L'année prochaine à Jérusalem : Zionism in a Post-Holocaust France

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In recent years, France has had the largest loss of Jewish population out of any other country through the process of aliyah, or permanent emigration to the state of Israel. The large-scale emigration of French Jews is not only a modern phenomenon, but also one that has origins in the immediate post-Second World War period. The process of aliyah for French Jews in the years following their attempted extermination descends ultimately from one ideological decision: whether one still believed in France's republican ideals, or if one became disillusioned after the oppression and persecution faced during the Shoah and chose instead to immigrate to Palestine.

Aliyah, or *aliyot* in its plural form, translated into English from the original Hebrew means "ascent[1]." The word finds its meaning in the first book of the Tanakh, in Genesis 50:13, when Joseph returns to Egypt after he "had gone up [to Israel]... to bury his father" (New JPS). The phrase from this story, and other Biblical text, establishes for some the idea that Palestine is a home and resting place for those who believe they are descended from figures such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob/Israel, etc. From its Biblical origins, aliyah has become the term used for a specific action; when Jews give up their country of residence and move permanently to Palestine, or more recently, to the modern state of Israel. Though the concept of aliyah is certainly not an advent for the Jewish Diaspora population, in the modern period the action has gained more attention, and sometimes criticism, due to the existence of the modern state of Israel and the conflicts it has been involved in, and the conflicts the state is currently still in the midst of. Under the state of Israel's Law of Return, written shortly after the state's creation in 1950, it is written that all Jewish people and their descendants are granted the ability to "come to [Israel]

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[1] Yossi Lew, "What Does 'Aliyah' Mean?" *Judaism*, Chabad.org, 17 August 2011.

as an *oleh*[2]," or as an immigrant with full rights under the state. Under the Law of Return, Diaspora Jews who meet certain requirements are guaranteed citizenship and residence in Israel. With antisemitism on the rise in many states across the world, there are thousands of Diaspora Jews who are making the choice to take advantage of the Law of Return, and establish new residencies within Israel.

France's Jewish population, especially in the past decade, has become the largest population group in the Diaspora to make *aliyah*. This is not by coincidence. One could argue that there has been a full-on campaign in Israel for this to happen. In June of 2015, Ze'ev Elkin, then acting as Israel's Minister of Aliyah and Integration, made public with the *Times of Israel* plans made by the majority Likud party to encourage young French Jews to emigrate to Israel. In addition to this encouragement, the ruling party also laid plans to also make the absorption process easier for those who were giving up French citizenship for permanent resettlement in Israel[3]. This is a deliberate effort to welcome Jewish people to Israel from a very specific state, that being France, and not just Jews from the Diaspora in general. The roots of this program are tied to the recent wave of antisemitism that has been felt by France's Jewish population in recent years. *The Forward*, an American Jewish periodical, reported on a survey which interviewed thousands of French Jews in 2014. According to the survey, performed by Siona, a Sephardic Jewish organization based in Paris, "nearly seventy-five percent of French Jews… said they are considering emigrating[4]." Almost thirty percent of this group "cited antisemitism" as their reason for leaving France, and that rising trends of hate crimes in recent years had made them feel that

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[2] "The Law of Return," *Knesset.gov.il*, Knesset, knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/return.htm.
[3] Toi Staff, "'Come home!' Israeli minister urges French Jews amid terror wave," *The Times of Israel*, 26 June 2015.
[4] JTA, "74% of French Jews Consider Leaving Country," *The Forward*, The Forward Association, Inc., 19 May 2014.

"Jews have no future in France[5]." As time has progressed, these numbers have grown. A Zionist news source based in Israel, *Arutz Sheva*, following the Paris terror attacks in November of 2015, detailed specific monetary and integration plans made by the Israeli government to help welcome these alienated French Jews. There are several non-governmental organizations in Israel which provide financial aid for Jews seeking to make aliyah, in addition to the state-run Ministry of Aliyah and Integration. Many of these groups have made specific plans to help welcome French Jews fleeing antisemitism to Israel in an expected "massive wave of aliyah from France[6]," with estimates reaching up to eighty percent of France's Jewish population wishing to make aliyah within the next few years. However, this trend of French Jews wanting to leave France permanently to establish residency in Israel is not just a recent trend inspired by rising antisemitism and terror attacks[7]. It is a wave of immigration that emerged in the immediate years following the Second World War.

The antisemitism facing France's Jewish population in the past few decades is something that has existed for centuries, not something that has just come about in the past two decades; and this antisemitism is certainly not something isolated to the attempted extermination of the community during the Second World War. This may seem like an obvious statement, but it must be said that recent antisemitic attacks in France are not just something spontaneous, and not something that came from recent immigration trends in France, as is commonly argued by news sources and even by the current administration. That is to say, antisemitism is an ongoing and inherently French problem. Waves of antisemitism have threatened Europe's Jewish population

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[5] Ibid.

[6] Shimon Cohen, "80% of French Jews Considering Aliyah," *Israel National News*, Arutz Sheva, 16 November 2015.

[7] Ibid.

for centuries. France's Jewish population has, since the Middle Ages, been driven out by force, in addition to numbers being lessened by Jews' individual choices, sans government interference, to leave the country. The antisemitism being experienced today by France's Jews is a problem which stretches back almost a thousand years, not a completely new problem which is spontaneously causing this mass aliyah to Israel.

The extermination of European Jews during the Second World War, the largest act of mass violence in the name of antisemitism, during the largest war in human history, is indisputable truth that this hatred is not a new problem merely being experienced in modern day France and elsewhere. The violence towards and the distrust of Jews in France existed before what some name the Holocaust, and is certainly still happening. This is not a hatred which spontaneously emerged in the past two decades or so. One could argue that the traumatic event of the attempted extermination of Europe's Jews was a launching point for the mass aliyah trends happening in France at this moment in time. This will be proven by examining Zionist sentiments and initial emigration trends of Jews to Israel in the immediate post-Second World War period, as well as the survivor associations and Jewish mutual aid foundations which were founded for Jewish communities in France and in Palestine. However, this must be set aside initially to first provide context and observe the cultural, emotional, and political state of France's Jewish population during the Second World War and immediately after.

Zionism is a political movement which started in the late nineteenth century in Germany, and the movement quickly found traction in France. The ideology was formally established and given a name in 1897 with the publishing of Theodor Herzl's *Der Judenstaat*[8]. Before the

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[8] Walter Ze'ev Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, New York: Schocken Books, 2003.

publishing of this work, the idea of Zionism had been popularized by secular Jews in response to antisemitism that had arisen in Europe as a result of nationalism. While ethnic groups across the European continent were solidifying their identities, and claiming certain parts of land as their sole birthright, the Jewish community in Europe was inspired to do the same. At the time of its inception, the main goal of the Zionist movement was the settlement of Ottoman-controlled Palestine by, usually, European Ashkenazi Jews. Convinced that assimilation was not enough to preserve the rights of Jews throughout the world, Jews in Europe, and elsewhere in the Diaspora, once the movement had spread, wished to settle in what was considered their ancestral homeland— based on their religious text. Though Zionism amongst French Jews was a popular institution in the years previous, one could argue that the French Zionist movement accelerated in the years following the Second World War. Many organizations were founded to further Zionist goals and to help French Jews emigrate to Palestine, and within a very short time following the end of the Second World War, the newly established state of Israel. After the antisemitism inspired by Nazi and other nationalist movements' ideologies, and the violence it caused in the years preceding and during the Second World War, much of Europe's Jewish population no longer felt safe in the Diaspora. Assimilation, often criticized by the Zionist movement, stopped being, for many European Jews, an option that people were willing to consider. Many of Europe's Jews, and as one will later see, French Jews in particular, wished to relocate to an area with cultural significance to their community where they could, through settlement, be the majority. Hate and malice that was previously tolerable had become completely unmanageable to this traumatized population following the Nazi regime's attempted

mass extermination. For the Jewish community, Zionism and permanent relocation to Palestine increasingly became preferable to remaining in Europe.

