in 1956. With the benefit of the Moroccan Royal Army, the Palace was highly successful in reconsolidating a monopoly of control over that nation-state in the decades following independence, putting the Alawite monarchy in perhaps its strongest position since the reign of Moulay Ismail in the 17th century.

The critical contribution of this study has been to reconsider how this colonial struggle to define the nation among the French administration, Moroccan nationalist movement, and the Sultan was fundamentally influenced by three critical subaltern groups: Berbers, Jews, and women. These internal “others” functioned as critical markers of “difference” that the French colonial authorities sought to exploit in divide and rule policies denying national unity and that the nationalists sought to gloss over in defending it. As was shown earlier, these marginalized groups themselves actively sought to negotiate and contribute to the process of defining the nation in the colonial period. Consistent with the main argument presented in this study, it follows that the dominant identity that prevailed at independence was not a fixed end point; the process of constructing and reconstructing Morocco continues. Though a full treatment of this post-independence story would require another book, this one will conclude with a brief overview of how, since the death of King Hassan II in 1999, Morocco has entered a significant new period in which the ethnic, religious, and gender tensions submerged in
the Arabo-Islamic construction of Morocco are being renegotiated.

Do Not Separate Us from Our Brothers, the Berbers: Redefining Amazighité at Ajdir

In first evaluating the current renegotiation of Morocco’s ethnic identity, it is illuminating to compare two royal speeches regarding the “Berber Question:” the first was given months after independence in 1956 and the second in October 2001. Both were delivered at exactly the same location, the Ajdir plateau near Khenifra, in the heart of la montagne berbère in the Middle Atlas. On July 13, 1956 King Mohamed V made a symbolic trip to the Middle Atlas to deliver a speech officially abrogating the “Berber Dahir.” The Ajdir plateau had intentionally been chosen because Thami El Glaoui had earlier gathered hundreds of tribal chiefs and thousands of Berber tribesmen there to rally against the King before his exile. Before a crowd of 100,000 “Berber brothers,” the King completed the framing process begun in the 1930 Latif protests to unify the Moroccan nation around Islam (expressed in the uniform application of shari’a), love of nation, and attachment to the Alawite throne:

It was in this region that the meeting of those that plotted against the nation and the Throne was held. Despite everything that these enemies of the country had decided, God made justice triumph. We are thus here with you today in this same place to make the voice of truth heard. It is natural that Moroccans, animated by a deep faith, stood against injustice and combined their efforts in the fight for the national cause. Since Islam spread its light in this country, it has cemented the union of its inhabitants and made a strong and united nation that no force in the world could divide, a unity that has been written in history for more than thirteen centuries. Our people which is placed in the shadow of Islam, which tolerates no discrimination between Arabs and Berbers, and which has no

1 In June, Si Lahcen Youssi, the former Ministry of the Interior, had come to prepare for the event, using his influence among the tribal chiefs and elements of the Moroccan Liberation Army to gain support in the area. MAE-Paris, Maroc 1956-1960, Dossier 29, Telegram No. 3250-3259 from André Louis Dubois reporting to French Minister of Foreign Affairs.
other ideal than its love of nation, is an example of solidarity and brotherhood. It is this union that has made of us a glorious nation, which allowed our ancestors to found an empire so vaunted in history. What pain it was the day customary law was substituted for the law of Islam and placed over a portion of our subjects who were claimed to be separate from the framework of Islam and separated from their Arab brethren. Since that day you have not ceased to raise your voice in expressing your disapproval and protesting against a measure that offended your convictions, thus showing your deep attachment to Islam and your sense of national solidarity. For you, there was only one homeland, only one nation, and only one Throne.

Because of this, we have decided to abolish all artificial discriminatory measures and, first, restore to the law of Islam the place it deserves in your lands so that it is applied among all of Our subjects. We pledge to send competent men to you to apply the law, who know your laws and customs, who are known for their integrity and their righteousness, and who will fulfill their duty to be sympathetic to your condition and deserving of your confidence and respect. Your patriotism, O faithful subjects, your piety, your attachment to the Crown, is known by all. You have not ceased to furnish the clearest proof, especially in these past years, refuting all of the lies and slander. Thanks to the sacrifices made by us and our people, we have grasped our liberty and our independence, and accomplished our territorial unity.2

In the King’s construction of the Moroccan nation, the “Berber” was acknowledged as part of the nation and simultaneously subsumed in a unified Islamic fraternity with his “Arab brothers.” Though named in this definition, no “tainted” actual Berber markers of identity, whether cultural or linguistic, were to be drawn from the potential Moroccan repertoire of identity in defining the nation. Rather, following independence, the Moroccan state pursued clear Islamization and Arabization policies3 in consolidating the legitimacy of the regime.

