“En Avant Sépharades Montréalais!” North African Jews, Ashkenazim, and the Quiet Revolution 1956-1975

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April 2020

A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts.

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Abstract

This thesis proposes that including North African Jews in Canadian historiography encourages historians to rethink the role of multiculturalism for Jews in Canada and their relationship to the Quiet Revolution. I suggest that the government of Quebec did not alienate all Jews and attempted to accommodate them. I overturn basic inaccuracies about North African Jewish experience in Montreal and contend that their French language did not initially serve them and that their reception by Ashkenazi institutions was challenging rather than beneficial. Finally, I argue that North African Jews did not strive to create their own institutions, and that the formulation of a new Sépharade identity was a reflection of their racialization by Ashkenazim and the strategic repositioning against a bureaucratic definition of Judaism.

Cette mémoire propose que l'inclusion des Juif.ves Nord-Africain.es dans l'historiographie Canadienne encourage les historien.nes de réviser le rôle du multiculturalisme pour les Juif.ves au Canada et leur relation à la Révolution Tranquille. Je suggère que le gouvernement du Québec n'a pas perturbé tous les Juif.ves et a tenté de les accommodé. Je renverse des malentendus vis-à-vis l'expérience des Juif.ves Nord-Africain.es à Montréal et prétend que leur langue Française ne leur a pas assisté initialement et que leur réception par les institutions Ashkénazes était plus malaisé qu'avantageux. Finalement, je détermine que les Juif.ves Nord-Africain.es n'ont pas tenté de créer leurs propres institutions, et que la formulation d'une nouvelle identité Sépharade reflétait leur racialisation par les Ashkénazes et leur repositionnement stratégique contre une définition bureaucratique du Judaïsme.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge first the community about which this thesis has been written. North African Jews, officially Sephardim in Montreal, have made incredible strides to reach the positions they now occupy, but they still suffer a historical and institutional invisibility. My own trajectory in Montreal was not unlike many of the Moroccan Jews I describe in this thesis. I attended an anglophone and Ashkenazi elementary school, then a public French high school, and was not particularly aware that I had a heritage that was any different from other Jews in Montreal. Despite this detachment, when I met with individuals at the CSUQ I was warmly received and offered whatever resources were readily available. Their immediate support for me and my project is the authentic inheritance of what Rachel, a Moroccan Jew I interviewed, believed was the North African Jewish proclivity for warmth and amicability. This thesis would be incomplete both without the help I received from the CSUQ and the tradition of Sephardi community activism which these incredible individuals uphold. In particular, I must thank Toby Benlolo, Benjamin Bitton, Eric Choukroun, and Agnès Castiel. In addition to them, I would like to thank individuals whom I interviewed or spoke to and whose insights were crucial to understanding the experiences and circumstances of North African Jews in Montreal. These are Rachel, Phyllis Amber, "Sabra," and again, Eric Choukroun.

I must thank Yael Halevi-Wise, whose guidance was instrumental for both my entrance into the master's program and its completion. Throughout the last two years, she has given me the benefit of her wisdom and opened countless doors for me. Furthermore, it was the generous grants from the Jewish studies department which allowed me to remain totally committed to my research. Yael also encouraged my development personally and as an

academic by funding two Hebrew-language programs I attended in Israel over a period of three months. This was a life-changing experience, and I owe her a great debt of gratitude.

I would like to thank my supervisor Christopher Silver, who inspired me to think critically about a history I knew very little about just two years ago. Christopher's invaluable direction and support has influenced me and this thesis. It will hopefully influence my future work, as well. His patience and kindness with me have been precious experiences.

Thanks are due to Janice Rosen and Helène Vallée at the Canadian Jewish Archives and Jessica Zimmerman at the Jewish Public Library Archives. Without the priceless knowledge, skills, and determination they and people like them possess, this thesis, and most historical work, would simply be impossible.

Finally, I would like to thank Jeremy Brown, Angeles Cohen, Simon Bensimon, and Edwina Wong, whose personal advice, reassurance, and friendship have shaped me and this thesis.