In order to understand Jewish communities post-Second World War, it is necessary to examine the non-Jewish populations they lived alongside and interacted with daily. Though they suffered immensely, the Jewish community was not the only group of people in France damaged by Nazi Germany and the collaborationist Vichy regime. The political climate in France following the Second World War was one of mass tension, which frequently expanded into violence. The country had been split, following France's surrender early in the war, into an occupied zone controlled by the Nazi German army, and a "free" zone that was still being directly influenced by the occupying forces. Though Nazi forces held control over the northern part of the country, the repercussions of their racial ideology could be felt in the technically independent state of Vichy as well. The French population was split into three: those who collaborated with Nazi and/or Vichy ideologies, those who resisted, and those who sat by and did nothing. One could argue that the bystanders were even actively collaborating by not attempting to resist, thus making two groups for France's Jewish population to interact with post-war: those who supported their persecution, and those who fought against it. Once France was liberated from Nazi German rule in 1945, those who collaborated were now under the direct legal control of those who resisted, the Provisional Government of the French Republic, or the GPRF (*Gouvernment provisoire de la République française*). The GPRF had the task of rebuilding their country, removing collaborators from the government, and making sure these collaborators received punishment for their treason and other crimes committed. There were two waves of

retribution for collaborationist crimes against France following liberation: the *épuration légale*, or legal purge, and the *épuration sauvage*, or wild purge.

As far as retribution went, the *épuration sauvage* preceded the épuration légale. Not content with waiting for court proceedings to mete out justice, many French citizens took it into their own hands to punish collaborators for their crimes. This movement completely lacked any notion of institutional justice. The *épuration sauvage* consisted of popular convictions, executions without trial, the prosecution of war-profiteers (usually black market dealers), and the public shaming of women who had sexual encounters or romantic relationships with occupying German soldiers, known popularly as horizontal collaboration. Because of the lack of institutional involvement in this stage of épuration, death counts are uncertain for the historians who study this time period[9], but it was certainly within the thousands. It is unclear whether Jewish victims participated in this stage of physical, often mortal retribution in the post-war years.

The *épuration légale* took, if one might say it, a more gentle approach to punishing collaborators. Though punishment occurred, it was not on a mass scale and many got away with lenient sentences, or escaped prosecution totally as a result of their leaving France or giving up their French citizenship. From 1944 to 1951, the GPRF condemned 6,763 people to death for treason and other offenses. However, only 791 of these people actually received their sentences, which, as one can observe, is a relatively small fraction.[10] Most of those prosecuted by the GPRF for treason following the war, rather than losing their lives, lost their rights as French citizens, a practice known as *dégradation nationale*[11]. Unfortunately, many of those who collaborated with

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[9] Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years, 1940-1944*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. p. 577.
[10] Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*, London: Pimlico, 2007. p. 46.
[11] ibid.

either Nazi Germany or the state of Vichy were able to simply continue on with their lives after the Second World War ended. One can picture France's Jews living side by side with those who had been active collaborators, sharing their space with people who called for their deportations, and for many, their deaths. This would have been an extremely difficult situation to deal with, and many were reliving their traumas every single day. This incapability of the GPRF to actually deliver justice could be one cause for why many French Jews chose to leave this environment and their native France to relocate to Palestine.

It is vital to keep in mind when examining the political state of France following the Second World War that while all these legal and extra-legal processes were happening, France's Jews were still reeling from the violence and persecution committed against them by occupying Nazi forces and their own countrymen. This was a traumatized population living during a time where violent, often mortal retribution and public shaming were popular tactics of the deliverance of justice for wartime treason. After persecution and death faced in hiding or in camps, many French Jews returned to their homes finding the same things happening on their doorsteps to the people who contributed to their persecution and their fellows' deaths. Many words have been used to detail the atrocities France's Jewish population suffered during the Second World War. While studying these crimes against humanity is vital work, the immediate aftermath of this suffering is a subject often ignored by historians. What did it mean to be Jewish in France, not during their extermination, but afterwards? Immediately after the Second World War, the act of being Jewish in France took on a new meaning. How could a Jewish individual possibly reconcile the idea of a reborn Republic with the harsh fact that they themselves, along with their compatriots, had been beaten, imprisoned, and denied basic human rights just months

or years previous? It is vital to keep in mind that many of those Jews who were prosecuted were prosecuted in the name of France, by a state that still claimed the name of the Republic, not even by an invading force of nationalist Germans. To cope with this fact, France's Jewish population either emphasized their French identities or their Jewish identities to varying degrees. Scholars who study this time period have differing opinions on how exactly this community fell on this issue of identity.

In his text *Jewish Destinies*, Pierre Birnbaum discusses the idea of Franco-Judaism, and how it changed so thoroughly after the Second World War. He argues that his term, Franco-Judaism, was a form of "emancipation" for Jews in France after the Revolution of 1793. This emancipation came after assimilation, where invisibility as an ethnic and religious grouping was necessary for a full joining in the secular, Republican French society[12]. In adopting French republican ideals, and letting go of certain aspects of their connection to Judaism, a new ideology could come into being that allowed French Jews to openly interact in a society which had once ignored and persecuted them. Birnbaum's main point in providing his model of Franco-Judaism is to point out that the actions of Vichy completely went against the guarantees of safety and emancipation seemingly offered by this ideal. Vichy held onto the word "Republic," yet nothing it did followed the ideology of what the French Republic actually was to those who believed in and participated in it. Protection which came from the Republican state was removed, and came instead from non-governmental institutions and individuals. The question is, after the Second World War and the attempted extermination of Europe's Jewry, with this vast changing of how exactly France's Jewish population interacted with the state as well as individuals, how would

[12] Pierre Birnbaum. *Jewish Destinies: Citizenship, State, and Community in Modern France*, NY, NY, Hill and Wang, 1957.

Franco-Judaism react? Seán Hand, a professor of French Culture and Language at the University of Warwick in the United Kingdom, takes this theory of Bernbaum's to task in his introduction for the essay collection *Post-Holocaust France and the Jews*, published in 2015. His argument is that the betrayal of Franco-Judaism by Vichy and occupying governments (i.e. the Third Reich) caused France's Jewry to strengthen already existing non-governmental Jewish societies, agencies, and schools of thought, and to begin new ones, in order to openly articulate the post-war present and future of France's Jewish population[13]. Assimilation had been the norm for much of France's Jewish population, and Hand holds that there was a fundamental shift after the Second World War, and not just coming as a result of the Cold War or decolonization, which many scholars of French Jewry cite as a major turning point in the political makeup and actions of France's Jewish population. Hand maintains that the post-war time period, in his definition, only the decade immediately following the Second World War, is often ignored by researchers and historians in order to highlight the changes in France's Jewish community during other conflicts in the late nineteenth-century. He states, however, that "for all the fundamental significance of [the Cold War and decolonization] in the relationship between France and Jews," the organization and community interactions during the immediate post-war years are just as important in the historical study of the two communities' interactions. The reconstructionist ideals of ignoring these painful post-war years also serve, in the eyes of Hand, to underline the power of the "Gaullist narrative of wartime efforts and postwar will[14]," where the actions of Jewish individuals and their organizations to restore their culture in France are ignored in favor of the very polarizing figure of de Gaulle. Further, Hand states that the study of this immediate

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[13] Seán Hand, "Introduction," In *Post-Holocaust France and the Jews, 1945-1955*, edited by Seán Hand and Steven T. Katz, 1-25. NYU Press, 2015. 1.
[14] Ibid. 2.

post-war time period will allow scholars to obtain a "more continuous and informed understanding of the life, contribution, and significance of Jews in France in the post war era[15]." It is exactly this contribution to France as a whole, as well as its rebuilding Jewish community, that causes Hand to state that French Jews in the immediate post-war years did not, as a whole, make the decision to make *aliyah*; to quit France permanently and move instead to Palestine, and eventually, after this immediate post-Second World War era, the state of Israel. Hand chooses to emulate the stance of Fourth Republic statesman René Cassin, and echo his belief that France's Jews had a "commitment to the traditional French concept of citizenship[16]" which caused them to not want to make the decision to move to Palestine, eventually Israel, and to instead make efforts for the Zionist movement from within the borders of a post-war France. Hand sustains that French Jewish organizational commitment to reconstruction after the Second World War, and relatively low numbers of people making aliyah in the immediate post-war years, mean that the ultimate move from France to a colonized Palestine, and eventually the state of Israel, was not a priority for French Jews. However, some scholars directly challenge this argument.