This makhzen-sanctioned Arabo-Islamic framing of Moroccan identity remained unchallenged over the next three decades until the early 1990s, when Berber cultural

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3 In the first Throne Speech after independence, King Mohamed V set forth the national Arabization educational policy: “We have our cultural policy a national impetus to assure, to all of our youth, an education inspired by the spiritual principles of Islam and of Arab culture and a deep recognition of the history of our country. Our objective remains to be able to educate all of our children, to make this education free and mandatory for boys as well as girls. We have set a goal to Arabize the entire primary educational cycle within three years.” MAE-Paris, Maroc 1956-1960 Dossier 29, DISCOURS DU TRONE (nov. 1956-nov. 1960).
organizations began to mobilize. In 1991, six Amazigh associations published the Agadir Charter protesting the official marginalization of Amazigh culture and language and calling for the official recognition of Tamazight as a national language alongside Arabic, the teaching of Tamazight in schools, and the use of the language in public media. In May 1994, several leaders of the Tilelli Amazigh association were arrested after demonstrations in Goulmima and Er-Rachidia in southern Morocco in which they displayed banners, written with the Tifinagh alphabet, that called for the teaching of Tamazight in Morocco. In August, however, King Hassan II delivered a speech where he surprisingly affirmed himself that Tamazight “dialects” should be taught in primary schools, though no actual changes in the curricular policies of Morocco’s education ministry were implemented through the rest of his reign up until his death in 1999.

This major renegotiation of the ethnic dimensions of Moroccan identity entered a new phase on October 17, 2001, when the new king, Mohamed VI, convened another major gathering on the Ajdir plateau near Khenifra, where his grandfather had earlier abrogated the Berber Dahir. This ceremony was arranged for the signing of a dahir creating the Royal Institute for Amazigh Culture (IRCAM). At the ceremony, King Mohamed VI, whose Amazigh (Berber) mother lives nearby, delivered a speech

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4 They were subsequently released after being amnestied by King Hassan II, following the mobilization of protests by Berber activists in Morocco, Algeria’s Kabyle region, and France.
6 Institut Royal de la Culture Amazigh.
7 The King’s mother, Fatima, was the second wife of Hassan II and the mother of both Mohamed VI and Prince Rachid, as well as the Princesses, Meryem, Hasna, and Asma. Her cousin, the daughter of the Berber tribal chief, Qaid Amharoq, had born him no heirs. Marvine Howe, Morocco: The Islamist Awakening and Other Challenges (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 5.
remarkable for its succinct integration of a revised Moroccan national “imagined
community.”

We desire, first of all, to recognize the entirety of our common history and cultural and
national identity which has been built around multiple contributions. The plurality of
streams that have forged our history and fashioned our identity cannot be separate from
the unity of our nation, which is grouped around sacred values and inviolable
foundations: the tolerant and generous Muslim religion, the defense of the country in its
unity and integrity, allegiance to the Throne and King, and attachment to a democratic,
social, and constitutional monarchy. We also want to affirm that Amazighité has the
deepest roots in the history of the Moroccan people, shared by all Moroccans without
exception, and that it cannot be used for political designs of any nature. Morocco is
distinguished, across the ages, by the unity of its inhabitants...They have always proved
their firm attachment to their sacred values and resisted every foreign invasion or attempt
at division.8

The speech echoed many of the themes from Mohamed V’s 1956 speech, re-emphasizing
the triptych of God, the Nation, and King, but, it departed significantly from the earlier
Arabo-Islamic formulation by explicitly incorporating “Amazighité” as one of the central
pillars of Moroccan identity. In this re-imagining of the nation, carefully orchestrated by
the Palace itself, Berber identity was officially celebrated at the highest level for the first
time in the fifty years since independence. Though still not constitutionally recognized
as an official language, Tamazight has begun to be taught in Moroccan schools and there
are Berber programs broadcast on radio and television. In the continuing construction of
Morocco, Amazighité is now proudly affirmed by many Moroccans as a basic component
of Morocco’s exceptional national identity.

8 Text of speech available on the IRCAM website: http://www.ircam.ma/.
Morocco’s *Israélites Manqués* and the Islamist Challenge

In terms of the core Muslim religious identity framed in anti-colonial nationalist protest, the tensions created by the presence of a substantial, historically rooted Moroccan Jewish religious minority were largely resolved in the years immediately preceding and following independence in 1956 by the mass emigration of this community to Israel, France, and North America. As discussed in Chapter 5, the Jewish Question in Morocco created dissonance for the core Muslim Moroccan national community imagined in the wake of the 1930 Berber Dahir. How did a non-Muslim population fit into the nation – as *dhimmi*, subject, or citizen? The tensions created in the interwar and post-World War II period by French assimilation and Zionism made this question more acute. It is important to stress that before and after independence, however, the Palace made efforts to reaffirm the historic attachment of Morocco’s Jews to the nation. Immediately after his return from exile, the King emphasized that Moroccan Jews have the same rights and duties as other Moroccans in the 1955 Throne Speech.