Introduction

In January 1975, *Présence*, the official organ of l'Association Sépharade Francophone (ASF), reproduced a letter it had received from Jean Bienvenue, then the Minister of Immigration for the government of Quebec. It read:

> "It is with joy that I seize this occasion to reiterate to our Sephardi and Francophone friends how much we appreciate their presence on our soil.
> You bring to us not only your particular religious heritage, […] but also all the philosophical and esthetic originality accumulated over the centuries in your successive habitats: whether it be Spain, […] or Africa, in particular North Africa, simultaneously Arabic and French, from which you knew to absorb their respective fundamental riches.
> And I repeat to you also our confidence in the beneficial effect of your presence as convinced Francophones for the strengthening of ties between the Jewish community of Quebec and the rest of the Quebecois community."[1]

This was not the first time the ASF had included a letter from the government of Quebec in its periodical. These letters demonstrated the strong relationship the ASF, as a Francophone representative organization of Jews, enjoyed with the provincial government. This was a fact which could not be equally assumed of the Anglophone Jewish community organization, which had struggled with its relationship to the provincial government since the beginning of the Quiet Revolution.[2] For Anglophone Jews, the period of political, social, and economic reform known as the "Révolution Tranquille"[3] was characterized by frantic activity,[4] staunch negotiation, and anxiety.[5] In contrast, some Francophone Jews, many of them from North Africa and particularly Morocco, welcomed the policies aimed at public francization[6] and increased economic and

[1] Jean Bienvenue, "Letter from Jean Bienvenue to ASF," *Présence*, January 1975.
[2] Frank Bialystok, "Post-War Canadian Jewry," in *Canada's Jews: In Time, Space and Spirit*, ed. Ira Robinson (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2013), 112–13.
[3] Quiet Revolution in French.
[4] Phyllis Amber. Interviewed by Julian Binder. Personal Interview. Montreal, March 15th, 2018.
[5] Pierre Anctil attributes this rejection of Quebec nationalism to the memory of the Holocaust. See Pierre Anctil, *Histoire Des Juifs Du Québec* (Montréal: Les Éditions du Boréal, 2017), 181; Gerald Tulchinsky has also pointed towards legitimate concerns regarding antisemitism and for the respect of anglophone civil rights. See Gerald Tulchinksy, *Canada's Jews: A People's Journey* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 443–49.
[6] I have use the term "francization" instead of "frenchification" due to the official use of the former in Quebec governmental policy and for a lack of a widely-used corresponding term in English-language academic works.

educational opportunities for Francophones. As the government of Quebec continued its efforts at "modernizing" the province, it increasingly preferred to cast a legitimizing gaze on this minority within the total Jewish community.

The Ashkenazi community of Canada had its roots in waves of migration from Russia, Poland, and Romania in the early 20th century. Though Jews in Quebec had numbered less than 3,000 in 1891,[7] by 1954 the number in Montreal alone had risen to 92,000.[8] French-speaking Jews from North Africa had only begun arriving in Quebec in 1956 in trickles of a few hundred a year, though the stream began to grow steadily around 1964. In 1971, the Anglophone community's estimate for North African Jews was 12,000.[9] By that year, North Africans remained a Jewish minority, but a significant one.

Though North African Jews[10] have recently been the subject of a flurry of scholarly literature as it pertains to North Africa, relatively little scholarship has paid attention to those who settled in Canada, particularly Quebec. Even within the field of Canadian Jewish history, the tendency has been to include a chapter, a few pages, or even a paragraph which write North African Jews into a narrative which is not theirs. Accounts of North African communal development mostly center on improving a disharmonious intra-Jewish relationship, and begin in the mid- to late seventies, such as Gerald Tulchinsky's influential volume, *Canada's Jews*.[11] As such, the