David Weinberg, in his essay "The Revival of French Jewry in Post-Holocaust France: Challenges and Opportunities," states that Jews in France, as survivors of the Holocaust and "being also at the heart of postwar allied operations with a heightened moral status," found that France became a locus for Jewish activism that was "European… and Zionist in [their] scope address, and resources[17]." However, this activism had a loss in which many of France's young Jews, not established Jewry who would eventually serve as leadership in this French Jewish activism, but rather those who served on the front lines in Resistance groups, "concluded that

[15] Ibid. 3
[16] Ibid. 5.
[17] Ibid.

there was little future for Jews in France and chose to immigrate to Palestine[18].” Hand argues in his introduction which immediately precedes this essay of Weinberg’s in *Post-Holocaust France and the Jews* that France had a relatively low number of Jews who chose to make *aliyah* after the Second World War. Yet when he states this, he ignores that those who did choose to immigrate were young people who had been seen as those who would take up the mantle of French Jewish leadership after the war. He mentions low numbers, but does not mention the cultural loss that came with these low numbers: the up and coming generation, the generation seen as the ones who would lead reconstruction after the conflict, were the ones who moved permanently to Palestine. In this, only those within the French Jewish community who were older and less likely to reproduce remained, shrinking the population and in some ways, stunting its growth. It is also worth noting that when Hand argues that the number of France’s Jews was relatively low, he is comparing it to other nations which went through the attempted extermination of their Jews, which often had a much higher Jewish population than France. Naturally, the amount of those making *aliyah* would seem smaller in France than in states such as East Germany, West Germany, the Soviet Union, and Poland. Weinberg’s article, however, does not have a focus on the practice of aliyah, but rather on the organizational aid work done by Jewish non-governmental organizations in the post-war years, as well as France’s status as a Zionist hub for many intellectuals. At the beginning of “The Revival of French Jewry in Post-Holocaust France,” Weinberg quotes a Jewish writer in the opening lines of his article, who stated that the survivors of the occupation of France and the attempted extermination of European Jews by the Third Reich within France “[were] like the inhabitants of a city that has been devastated by an

[18] David Weinberg, "The Revival of French Jewry in Post-Holocaust France: Challenges and Opportunities," In *Post-Holocaust France and the Jews, 1945-1955*, edited by Hand Seán and Katz Steven T., 26-37, NYU Press, 2015. 27.

earthquake; [they surveyed] the ruins and… [they utilized] that which is still usable in order to organize emergency relief[19].” Comparing the conflict of the Second World War to a natural disaster, Weinberg maintains that the forming of Jewish non-governmental organizations in the immediate post-war years was a necessary humanitarian response, just as natural as providing relief for victims of an earthquake or another catastrophe. He states that this organizational response was exactly what France’s Jewish community needed, however, to shed its dependence on French Jewish governmental organizations. Rather than turning to the Consistoire, established under Napoleonic rule, or the collaborationist UGIF which served in both occupied France and Vichy in the South, Weinberg argues that “the Jews of France had the opportunity to reshape their institutions and policies in order to create a self-sustaining and independent community[20].” As a result of this idea, Jewish non-governmental organizations mentioned earlier in this paper such as CRIF and the French section of the World Jewish Congress swiftly became politically relevant.

As survivors of their attempted extermination, France’s Jews believed that they deserved a prominent place within the reconstruction of their country as well as Europe as a whole. Weinberg argues that it is not a coincidence that international Jewish organizations such as the World Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and the Jewish Agency quickly moved to establish their European offices in Paris. In this, one sees that the American aid in post-Second World War Europe was not just the realm of the government; non-governmental organizations, and most interestingly for the subject of this paper, American

[19] J. Jacobs, *L’Unite*, February 23, 1945.
[20] David Weinberg, "The Revival of French Jewry in Post-Holocaust France: Challenges and Opportunities," In *Post-Holocaust France and the Jews, 1945-1955*, edited by Hand Seán and Katz Steven T., 26-37, NYU Press, 2015. 27.

Jewish non-governmental organizations, also held sway in determining the political and cultural makeup of the rebuilding continent. In addition to these prominent American Jewish institutions, Weinberg also states that France's capital also became home to "major conferences of Zionists, left-wing Jewish movements, and Jewish relief agencies in the post-war period[21]." The Jewish community of France, in Weinberg's eyes, was encouraged to rapidly become a political power by both local Jewry and Jewry abroad in the rebuilding of the country after the conflict of the Second World War. In this, one can see the attempts to rebuild a stronger, more powerful Jewish community in France reflects the desires of the community to stay in the country and create a lasting niche for themselves there. However, the author points out as well that Zionist and Israeli organizations found homes in France, whose primary goal was to "[expedite] the migration of native-born Jews and refugees to Palestine" and to eventually encourage "the development of financial and political support for Israel[22]." The fact that these organizations such as the Palestine Offices and the French Zionist Federation were able to flourish alongside others such as CRIF and the French chapter of the WJC show that, while rebuilding in France was important to the French Jewish community after the Second World War, making aliyah and supplying financial support for those who wished to was also a large concern. Weinberg, to sum up his points about post-Second World War Jewish organizations in France, states that there were three main challenges facing French Jews: relief and rehabilitation, antisemitism, and the choice of "whether or not to live in Diaspora[23]." With the creation of the Israeli state in 1948, French Jews were no longer presented with living in small communities in Palestine if they chose to make aliyah; rather, they were given the opportunity to immigrate to an actual state, which had structures

[21] Ibid. 28.
[22] Ibid. 29.
[23] Ibid. 32.

deliberately in place in order to facilitate the making of aliyah. The creation of Israel, in Weinberg's words, caused "a greater assertiveness in the public arena [of France's Jews] and a new form of Jewish identification… rest[ing] upon spiritual and emotional ties with Israel[24]." The problem addressed earlier in this paper, the choice between rebuilding in France or making aliyah is called "the issue of 'dual loyalty[25]'" by Weinberg. Was one to be more loyal to the nation of one's birth/the nation that welcomed one after the trauma of the Final Solution and the Second World War, or was one to be ultimately loyal to the newly minted state of Israel? Unfortunately, Weinberg does not answer this question himself. He argues that rather than pick a side, the survivors in immediate post-war France and their descendants found a "third way" of the modern Jewish community, one between the "alleged… hedonism and materialism of American Jewry and the isolationism of Israel[26]." Yet, when one looks at the France of today and its Jewish community, one can see that this so-called "third way" is not necessarily a truth. If there is a French way of being Jewish, why is it that, as of 2014, nearly seventy-five percent of France's Jewish population wished to quit the country permanently in order to move to Israel[27]? One should see, looking at what Weinberg has presented, that the French Jewish community never did find this "third way." There is still an absence of clarity on the choice of dual loyalty, and whether or not French Jews should be more adherent to the Republican ideals of France, or to the fact that is the state of Israel.

René Cassin is one member of France's Jewish community that was extremely active in the Republican realm. Born to Jewish parents in Bayonne, he had a very successful law and

[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid. 36.
[27] JTA, "74% of French Jews Consider Leaving Country," *The Forward*, The Forward Association, Inc., 19 May 2014.

military career before the Second World War. After France's surrender to Germany in 1940, he refused to acknowledge the armistice and travelled to London to work in legal services for Free France. After the war, Cassin embodied what is the inverse of many French Jews after their extermination. Rather than abandon or become disillusioned with Republicanism, he embraced the ideology after the Second World War and wished to spread it and revitalize it in France, as well as abroad. In his article "René Cassin and the Alliance Israelite Universelle," Jay Winter describes Cassin as "a man whose republican commitment was unshakable and indeed deepened by the war and the Shoah[28]." He very much represented the republican image of a member of the Jewish community, thoroughly assimilated and dedicated to the laïcité which pervades French culture to this day. It is imperative to note, however, that after the Second World War, he came to adhere to his cultural background in a way he had not as a lawyer on the Paris bar and as the legal counsel for Free France. This is not to say that he more regularly attended synagogue or left his Catholic spouse. Rather, he came to champion the rights of all oppressed people, as a co-author of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the president of the Alliance israélite universelle. Winter argues that after this appointment, Cassin was brought to a "position of prominence within French and world Jewry[29]," and became a key figure in Jewish transnational politics. The AIU was created at the beginning of the Republican era, in the 1860s, in order to provide French education for Jews and those of other faiths living within France's North African and Middle Eastern colonies. Under the direction of Cassin, the AIU came to stand for "education, engagement in the defense of Jewish rights, and public outreach[30]." In the