After independence, a Judeo-Muslim association in the Istiqlal party was created named *El-Wifaq* (Entente), under the administration of Crown Prince Moulay Hassan, to organize meetings in which Jewish and Muslim speakers attempted to convince Moroccan Jews of their duty to integrate in the Moroccan community. Several Jews held prominent positions in the government after independence and were also allowed to participate in the Royal Armed Forces.⁹ In a reception for the newly elected members of the Committees of the Community on September 13, 1956, King Mohammed V reminded

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⁹ Prince Hassan lamented that only one Jew had applied for a officer candidacy in the RAF. Arzeno, “Les Israélites marocains, 1956,” *CHEAM*, No. 2567.
the Moroccan Jewish audience about the need for them to unify with the Moroccan nation and not preserve a confessional communitarian separate identity:

We must direct your attention to an important point: in effect, as your President underlined, the benevolent activities of the Jewish works cannot be but provisional, as it is necessary for all Muslim and Jewish aid organizations to be combined and that they undertake a national, not confessional, effort. In social matters, there is but one people who have the money. There cannot, on this point, be a distinction between Jews and Muslims. Consequently, their activities need to have a national character, because Moroccan citizens, Muslims or Jews, have the same rights and the same duties, which imply the same obligations, the same preoccupations, and the same tasks to undertake. They must combine all of their efforts and all of the means at their disposal to aid those in need.

Later, the Sultan went on to outline the responsibility of these leaders to persuade the Moroccan Jewish community of their ties to the Moroccan nation:

You must explain to your coreligionists who are thinking of immigration, who are leaving Morocco, their homeland, that this proves an absence of national feeling of not having faith in their own country. This is not a question of limiting the freedom of these citizens. You must also persuade them who want to leave that their place is here, that their duty demands that they stay and participate in the construction of their country. Morocco needs all of its sons.¹⁰

These exhortations to national duty and assimilation did not succeed in staunching the process of leaving the nation, though. While a core Moroccan Jewish community, including the most wealthy and prominent families, continued to maintain a presence in Casablanca, most of the rest from the interior cities and the countryside emigrated out of the country in the 1950s and 1960s. Today, despite their near total physical absence,¹¹ Morocco’s Jews do continue to occupy a prominent role as a Moroccan national lieu de mémoire. The memory of a “warm” co-fraternity of Jews and Muslims in Morocco since

¹¹ It is important to note the continuing presence of politically prominent Moroccan Jewish figures such as André Azoulay, one of the king’s close advisors, and Abraham Serfaty, the Communist activist who was allowed to return from exile in 2000 by Mohamed VI.
the medieval period is a critical component in efforts to project Morocco as a tolerant, pluralist society. The literal *lieux de mémoire*—the *mellahs* and synagogues that still exist—are also prominent features of urban and even of rural village geography.\(^\text{12}\) Morocco is also a favored destination for Israeli tourists, bringing second and third generation Moroccan Israeli Jews back to the country of their parents on ten-day bus tours.

Though (or perhaps because) the nation has been almost totally homogenized as a Muslim community, the religious dimensions of national identity actually continue to be hotly contested in debates over what type of “Islamic” political and social order should be established. After defusing the threat of leftist opposition in the 1960s with harsh crackdowns, Hassan II faced a rising Islamist challenge to his religious claims to legitimacy as the “Commander of the Faithful” in the 1980s. The most prominent oppositional Islamist leader in Morocco is Abdessalam Yassine, who began critiquing the Alawite monarchy in the 1970s as an unjust and un-Islamic regime. In and out of jail during the 1980s and 1990s, Yassine successfully mobilized what has become the largest Moroccan Islamist organization, *Al-‘Adl wa-Ihsan*. Though focused on personal spiritual formation and benevolent social programs, the movement remains a potent potential political player. Other Islamist parties such as the P.J.D. (the Justice and Development Party, *Al-‘Adl was Tanmiah*) have been brought into the political process, but Yassine’s movement has “refused” to be “co-opted” by the palace and does not yet participate in

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\(^{12}\) On the latter, see Stefania Pandolfo’s ethnography of a village in the Draa valley in southern Morocco, *Impasse of the Angels: Scenes from a Moroccan Space of Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997)
elections. In the past five years, Yassine’s daughter, Nadia, has emerged as one of the most prominent critics of the Palace and has faced prosecution following remarks in 2005 in which she stated that a democratic republic was more in line with Islamic values than a monarchy. In the struggle over the religious parameters of Moroccan national identity, one of the most intense battlegrounds between the Islamist groups and King Mohamed VI has centered on the initiative to reform the position of the Moroccan woman as defined in the *Mudawanna*, Morocco’s personal status code, or family law.