[7] Pierre Anctil, *Trajectoires Juives Au Québec* (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2010), 75–76.
[8] "Canada: Jewish Population," *American Jewish Yearbook* 56 (1955): 298.
[9] Exact numbers of North African Jews in Canada remain difficult to ascertain. Conservative numbers place the North African Jewish population of Quebec at around 10,000. Antoine Burgard, "Les Sépharades Dans Les Études Démographiques," in *Les Sépharades Du Québec: Parcours d'Exils Nord-Africains*, ed. Yolande Cohen (Montréal: Del Busso Éditeurs, 2017), 44.
[10] I have chosen to refer to these Jews as "North Africans" because, though the official community refers to itself as Sephardi and the majority of them are of Moroccan descent, the early community leaders and members saw themselves primarily as united by their North African heritage. This commonly used register remained in use through the 1970s and is still preferred to "Sephardi" by some of the North African Jews I have interviewed. Furthermore, it reveals the way in which a North African register was a prominent marker of comfort and solidarity.
[11] Tulchinksy, *Canada's Jews: A People's Journey*, 449–53.

major themes of Canadian, and especial Quebec, Jewish history are not inclusive of a large segment of their respective Jewish populations. For example, prominent historians emphasize the role of Canadian multiculturalism on Jewish success in Canada.[12] They chart the adoption of a Canadian-Jewish identity unanchored in the immigrant experience or Yiddish-inflected past.[13] This amounts to an account of Canadian Jewry "coming into its own," or Canadianizing, so to speak. Finally, historians often stress the profound alienation caused by the Quiet Revolution.[14] However, these themes have yet to be tested against the inclusion of North African Jews in a broader Canadian Jewish narrative. On the other hand, the small, dedicated field of North African Jews in Canada is largely dominated by oral history collections and interpretations,[15] with a few exceptions.[16] The result is that nearly seventy years after North African Jews began to arrive in Canada, the historiography of Jewish Canada is out of date and incomplete.

While recent scholarship has aimed to demonstrate the trajectory of North African Jewish community development, this thesis argues that too much importance has been placed on the desire of these Jews to erect their own, separate community structures.[17] This emphasis on "cultural" structures has been reflected in the limited historiography as a narrative of the relatively easy

[12] Bialystok, "Post-War Canadian Jewry," 96; Yolande Cohen, "Sephardi Jews in Montreal," in *Canada's Jews: In Time, Space and Spirit*, ed. Ira Robinson (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2013), 173; Morton Weinfeld, Randall F. Schnoor, and Michelle Shames, *Like Everyone Else but Different: The Paradoxical Success of Canadian Jews* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2018), 3–4.
[13] Bialystok, "Post-War Canadian Jewry," 101.
[14] Morton Weinfeld, "Jewish Life in Montreal," in *Canada's Jews: In Time, Space and Spirit*, ed. Ira Robinson (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2013), 159.
[15] The majority of oral histories which have been treated and published were conducted either by Marie Berdugo or under the supervision of Yolande Cohen.
[16] A few important works among others are: Christine Chevalier-Caron and Yolande Cohen, "La Langue Française Chez Les Sépharades Du Québec : Une Stratégie de Préservation Culturelle et d'intégration Sociale (1960–1980)," *Revue d'histoire de l'éducation* 31, no. 1 (n.d.): 93–112; Martin Messika, "Politiques de l'Accueil: États et Associations Face à La Migration Des Juifs d'Afrique Du Nord En France et Au Canada Des Années 1950 à La Fin Des Années 1970" (Université Pari I Panthéon-Sorbonne & Université du Québec à Montréal, 2016); Yolande Cohen and Linda Guerry, "Mariages et Parcours Migratoires : Juifs Nés Au Maroc et Mariés à La Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue de Montréal (1969—1981)," *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 40, no. 3 (2011): 293–317.
[17] Cohen, "Sephardi Jews in Montreal," 173; Anctil, *Histoire Des Juifs Du Québec*, 339.