[28] Jay Winter, "René Cassin and the Alliance Israélite Universelle: A Republican in Post-Holocaust France," In Post-Holocaust France and the Jews, 1945-1955, edited by Seán Hand and Steven T. Katz, 203-26, NYU Press, 2015. 203.
[29] Ibid. 204.
[30] Ibid. 211.

words of AIU's Commission for External Affairs, the organization wished to combat an idea taking shape in France at the time of its revitalization, that the interests of French Jews would be laid in "the hands of lay associations and… lawyers who [did] not separate Jews from other victims of the enemy and his collaborators[31]." Cassin wished to turn the AIU from just an organization of educators into an organization which advocated for peace and the rights of all men, including particularly the victimized Jewry of the world in the years following the Second World War. Winter paints Cassin as a man truly dedicated to the core ideas of the Republic, "defined less by the injunctions of the Torah than by the emancipatory messages of the French Revolution[32]." Cassin's status as a true republican aside, most pertinent to the subject of this paper is his views, as a republican, towards Palestine and the eventual state of Israel. The AIU released a document of its principles in late 1944, signed by Cassin as well as other important members of French Jewry, including the chief Rabbis of France and Paris, as well as the current president of the Consistoire. Within the document, the AIU demanded that those survivors of the attempted extermination of European Jewry to be granted "the right to enter Palestine[33]." Further, the document states that the AIU, "while committed to the complete incorporation of Jews in the country where they live, [had] never ceased to participate in the mutual Jewish effort in favor of the Holy Land[34]." If Cassin was so dedicated to the lofty ideas of republicanism, why then was one of the AIU's core beliefs rooted in the ideology of Zionism and the Jewish inheritance of Palestine? After the creation of the modern state of Israel, Cassin moved further to guarantee the

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[31] AIU, AM Présidence 001A, Commission des affaires extérieures, November 29 and December 9, 1944.
[32] Jay Winter, "René Cassin and the Alliance Israélite Universelle: A Republican in Post-Holocaust France," In Post-Holocaust France and the Jews, 1945-1955, edited by Seán Hand and Steven T. Katz, 203-26, NYU Press, 2015. 212.
[33] AIU, AM Présidence 001b, "Une déclaration de l'Alliance israélite universelle," November 11, 1944.
[34] Ibid.

existence of the country as well as AIU's campuses within its borders, citing that the Alliance's schools contributed to "the gigantic task of the settling of new immigrants and the expansion of the national economy[35]." One can see that while Cassin was dedicated to France and its republican beliefs, he was also a strong proponent of Zionism and believed that Israel had a right to exist. Winter phrases it well, stating that, "Cassin was a Diaspora Zionist, a man who believed that Jews who wished to live a collective life in Palestine should be free to do so[36]." Even a man clearly identifying most strongly with his French background felt it necessary, with his Jewish identity, to support Zionism as well. Though he never chose to make aliyah, his compatriots within the AIU chose to do so, and "defended the rights of those who wanted to join them[37]." Cassin's remains are entombed in the Pantheon in Paris, an honor reserved for those in France who embody the Republic. The life and career of Cassin poses many questions for those who wish to deduce whether the Jews of immediate post-Second World War France preferred to showcase their French or Jewish identities, to remain in France or to abandon it for Israel, because it seems his life was dedicated fully to the two. One can argue that the life of Cassin paints an image that reflects much of France's Jewish population in the years following their attempted extermination. While many left France to begin lives in Palestine and eventually Israel, many still chose to stay in the country of their birth, or the country that welcomed them in the face of oppression and persecution. Yet while these individuals stayed in France, they still advocated for their people who chose to make aliyah and form new communities by settling in Palestine.

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[35] AIU, AM Présidence 030, Sharett to Cassin, May 10, 1950.
[36] Jay Winter, "René Cassin and the Alliance Israélite Universelle: A Republican in Post-Holocaust France," In Post-Holocaust France and the Jews, 1945-1955, edited by Seán Hand and Steven T. Katz, 203-26, NYU Press, 2015. 220.
[37] Ibid. 221.

It is one thing to study the positions made by scholars when it comes to post-Second World War identities of France's Jewish community, but to truly understand this complicated dichotomy of French and Jewish identities in this traumatized community, it is vital to observe their own words and their own ways of expressing themselves. While individual reports would be useful, it is also important to cast an eye on the words of the organizations which represented these individuals. Several non-governmental Jewish organizations were active in the immediate post-war years in France in order to aid with reconstruction in the war torn country and to create new spaces for its Jews to express their identities and communities. To cope with the rapidly evolving environment which was a post-Second World War Europe and France, they formed organizations to provide emotional and economic support for each other in the immediate post-war years. These were both large and small bodies which inevitably reflected the individual viewpoints of the Jewish communities they represented. Often, organizational correspondence reflected different ideals, which shows that even in organizations which sought to include many people within France's Jewish population, individual reactions and sentiments still remained for those that were acting within them. Many of these organizations are still in existence; their reasons for operation are a little different, but their goals are still very similar. A few organizations will be observed in detail, in order to have a better view of how exactly they operated with the question of Zionism in the years immediately after the Second World War. Their papers were retrieved through the Central Zionist Archive and the Yad Vashem Archive in Jerusalem, Israel, as well as the Archives of the Deportation and Resistance History Center in Lyon, France. From observing correspondence, circulars, memos, etc., a researcher can observe the primary goals and ideologies of these organizations. To reiterate a point stated above, just

like individual Jews throughout France, these Jewish non-governmental organizations differed in exactly how inclined they were to acknowledge the French part of their identities.

One of these organizations was The Association of Jewish Veterans and Volunteers. This organization had made correspondence with the World Jewish Congress directly relating to the concept of either emphasizing a Jewish identity or a French identity in post-war France. The Association of Jewish Veterans and Volunteers was created in 1953, after the end of the Second World War. The organization was comprised of Jewish soldiers from France, its colonies, and allied armies who were residing in France at the time[38]. Their goal was to have French Jewish veterans "join the life of the City," or, Republican society, "to testify to the place of the Jews in the nation[39]." Or in other words, the goal of the organization was to actively participate in French society, and in doing so emphasize their place as explicitly Jewish people in French society. As survivors of the World Wars, as well as the mass extermination that occurred during the Second World War, these Frenchmen laid out stipulations for what must happen to those who collaborated with the Vichy government to further their persecution. Though this correspondence is not immediately after the conflict, but later on in the 1950s, this desire to see direct action against a continuation of their suffering shows that the aftermath of their traumas did not stop affecting them just because a few more years had passed. Within their letter to the World Jewish Congress, the First World War veterans state that, Xavier Vallat, who was previously the Commissioner-General for Jewish questions in the collaborating Vichy government "ha[d] undertaken a series of articles and conferences across the country to justify the status of the Jews

[38] "Association Des Anciens Combattants Et Engagés Volontaires Juifs," CRIF (CRIF, April 28, 2016)
[39] Ibid.

and to praise collaborationism[40]" after his release from prison. This time in prison was a relatively short sentence he had received during the épuration légale that followed the Second World War. Following his release from ten years of prison time, Xavier Vallat once again became prominent on the French political stage with his virulent antisemitism and far-right ideology. Now retaining their rights as French citizens able to protest and exercise their political rights, however, the members of the Association of Jewish Veterans and Volunteers underlined that it was "inconceivable not to repost and not prohibit him from continuing his anti-Semitic propaganda[41]." The organizational solidarity within their identities as French Jews who had fought in wars for France allowed these men to speak out against hate-mongering in the years following the Second World War.