**Marching for the Mudawanna: Redefining the Moroccan Woman’s Place in the Nation**

While reforming the place of the Moroccan woman in the nation had been a prominent feature of the nationalist collective action frame supported by Istiqlal and led most prominently by the King himself from the 1940s in the anti-colonial nationalist struggle, following independence the limitations of this vision became apparent in the patriarchal legal and political construction of the Moroccan woman that was determined. While educational opportunities for Moroccan girls were greatly expanded, the 1957 personal status code that delineated the legal position of the Moroccan woman remained firmly ensconced on the “traditionalization” side in comparison to the much more liberal code passed the same year in Tunisia. The King convened a panel of ulama to draft the *Mudawanna*, and despite the fact that the Salafi modernist reformer, Allal al-Fassi, was a member, the commission produced an extremely conservative Malikite version of the *Mudawanna*.
In the 1980s and 1990s, a renewed impetus to reform the legal status of Moroccan women began in earnest as the first generation of college-educated Moroccan women began to mobilize women’s rights organizations. After achieving only a minor revision of the code under Hassan II in 1993, there were high hopes following the accession of Mohamed VI, who had publicly affirmed his support for women’s rights. The issue, however, continued to be a flashpoint between rival constructions of the nation proposed by Islamists, who opposed the legislation on the basis that is contradicted “Islam,” and women’s rights organizations, who stressed a more secular “modernization.” The most obvious clash between the two occurred on March 8, 2000, International Women’s Day, when a coalition of women’s groups, human rights organizations, leftist political parties, and trade unions gathered for a mass demonstration in supported of reforming the Mudawanna. The same day Islamist organizations organized a counter-demonstration, with nearly twice the crowd, protesting against the reform of the Mudawanna as an attack on Islam and the Muslim family.

In response to these pressures, the King appointed a royal commission in 2001 to study the potential reform of the Personal Status Code. This task force made little progress until 2003, when, partly in response to the May 2003 terrorist bombings in Casablanca which were blamed on extremist Islamist groups, the King himself called for a revision of the code at the opening of the parliamentary session on October 10. In his public sponsorship for the reform, the King moved to undercut the Islamist challenge, beginning the speech with a quote from the Prophet Mohamed, “Women are the equals of men in regards to the law” and “the man who honors them is honorable and he who
humiliates them is ignoble” and then stating, “I cannot, in my quality as Amir Al-
Mu’iminin (Commander of the Faithful), authorize what God had prohibited, nor forbid
what the Most High has authorized.” Framing the reform initiative as an integral process
of *ijtihad* consistent with the “homogeneity of the Malikite rite,” the King called on
Parliament to enact a “modern code of the family, in perfect consistency with the spirit of
our tolerant religion.” The new legislation was passed by parliament and affixed with
the royal seal by the King the following spring in 2004. The new code took significant
steps towards guaranteeing Moroccan women legal equality, including important
provisions granting women the right to initiate divorce proceedings, improving women’s
inheritance rights, simplifying proof of paternity, granting women possibility to retain
custody of children, and establishing the sharing of property between married couples.

These struggles over the ethnic, religious, and gender parameters of Moroccan
identity are by no means resolved, and the Palace, though highly adept at co-opting
challenges, does not exercise a total monopoly over national discourse. The historical,
empirical approach carried out in this study which examined the colonial state-building
project in Morocco and the struggle to define the nation in the first half of the last century
helps contextualize the current interactive struggle to redefine the nation among
Amazigh, Islamist, and women activists and the Moroccan Palace. Just as the Arabo-

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13 The text of the speech was included in the dahir instituting the new code published on February 3, 2004
(12 Hija 1424) The official text of the revised Moroccan family code is available online at:
14 In addition, the minimum legal age of marriage for women was raised to eighteen. Also, polygamy was
not made illegal, but it was severely restricted, requiring the demonstration before a judge of a clear
justifiable motive for it and that the husband can guarantee equality between wives. The woman also
retains a right to stipulate in the marriage that her husband will not take a second wife. Women without the
condition in their marriage contracts have the right of consent to the husband taking a second wife and a
right to petition for divorce for harm suffered.
Islamic framing of Moroccan national identity gained ascendancy in an interactive anti-colonial struggle, these current efforts to reframe the nation are playing out in a dynamic process among many players. It is fascinating to observe the ongoing process of how and why Moroccan identity gets defined the way it does, as these new “shreds” and “patches” from the Moroccan repertoire get reworked into new forms of imagined national identity.
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