integration of North African Jews in Montreal[18], and has obscured their significant relationship to the Quebec governments of the Quiet Revolution. Additionally, the history of intra-Jewish relations in Quebec has long fixated on how North African Jews unambiguously benefitted from Anglophone Jewish institutions like the Jewish Immigrant Aid Service (JIAS) and the Jewish Vocational Service (JVS). Yolande Cohen has stated without nuance that an "exceedingly well organized" Jewish community was responsible for their successful integration.[19] Randal Schnoor has written that North African Jews held an advantage by speaking French.[20] Pierre Anctil has gone so far as to write that "as native French speakers, most of them would not know the adaptational difficulties which Yiddish-speaking immigrants from Russia had encountered during their immigration."[21] Outside of the question of Protestant schools,[22] scholarship on this aspect of Jewish experience in Quebec has been almost mute. Correspondingly, the trajectories of North African Jews within Ashkenazi institutions have been ignored in favor of a narrative of easy integration and a desire for separation.

This study suggests that properly including North Africans into Canadian Jewish history encourages historians to rethink the singular role played by multiculturalism in the Canadian Jewish "success story" and recognize that the policies of the Quebec governments after 1959 did not alienate all Montreal Jews. In fact, a concerted effort was made to include Jews in an evolving Québécois identity, and the changes of the Quiet Revolution benefitted many—especially French-speaking—Jews. Furthermore, the inclusion of North Africans into Montreal's institutional Jewish history reveals that in fact these Jews were not advantaged by their French language in Jewish

[18] Randall Schnoor, "The Jews of Canada: A Demographic Profile," in *Canada's Jews: In Time, Space and Spirit*, ed. Ira Robinson (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2013), 122.
[19] Cohen, "Sephardi Jews in Montreal," 171.
[20] Schnoor, "The Jews of Canada: A Demographic Profile," 122.
[21] Anctil, *Histoire Des Juifs Du Québec*, 330. Translation mine.
[22] Anne Read, "The Precarious History of Jewish Education in Quebec," *Religion and Education* 45, no. 1 (2018): 34.

organizations or Montreal more generally, nor did they strictly seek their own parallel institutions. This assumption has concealed that North African Jews experienced isolation and tangible difficulty navigating the landscape of Jewish social services in Montreal, and that community activists exerted massive efforts to become equal partners in a shared Montreal Jewish community. It also proposes that North African community activists' discourse on Israel constitutes a new dimension generally absent in Canadian Jewish historiography.

Community activism aimed at solving social problems, rather than a desire to maintain cultural uniqueness, was also instrumental in the formulation of a new Sépharade[23] identity. This thesis argues that this new identity was partially formulated to counter an outdated bureaucratic category of Judaism which reflected a homogenous Ashkenazi and Yiddish-speaking or anglophone Jewish community. Additionally, the new Sépharade identity countered racialized stereotypes which plagued Ashkenazim's perceptions and expectations of North African Jews and played a significant role in intra-Jewish relations and conflict. Finally, North African community activism and problematic integration played a significant role in influencing official responses of the established Anglophone Jewish community to the events of the Quiet Revolution.

[23] Sephardi in French.

Sources and Methodology

In the early 1960s the Ashkenazi communal structures began to take note that more and more French-speaking Jews were attempting to make use of their services and that increasingly this presented a problem for both. By the mid-1960s the problems represented by this new minority had become hard to ignore. Hospitals, youth houses, classes, nursing homes, work placement programs, and the rest of the twenty or so agencies which fell under the Allied Jewish Community Services' (AJCS) umbrella were realizing that their challenging interactions with these French-speaking Jews were becoming less exceptional. Individual agencies launched isolated initiatives to try to understand the place of these particular immigrants in Montreal Jewish society. Young graduate students, some Jewish, others not, began choosing North African Jews as the focus of their research.