The Conseil représentatif des israélites de France, known today as the Conseil représentatif des institutions juives de France, was an independent Jewish non-governmental organization which has since become the official French affiliate of the World Jewish Congress[42]. CRIF was established to stand explicitly for the cultural lives and rights of French Jews, not their religious ones, which were defended by the Consistoire. Much like the Association of Jewish Veterans and Volunteers, CRIF also opposed the release and subsequent political activity of Xavier Vallat. In a general bulletin, a representative wrote that during his trial, the collaborator would not "cease to testify of his fierce antisemitism and did not express the least regret of the consequences of his past actions[43]." This is true, as Vallat continued to voice his

[40] Letter from Armand Kohn, Robert Cohen, Jacques Orfus, Dr. Danowski, Charles Bronschwas and Rubin Bercovia, to the president of the World Jewish Congress, 13 November 1957, C10\887-1, Box 1, Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, Israel.
[41] Ibid.
[42] "Community in France," Community in France (World Jewish Congress), accessed February 4, 2020.
[43] Bulletin from CRIF voicing protest against the liberation of Xavier Vallat, 18 January 1950, C10\571-21, Box 1, Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, Israel.

antisemitic views for another almost two decades after his release from prison. Even after serving his sentence in prison, he did not grow or move past his hateful ideology. His collaboration had been punished by the French government, but not significantly enough for these French Jewish organizations who spoke out against him. Their condemnations arise not merely from his release, but also from the fact that he continued to voice the same hateful views he held while acting as a Vichy government official. Though the cry of protest from a group of French veterans previously mentioned is a powerful source, this additional source from CRIF is extremely pertinent when one considers the strength of Jewish survivor organizations and mutual-aid foundations in the Jewish social and political climate in the years following the Second World War. CRIF, as one of the largest Jewish non-governmental organizations in France, held a lot of power on the political stage in this sense. Their figurative voice was resounding, and their organizing power was large. Though Xavier Vallat retained some political power in the far right at this time with his ideals, the clear condemnation from such a powerful organization limited his influence within the centrist and left political communities in France.

Collaborators in France were not the only people being challenged by French Jews and the organizations they were a part of during the years after the Second World War. They also criticized the remnants of other regimes that had harmed them in the past. In February of 1951, the provincial sections of the French council of the World Jewish Congress released a document condemning the projects of rearmament which were underway at the time in a reconstructing Germany. In their text which they titled a "Solemn Protest," the delegates from the WJC advised their audience to "not forget that [Jews] under the Hitlerian regime were… chased from their

homes and deported to concentration camps where they endured evidenced suffering[44].” Referring to Jewish victims of the Nazi German army as “martyrs,” they did not leave out that “thousands of Frenchmen had suffered from German abuse[45]” as well. Though WJC stood for the rights of Jews, and they wished to remind the country in which they resided that Jewish people were not the only ones who suffered under Nazi German rule. They were defending their rights as Jewish citizens of France, not just Jewish people who happened to reside in France at the time. Their suffering was also a part of France’s collective suffering during the Second World War France’s Jewish population used their collective energies to combat antisemitic voices in the aftermath of the Second World War, instead of being voiceless or having their collective voice organized through collaborationist governments. They would act independently of organizations forced upon them such as the Union Générale des Israélites de France, the artificially created Jewish governmental organization founded by Nazi occupiers and Vichy during the war[46]. In this piece of correspondence from CRIF, a reader can see how France’s Jews reacted to living alongside those who had actively collaborated and persecuted them during the Second World War. They used their collective voices and organizational powers to challenge antisemitic voices around them, to and make France a home for their community, and to make it safer for non-Jews as well.

Despite the fact that they now had a voice and considerable organizational power in their Diaspora country, as detailed above, a large number of France’s Jews prioritized their Jewish identity over their French one. This may be considered unsurprising, as one can see above that

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[44] “Une protestation solennelle,” 19 February 1951, C10\335-68, Box 2, The Provincial Sections of the World Jewish Congress, Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, Israel.
[45] Ibid.
[46] “Rapport du 2 September 1944 de Kurt Schendel,” 2 September 1944, 3680790, CRIF court documents, une copie de jugement, Yad Vashem Archive, Jerusalem, Israel.

France continued to house many politicians, such as Xavier Vallat, who continued to contest their very rights as French citizens. Unable to deal with a lack of any true retribution for countless collaborators, many Jews left France after the trauma of the Second World War, placing themselves or sons and daughters into settlements that had been founded throughout Israel, before, during and after the Second World War. They were willing to abandon France, despite a renewed political and social voice, in order to find a new community elsewhere, where they would be the majority. This reflects some modern sentiments of France's Jewish community, as well. When one reads the correspondence of the French Zionist Federation, one can see how highly this particular group prized the idea of a Jewish homeland. The entire organization revolved around wishing for a Palestine completely settled with Diaspora Jews. Each letter sent to and from their main offices in Lyon were signed and sent along with "nos meilleurs sentiments sionistes[47]," or, our best Zionist feelings. The phrase is written in French, yet with this signature, the main feeling of the letter remains with those Jewish people who are in Palestine, or later on, in the state of Israel.

Not all Jews left France in favor of Israel, however. It seems that many members of the French Zionist Federation instead wished for their children to find homes in Israel rather than themselves. Or perhaps, they planned on following their children once they were fully situated. There are many letters from the Lyon and Lille offices detailing the plans of children as young as six years old relocations to Israel. These children moved to have "participation… in [the French Zionist Federation's] colonies[48]" situated throughout Israel, where they would acclimate to the land, work, farm, and learn the Hebrew language before establishing permanent residency in the

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[47] Letter from secretary of Lyon office of the French Zionist Federation to M. Rubins of Marseilles, 17 April 1949, F11\179-29, Box 1, Fédération Sioniste de France, Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, Israel.
[48] ibid.

territory. Alternatively, these young people would spend the summer months in Israel before returning to France. For example, Meyer Morgenthau received a letter in 1959 from the French Zionist Federation clarifying the details of his childrens' trip to Israel, where they would spend their summer months, returning either at the "end of August or the fourteenth of September[49]," in time for the resumption of classes. In the correspondence of the French Zionist Federation, one often sees these summer visits detailed in letters to parents, uncles, aunts, grandparents, etc. This typical summer trip was also taken by Elisabeth Maier, the niece of a M. Langfield. The young girl's parents "moved to [Akko]" and she "wished to see [them] during the period of summer vacation[50]" in the year of 1959. The case of Maier is interesting, as her parents were permanently located in Israel, while she still resided in France with her uncle in the city of Marseilles. This reverses the trend noted earlier in the correspondence of the French Zionist Federation when it came to relocation or short visits to Israel for children and young adults at this time. Most children seem to have been sent over first, usually for a few months before a permanent move. The general idea remains the same, however; that she would live in France for some time, perhaps to finish her education, before making the permanent move to Israel, as her parents had done.

Many members of the French Zionist Federation did not make this permanent move to Israel to abandon their country of origin, even if their children did so. This is not to say that their values lay explicitly with the French state, though they resided there. They simply campaigned for the Jewish state from their places within the Republic, often through their participation with a

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[49] Letter from secretary of Lyon office of the French Zionist Federation to Meyer Morgenthau, 20 April 1959, F11\179-22, Box 1, Fédération Sioniste de France, Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, Israel.

[50] Letter from secretary of Lyon office of the Zionist Federation to M. Langfeld of Marseilles, 22 April 1959, F11\179-6, Box 1, Fédération Sioniste de France, Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, Israel.

non-governmental Jewish organization. The French state is acknowledged in correspondence, but the precedent and prestige is given to Israel. In an undated letter, the secretary of the French Zionist Federation office in Lille expressed this sentiment, saying that "The Zionist Federation paid tribute to the valour of the small state of Israel and expresses its gratitude to France[51]." The praise is mainly directed to Israel, though France is also mentioned, mostly for courtesy's sake. Though some French Jews remained in the Diaspora, the idea of spending their next year in Jerusalem was prized more highly than lofty ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity espoused by many French citizens.

A significant movement Europe's Jewish population made immediately after the Holocaust was to form survivor organizations. In addition to ideological organizations such as the French Zionist Federation or CRIF, those who survived the extermination attempts and persecution during the Second World War established groups to commemorate their survival and to honor the memories of those who were not so lucky. When it comes to the subject of this paper, this may seem counterproductive to the idea of permanent French Jewish relocation to Israel. Some of the work these survivor organizations made seems to go against the trend of aliyah, performing the vital work of memory in their countries of residence rather than moving permanently to Israel. Even so, this work of memory done in the Diaspora was meant to strengthen a Jewish identity, rather than strengthen an adherence to the culture of their country of residence. It was less about their status as French citizens, and more to underline their identities as Jews who survived a horrible persecution, and to remember their friends, families, and loved ones who were not so lucky. One such group who prioritized their Jewish identities over their

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[51] Letter from secretary of Lille office of the French Zionist Federation, N.D., F11\86-2, Box 1, Fédération Sioniste de France, Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, Israel.

French one was l'Association des parents et amis des familles françaises israélites déportées en Allemagne, which will now be referred to throughout the rest of this paper as APAFFIDA. Though these survivors lived in France, their work was meant to provide a base of support and communal strength to those Jewish survivors who still lived in France explicitly through the act of remembrance. Their work was not to glorify France, or the resistance it did throughout the war that *did* help some of these individuals to survive. This was an organization by Jews and for Jews, and in the memory fiches observed, they did not hide from the fact that it was often French police or neighbors who caused their suffering. This work of memory was for Jewish suffering during the Second World War, not for their non-Jewish peers who may have also faced persecution.

APAFFIDA was founded in October 1945, just a few months after German surrender. The organization was based in Lyon, France and led by a Dr. Marcel Bernheim, who was aided by Odette Brunschweig, former director of a large high school in Ain, a département situated near Lyon[52]. Both were survivors of the attempted extermination of French Jews during the Second World War. Amongst others, the primary goal of APAFFIDA was to publish their *Livre du Souvenir*, or a Book of Memory, which was originally just a group of six bulletins titled "Les Absents[53]." The head of this book project was a Lyonnais man named Robert Moïse[54]. The book was to be dedicated to those who lost their lives due to German occupation or collaborationist practices by the Vichy regime. A one-time membership fee of one hundred francs[55] was paid by

[52] "Dossier Concours National de la Résistance et la Déportation," Valerie Ladigue and Frederic Fouletier, 2014, Deportation and Resistance History Center, Lyon, France. Page 30.
[53] ibid.
[54] "Appel lancé par l'APAFFIDA pour le Livre du Souvenir," Robert Moïse, N.D., APAFFIDA fonds, Archives of the Deportation and Resistance History Center, Lyon, France.
[55] "Demande d'adhésion" of Suzanne Abraham and her husband, 1946, APAFFIDA fonds, Archives of the Deportation and Resistance History Center, Lyon, France.

members of APAFFIDA for the funding and printing of this publication. The book was meant to be a "a supreme homage to [the victims'] deaths" and to "search for a consolation for their anguish and to complete the necessary work for posterity[56]." Though this survival organization did not necessarily provide the material support provided by other organizations which many Jews needed after coming out of hiding or returning to France, it did provide emotional support and an outlet for grief for those who survived past their loved ones. One could argue that the work of memory begun by APAFFIDA with their *Livre du Souvenir* and the actions of other survivor organizations in the late 1940s laid the groundwork for the eventual tradition of witness and survivor testimony.

The collection of information for the *Livre du Souvenir* was done through the filling out of census forms with prompts and questions about the life and identity of the victim(s). Some of these forms are more complete than others; even with a lack of information, survivors still longed to commemorate their lost loved ones. A few forms have only the surname and a point of contact recorded, either a sign of a whole family gone, or the presence of too many names to invoke. The process was thus: a survivor would write to or visit the main office of APAFFIDA located in Lyon, and would receive however many census forms they requested, to be filled out themselves[57]. Survivors would on occasion request more forms later on, perhaps as more countless names were recalled[58]. These completed forms would then be sent back to the organization, who then compiled the information in order to eventually publish it in the *Livre du*

[56] "Appel lancé par l'APAFFIDA pour le Livre du Souvenir," Robert Moïse, N.D., APAFFIDA fonds, Archives of the Deportation and Resistance History Center, Lyon, France.
[57] "Pour le livre du souvenir veuillez envoyer…" N.A., N.D., APAFFIDA fonds, Archives of the Deportation and Resistance History Center, Lyon, France.
[58] "Veuillez je vous prie…" Paper scrap from APAFFIDA correspondence, N.A., 12 August 1946, APAFFIDA fonds, Archives of the Deportation and Resistance History Center, Lyon, France.

Souvenir. Those who sent in their forms were also requested to "distribute these documents among all the missing families that [they] know[59]." In this, word of mouth between Jewish community members was just as vital for the work of memory as written records were for APAFFIDA. The brunt of the work of the organization was completely on the shoulders of those who were willing to bear witness and share their traumas, and not those who held leadership roles, which is the inverse of many of the other organizations discussed within this paper. In more than one instance, surviving family members and friends sent in the information of their lost loved ones on pieces of notebook paper[60] or legal pads[61], not even the standard memory form sent out by the organization. This exemplifies how important the work of memory was to those survivors immediately after the Second World War. Pictures were occasionally attached to the census forms, either for further commemoration in the *Livre du Souvenir* or for tracking down those who had not yet returned home, or whose status was unknown[62]. Survivors, in addition to recording the deaths and arrests of their families, friends, and loved ones, had the ability to send in forms of those whose fate was unknown, in the event that APAFFIDA received any news of the person[63]. Initially, these forms were filled out mostly by survivors in the Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes region, that is to say, the region in and around Lyon. However, the organization very rapidly began receiving forms from other départements all over France[64].

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[59] "Appel lancé par l'APAFFIDA pour le Livre du Souvenir," Robert Moïse, N.D., APAFFIDA fonds, Archives of the Deportation and Resistance History Center, Lyon, France.
[60] Note from Mme. Jules Lévy to APAFFIDA with names of victims, N.D., APAFFIDA fonds, Archive of the Deportation and Resistance History Center, Lyon, France.
[61] Memory fiche of Rabbi Henri Kauffman, sent in by nephew Borg Silvani, N.D., APAFFIDA fonds, Archives of the Deportation and Resistance History Center, Lyon, France.
[62] Correspondence from Jean Hesse to President of APAFFIDA concerning missing family members, 9 August, unknown year, APAFFIDA fonds, Archives of the Deportation and Resistance History Center, Lyon, France.
[63] Correspondence from Margot Loeb to Dr. Marcel Bernheim concerning missing family members, 20 October 1946, APAFFIDA fonds, Archives of the Deportation and Resistance History Center, Lyon, France.
[64] Correspondence from an unknown author in Paris, France to Dr. Marcel Bernheim, N.A., 6 June 1947, APAFFIDA fonds, Archives of the Resistance and Deportation History Center, Lyon, France.

Though many of the forms record residences and places of arrest in and around Lyon, it can be observed that many forms, especially the ones that were visibly recorded later, list locations all across France, particularly in and around Paris.

The prompts on the forms changed as the organization realized they may need more information in the case of missing persons, but the general information gathered remained the same[65]. They collected information such as the victim's name, profession, names of family members, spouses, or children, address at the time of arrest, conditions of arrest, cause of death, etc.[66] This question is extremely pertinent when one considers the makeup of France's Jewish population. Those Jews in France who were first arrested and deported to death camps in Eastern Europe were not French in origin. France's Jewish population was inherently transnational. They crossed borders in order to find more opportunities in France, or to escape prosecution. In this, these Jewish individuals who survived the attempts of extermination during the Second World War were not emphasizing their places in the Diaspora, or in France in particular. Instead, they were emphasizing their identities as Jews, not their places of origins. Their Jewish identity mattered more than the fact that they happened to be residing in France during the time of their arrests or deportations. An observer could see that in this statement, even before the war, much of the Jewish population of France was still prioritizing their Jewish identity over their French one.

Though the Jewish population of France was transnational, there were still many who were well-assimilated and valued the same values as many French citizens. When one studies

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[65] Updated Virgin APAFFIDA memory fiche, N.A., N.D., APAFFIDA fonds, Archives of the Resistance and Deportation History Center, Lyon, France.