For example, to discover to what extent these services were being used by French-speaking Jews, the Education Committee of the Women's Federation of AJCS collected responses to surveys sent to all of AJCS's twenty or so social service agencies in 1966. The result was a report which details many of the difficulties faced, from an institutional perspective, by North African Jews in Montreal in the 1950s and 1960s. Another example is the master's theses written by Jewish students which, using racialized categories, rationalized the difficulties of these Jews in Ashkenazi institutions.[24] By pointing to cultural incompatibilities and prejudicial racial traits, structural problems affecting North African Jews were disregarded. The significance of such documents cannot be overstated; the Jewish community sometimes commissioned and often utilized master's

[24] Two examples among others are: Phyllis Amber and Irene Lipper, *Towards an Understanding of Moroccan Jewish Family Life: Including the Perceptions of Moroccan Immigrants to Montreal* (Montreal: McGill University School of Social Work, 1968); Marvin Julian Godfrey, "Achievement & Adjustment of Jewish Moroccan Students" (McGill University, 1970).

theses ("mémoires") to contextualize and direct community policy,[25] as well as to present detailed positions to the government.[26] Furthermore, young Jews graduating from the McGill School of Social Work would become interns at Jewish community organizations with a disproportionate representation of North Africans, such as Neighbourhood House, where their theoretical and racialized conception of these Jews would become community policy in action.[27]

These sources form part of the background work utilized here to contextualize the experiences of North African Jews in the late 1950s, the 1960s, and the early 1970s. Overall, I make use of a substantial selection of documents written and distributed within Ashkenazi Jewish community structures. These documents were often reports like the one mentioned above with the intention of assessing and offering solutions for the difficulties faced by North African or French-speaking Jews. Correspondence between Ashkenazi officials or with North African community activists make up significant portion of the primary sources used, as well. Finally, periodicals produced by Anglophone and Francophone Jewish institutions are included, particularly the previously untreated publication of the ASF since 1969, *Présence*.

Before exploring the early interactions of Ashkenazi and North African Jews, an important detail must be recognized. Though the use of almost exclusively Ashkenazi community source documents to detail the experience of North African Jews is highly problematic, there is an advantage to this handicap. The relative invisibility of North African Jews in the community meant that they were rarely taken into account throughout the early years of their immigration. This, in

[25] *Section Française du Congrès Juif Canadien: Programme*, undated (197?), File 11, Series DB 05 Meyer Levy, Community Relations 1969-1982, Box 8, CJC Quebec Region Fonds, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives.
[26] An example is the "*mémoire*" presented in French to the Quebec government's Gendron Commission. Canadian Jewish Congress, Quebec Region, *Memoire soumis par le Congrès Juif Canadien Région du Québec à la Commission d'enquête sur la situation de la langue française ainsi que sur les droits linguistiques au Québec.* Montreal: CJC, August 1969. File 1, Series Db 01 Staff Records, Box 16, CJC Collection Fonds, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives.
[27] Phyllis Amber. Interviewed by Julian Binder. Personal Interview. Montreal, March 15th, 2018.

fact, increases the significance of the moments in which they *do* appear in community documents. The absence of North African Jews in Anglophone institutions highlights formal and informal segregation at work in the context of Quebec. Furthermore, documents collected over the years by Montreal's official Sephardi community remain, as of yet, difficult to access. Unwilling to donate their archive to the Ashkenazi community's better-funded and locally accessible Jewish Public Library Archive, the Sephardi community instead opts to send their archive to a private location where they pay out of pocket.[28] Though one official at the Jewish Public Library laments the loss of a potential government grant caused by the Sephardi community's refusal to donate their archive, this circumstance is emblematic of the deeply embedded distrust which sprouts from the history of intra-Jewish conflict in Montreal.[29] This lasting tension stems from the particular experiences of Jews in Montreal mediated through a linguistically divisive and often racialized framework. North African Jews thus constitute a tangible absence in this story, for the time being. An understanding of the early interactions which describe where and how North African Jews fit into the schema of Jewish social services helps to trace the outlines of these absences and reveals the contentious nature of this framework.