[66] Virgin APAFFIDA memory fiche, N.A., N.D., APAFFIDA fonds, Archives of the Resistance and Deportation History Center, Lyon, France.

modern French history, it is impossible to ignore the importance French citizens held for the idea of the Republic, and its prized ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity. There were Jews in France who believed their status as Republicans should be prized just as highly as their ethnic background. While their peers turned their eyes eastward towards the newly minted state of Israel, there were many who preferred instead to affirm their place in a rebuilding France. This does not mean they were particularly concerned with prioritizing their French identity. Rather, they wanted to affirm their place in France as Jews *and* Republicans. One of the Jewish non-governmental organizations that reflects this general understanding, based on the correspondence observed, is the French section of the World Jewish Congress. In minutes from a 1956 meeting of the Paris bureau of the WJC, "events… which provoked a large Jewish emigration[67]," were discussed, but the organization's delegates were discussing Jews from former French colonies in Northern Africa and the Middle East who were relocating to Israel, not those who were residing in France at the time. While Palestine and eventually Israel, and the seemingly inevitable French Jewish emigration to it were a subject within correspondence between members of the WJC, more frequently was a general discourse about protecting Jewish communities and their rights within France. In a verbal process circulated throughout southern France in 1951, an unnamed individual from Lyon's Jewish community voiced their concerns that there was a "loss of Judaism with conformity[68]" to French society. Their place in France was important, and the existence of Jewish provincial circulars was vital to sustaining a Jewish community in a country that was largely non-Jewish. However, while preserving their place as

[67] Minutes from a World Jewish Congress meeting at the Paris Bureau, 8 January 1957, C10\887-3, Box 1, Minutes from various CJM meetings in the 1950s, Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, Israel.
[68] Verbal process of revision from Lyon province, N.A., 12 November 1951, C10\335-17, Box 1, Various circulars and general correspondence from the provincial sections, Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, Israel.

French citizens, it was still important for this organization and its members to maintain their identity as Jewish people even while trying to find a permanent place in France. Part of maintaining a Jewish community in France, however, meant adopting the French language more fully. The language of Europe's Jewry before the Second World War was overwhelmingly Yiddish. In the years after the conflict, it seems that France's Jewish population was concerned with making sure their people knew the French language, one more widely used by their neighbors and governmental institutions, instead.

The World Jewish Congress was and is a worldwide agency, and recognized the necessity of a degree of assimilation within their respective Diaspora countries. The same is true of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, a network connecting Jewish newspapers and periodicals around the globe. In a meeting at the Hotel California in Paris, France on 10 January 1949, the committee of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency met to discuss newspapers and circulars being distributed amongst France's Jewish population. They stated that French Jewish newspapers should be transmitted in the French language, rather than Yiddish, so that they would be more accessible to people within the community. While France's immigrant Jewish population from Eastern Europe spoke Yiddish, those who came from French Jewish parents and families were much less likely to speak the language. Assimilation within a post-war France for this organization meant letting go of some old traditions and making new ones. The Jewish Telegraphic Agency stood by the fact that their newspapers needed to be more accessible to the general French Jewish population because "none of [the newspapers] appear in French…" and that "a large part of the Jewish public does not understand Yiddish and, therefore, does not subscribe to these Yiddish

newspapers[69]." In order to keep subscriptions up and to sustain the Jewish community within France, the French language was necessary, especially for the younger members of the community. The French language was important to maintain community ties and to relate with non-Jewish peers within the country. Despite this campaigning for circulars in the French language, it seems that Yiddish was still held in importance for the organization. It was an important part of their culture, and they wished for it to be sustained, even while the organization and the media it put out was meant to be more largely accessible to a bigger audience. An A. Kaplan, who was very prominent in Lyon's Jewish community as a member of their provincial chapter of the World Jewish Congress, voices this in a letter he wrote in October of 1951. He wished to have a conference amongst the provincial chapters of the World Jewish Congress in order to increase their activities as well as to discuss cultural problems, such as the "diverse aspects of Judaism[70]." The conference would be held in French, but they would "be willing to explore possibilities of finding Yiddish speakers[71]." Though they wished to make the conference accessible to everyone, especially the younger population who spoke almost exclusively French, they wished to acknowledge the cultural significance that Yiddish still held for Europe's Jewish community.

In the same vein, from the sources observed, CRIF, while encouraging expression of the Jewish ethnicity and its cultural significance in France, understood that they also needed to encourage a degree of French-ness within the communities they represented. Though those who

[69] Minutes from a meeting of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 10 January 1949, C10\571-42, Box 2, Correspondence with various organizations, Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, Israel.
[70] Letter from A. Kaplan to Professor Bloch of the Lyon Chapter of the World Jewish Congress, 5 October 1951, C10\335-25, Box 1, Various circulars and general correspondence from the provincial sections of the World Jewish Congress, Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, Israel.
[71] ibid.

spoke on their Jewish compatriots behalf within CRIF in the immediate post-war years were by no means assimilationists, they certainly acknowledged that participating in French culture was the only way for a Jewish community to thrive within the Hexagon. There was a large manifestation of the Jewish community in Lyon, France on 5 May 1951. The "most eminent meetings of the committee since its foundation in 1936" — conspicuously in the years immediately preceding the Second World War — was held in order to ensure the "full and complete success… of Judaism in Lyon[72]," and in France in general. They wished to make a grand showing of their community, "at least three hundred and fifty people[73], to show that Lyon and France's Jewish population was thriving, even in the immediate post-war years, even after the attempted extermination of their community . One could argue that the impulse to hold a manifestation to announce their validity is an explicitly French action. Some have jokingly referred to manifestations as France's "national pastime." One might say that this manifestation led by the Lyon chapter of CRIF was an attempt to emphasize the part of them that was French.

On a more serious note, one can see in CRIF documents from 1945 that CRIF was very explicit in establishing a strong Jewish community in France. In minutes from a meeting in the summer of 1945, the representatives from the still infant CRIF organization "aimed [to] defend legitimate Jewish rights and interests[74]." The way they planned to do this was thus: combine all Jewish organizations in France, with six people on a committee to represent France's Jewish population who would reflect the views of the World Jewish Congress and defend the rights and

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[72] Note from A. Kaplan regarding a manifestation, 5 May 1951, C10\335-41, Various circulars and general correspondence from the provincial sections of the WJC, Central Zionist Archive, Jeursalem, Israel.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Minutes from a 1945 CRIF meeting, 3690730, Collection of documents from the estate of Joseph Fischer-Ariel, Lyon, France, 1944, Yad Vashem Archive, Jerusalem, Israel.

interests of all Jews[75]. CRIF had further goals, but all involved defending the human rights of Europe's Jews and other displaced peoples who suffered from Nazi Germany's and other collaborating states' racially based persecution. These involved demands for the "complete reestablishment of Jewish emancipation[76]," free immigration and citizenship for all those, Jews and non-Jews, who had been deported and displaced by fascism and war in the previous few years, reparations from Germans and other collaborators, disarmament in countries which had collaborated during the Second World War, professional reclassing for Jewish youth, and many more. Telling, however, is that in the same document, one of the revendications for CRIF was to "pay tribute to the efforts of Palestinian Judaism accomplished with the help of Diaspora Judaism, with a view to reestablishing its National Home in the historic Fatherland[77]." Even while trying to emphasize France's Jewish community in France, and establish a home for European Jews in Europe, homage was paid to the colonization effort in Palestine and directly encouraged by what would eventually become the largest Jewish non-governmental organization in France.

Returning again to the French Zionist Federation, it is clear even from their name that the organization prized their Zionist ideals above a French identity. Even before the state of Israel was established and the Law of Return was written, their stated goal was to aid French Jews in short stays or permanent resettlement in Palestine. Though they recorded their thoughts and goals in the French language, not much can be observed of any clear sentiments towards France. All that is clear is that the idea of a Jewish state, particularly one they would settle in what was still

[75] "PROJET," N.A., 3690730, Collection of documents from the estate of Joseph Fischer-Ariel, Lyon, France, 1944, Yad Vashem Archive, Jerusalem, Israel.
[76] "Revendications suivant…," 3690730, Collection of documents from the estate of Joseph Fischer-Ariel, Lyon, France, 1944, Yad Vashem Archive, Jerusalem, Israel.
[77] Ibid.

Palestine at the time, was above anything else. Their objective was not to encourage communities in their identities as French who would remain in France, but their identities as Jews who would eventually move to Palestine and reside there permanently. Once Israel was created, efforts continued in which citizenship of formerly French Jews in the newly minted state were now the primary goals of the organization. The creation of the state of Israel, though it caused massive conflict, in fact made this process easier. In 1957, correspondence dictates that they "essentially intend[ed] to coordinate the activities of the various Zionist groupings, national funds and institutions in their work for Israel[78]." Additionally, they would be able to cooperate with the state of Israel itself to encourage further immigration. The organization was based in France, but that was the extent of their sentiments for the country. Far more important for them was lending their support to Israel in the hope to eventually have a home in Israel for all Jews who had previously lived in France.

Jewish Agency for Palestine Offices were located throughout the Diaspora in order for Jews in the Diaspora to coordinate trips or emigrations to Palestine, before the modern state of Israel was created. The offices were disbanded once the state of Israel was created and the Ministry for Aliyah was founded in 1948. France had two such offices, one in the capital of Paris and one in the second largest metropolitan area in the country, the large port city of Marseilles. These Jewish Agency for Palestine Offices in France's major cities differ from the aforementioned organizations in this paper in that they almost disregard the fact that was the established French government at the time, the GPRF and eventually the Fourth Republic, which was created in 1948. Though they interacted with the French government daily, and those that

[78] Letter from M. Catarivas to President Bonett of the French Zionist Federation, 23 May 1957, F11\85-27, Box 1, Fédération Sioniste de France. General correspondence, in particular correspondence with the Fédération Sioniste de France branches of Lille and Lyon, Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, Israel.

worked there were Republican citizens, there is no concern with France in their records and correspondence. Even mention of bureaucracy, paperwork, and the like within correspondence was about offices in Palestine, not with the French Office for Immigration and Integration.[79] The goal, simply, was to move French Jews out of France and permanently into Palestine. Many of the sources found from the Palestine Offices at the Central Zionist Archive are from mere months after the Second World War, showing how desperate some of France's Jews were to leave after the conflict and their attempted extermination. One memo to the Paris Palestinian Office from a Dr. Chaim Pozner, who was the Secretary General of Immigration Services for the Jewish Agency for Palestine in mid-1945, just a few months after the Second World War ended in Europe, details the status of ten children "for whom a request for aliyah [was] made by close relatives in Palestine[80]." Though many of the French Jews leaving for Palestine at this time were young men and women or children, memos from the Offices reveal that older people and couples sometimes made the move along with their children. This is true of a M. Schapiro whom the Marseilles Palestine Office sent their "utmost" wishes to the Central Palestine Office "so that [the family could] leave for Israel as soon as possible[81]." The same is the case for Desider Weisz, who was leaving France with his wife Blanka and "their two children, aged two years and six months[82]" to move permanently to Palestine. Even with two small children, one of whom was

[79] Letter from Directrice A. Szarowicz of Marseilles Palestine Office to Warsaw Palestine Office, N.D., L17\4266-7, Box 1, List and correspondence with the Palestine Office Marseille and Paris regarding Palestine Certificates, organizational and financial matters for the immigration to Palestine, Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, Israel.
[80] Letter from Dr. Chaim Pozner to Paris Palestinian Office, 7 July 1945, L17\4266-13, Box 1, List and correspondence with the Palestine Office Marseille and Paris regarding Palestine Certificates, organizational and financial matters for the immigration to Palestine, Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, Israel.
[81] Memo from Marseilles Palestine Office, 3 February 1949, L17\4266-2, Box 1, List and correspondence with the Palestine Office Marseille and Paris regarding Palestine Certificates, organizational and financial matters for the immigration to Palestine, Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, Israel.
[82] Letter from Dr. Chaim Pozner to Directrice A. Szarowicz, 14 February 1949, L17\4266-9, Box 1, List and correspondence with the Palestine Office Marseille and Paris regarding Palestine Certificates, organizational and financial matters for the immigration to Palestine, Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, Israel.

not even able to walk or feed itself, the Weisz family found it of utmost importance to leave France for Palestine, even though the situation in Palestine was just as uncertain as the setting of a reconstructing France. Much of the correspondence from the French Palestinian Offices shows that, although many Jewish people were leaving France in the years following the Second World War to permanently move to Israel, the process was not necessarily easy or streamlined until the modern state of Israel was established, the Law of Return was written, and the Ministry for Aliyah and Integration was established. In a letter from the director of the Marseilles Palestinian Office to the Palestinian Office in Warsaw, Poland, it is written that, "all migrants… must have eight identity photographs, so that the various procedures for their legalization of stay in Palestine are carried out as soon as possible[83]." Other stipulations also applied to the migrants, they had to be "vaccinated against cholera and have a doctor's certificate[84]" that would be reviewed by the immigration board once they arrived in Palestine. Even with lots of requirements and hoops to jump through when it came to the immigration process, many French Jews still made the choice to permanently relocate to Palestine, and later, Israel through the process of aliyah.

The following discussion of Jewish non-governmental organizations in the immediate post-Second World War period above details a debate which is ongoing even to this day. The key divide found within French Jewish communities was the question of whether to prioritize the Jewish identity over the French, or vice versa. To rephrase, which was more important to the

[83] Letter from Directrice A. Szarowicz of Marseilles Palestine Office to Warsaw Palestine Office, N.D., L17\4266-7, Box 1, List and correspondence with the Palestine Office Marseille and Paris regarding Palestine Certificates, organizational and financial matters for the immigration to Palestine, Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, Israel.
[84] Telegram to Swiss Palestine Office from Marseilles Palestine Office, 28 December 1948, L17\4266-8, Box 1, List and correspondence with the Palestine Office Marseille and Paris regarding Palestine Certificates, organizational and financial matters for the immigration to Palestine, Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, Israel.

French Jewish survivors of the Second World War and their attempted extermination; the maintenance of a Jewish identity in France, or giving up the French part of oneself and making *aliyah* to permanently reside in Palestine, and eventually, Israel? One could argue that the mass immigration trends of French Jews leaving France to move permanently to Israel would mean the *aliyah* was more important to the community, but that leaves the question of the sizable, yet admittedly shrinking, Jewish community still residing in France at the time of this paper being written. Additionally, many of the organizations discussed earlier are still in operation today, particularly CRIF, doing much of the same work: providing emotional and physical support to French Jews, protecting the rights of Jews in France and throughout the world, and attempting to strengthen the French Jewish community as a whole. Evidently, the balancing of French and Jewish identities was not something, and still remains, something that is not up to organizational decision or the thoughts of delegates detailed in correspondence and minutes. It was and still remains an individual decision, and though these decisions may have been fostered and encouraged by certain organizations detailed within this paper, the work relies on individual responses, which are often difficult to locate, to the post-Second World War climate in Europe for Jews in France to determine which side was more persuasive, and which identity was ultimately more prized.

Naturally, it is impossible to know the minds of every French Jew in the immediate decade following the Second World War and the attempted extermination of Europe's Jews. Once again, however, correspondence and other written records help provide an insight to determine what exactly made French Jews choose to stay in France or to make *aliyah* and move permanently to Israel. However, the observations made by different scholars based on these same

or very similar sources have led to divergent conclusions when it comes to France's Jewry and communal and individual responses to the ideology of Zionism and the very physical action of immigrating and making *aliyah*. Different scholars ultimately have varying ideas as to which side won out when it comes to French republicanism and Zionism in the decades following the Second World War. However, it becomes clear through research that there is not necessarily a winning side. Both identities, to this community, were strong, and it is impossible to determine which side to each individual eventually prevailed. While there is still a Jewish community in France, there is also a considerable portion of their population who made the choice to reestablish themselves as members of the Jewish community in Israel. Even at this time, more and more French Jews are making the latter decision when it comes to their identity. There is no winning side to this argument, and the decision of whether or not to make *aliyah* is ultimately a deeply personal one that cannot be forced into certain ideologies or winning camps.

In the face of the Second World War and the attempted extermination of European Jewry, France's Jewish population sought to form communities and organizations that would provide support and defense in the uncertain days of retribution and reconstruction. While many became members of these organizations or were represented by them, many also decided to leave France and make aliyah instead; make a permanent relocation to Palestine and eventually the newly minted state of Israel. This is not to say there was a dichotomy between the two, rather, there was a solidarity between the two groups. Those Jews who stayed in France and embraced republican ideology during the years immediately following the Second World War offered support and aid to their compatriots who chose to relocate to Palestine, through the non-governmental Jewish

organizations they founded or revitalized.

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