For most of the 20th century, the experience of communal life in Montreal was based on ethnic-religious community structures, which themselves were fashioned as neatly as possible along ethnic, linguistic, and confessional lines. Rather than reflecting the desire of North African Jews to have their own institutions, this split actually mirrored the greater ethnic-linguistic split within Quebec and the rest of Canada. This constitutes a major misconception in the historiography of Jewish Montreal in particular as concluded by Pierre Anctil, who writes that when Maghrebi Jews begin to arrive in Montreal, "there is no longer one, but several Jewish communities on the

[28] Toby Benlolo. Interviewed by Roy Shukrun. Personal Interview. Montreal, October 28th, 2019.
[29] Anonymous JPL Official. Interviewed by Roy Shukrun. Personal Interview. Montreal, November 25th, 2019.

territory of Montreal and each in its own manner evolves in a space of relative autonomy."[30] However the fact that North African Jews had legally and economically no choice but to navigate Ashkenazi institutions means that no such autonomous evolution was fundamentally possible. North African Jews were curious outliers with a foot in both worlds and neither, and they defied the social, political, and economic arrangement of 1950s and 1960s Quebec even more than did their Ashkenazi coreligionists.[31] Because social services and ethnic-religious institutions were inescapably entwined in this period, an assessment of North African Jews' presence—or absence—in contemporary community documents is pertinent as much to the history of Canadian Jews as it is to the history of Quebec and Canada in general.

The experiences of North African Jews within Ashkenazi institutions reveal that the assumptions of Ashkenazi and Sephardi historiography in Canada require revision. The examination of community sources and French-language Jewish periodicals lays out a more complicated trajectory leading to the formation of Sephardi institutions. Rather than hoping to separate themselves through the creation of autonomous institutions, North African Jewish community activists negotiated with Ashkenazi leaders to adapt to their needs and used Anglophone institutions like Neighbourhood House to gain a voice within the established community. Similarly, though historians have stressed a growing "divergence" of the Sephardi community from Ashkenazim culminating in the creation of the CSQ in 1976,[32] little attention has

[30] Anctil, *Histoire Des Juifs Du Québec*, 336.
[31] Pierre Anctil has rightly argued that the arrival of Jews from Eastern Europe challenged Quebec's Anglo-Protestant and Franco-Catholic dualistic social model. The present study argues that the arrival of North African French-speaking Jews at a propitious moment in Quebec's history challenged the cemented models both of Quebec society in general and the Ashkenazi Jewish community in a corresponding way due to the anglicization of the previously settled Jews. See Anctil, Pierre. "Ni Catholiques, Ni Protestants : Les Juifs de Montréal." *Revue Française d'Histoire d'Outre-Mer* 77, no. 289 (1990): 179–87.
[32] Cohen, "Sephardi Jews in Montreal," 174.

been given to the fact that in 1977 the organized Sephardi community merged with the AJCS.[33] This thesis will explain this discrepancy in the literature by detailing how North African Jews navigated Ashkenazi institutions, and how their community activism eventually led to the merger.

The use of community documents also exposes a new way of understanding the adoption of a Quebec-specific Sépharade identity. These documents demonstrate how a Sephardi identity came to be formulated not simply as a means of "self-preservation".[34] Rather, this category was utilized in direct response to the necessities imposed by the anglicized framework of Jewish community services and the atmosphere of a francizing Quebec in the throes of a "Quiet," but no less radical, shift of power. Both Anglophone and Francophone Jews in Montreal would need to negotiate their respective identities in response to the anomaly represented by North Africans and the political shift of linguistic privilege from English to French. The tension and struggles apparent in the relationship between North Africans and mostly anglicized European Jews were a result of the rigid, if often informal, boundaries imposed by linguistic and sometimes racialized segregation. As North African Jews continued to migrate to Montreal through the 1950s, 60s and 70s, Quebec governments sought to francize, modernize, and incorporate a vast Jewish community structure into new provincial frameworks. In this context North African Jewish community activists would strategically reformulate themselves as Sépharades both to improve their position vis-à-vis the Ashkenazi community and to show solidarity to other North African and Sephardi communities abroad.

These sources also represent a significant contribution to the scholarship of North African Jews. Comparable studies directed outside of North America have been particularly instrumental

[33] AJCS. Executive Committee. *Report of Comité Conjoint AJCS-CSQ*, August 24th, 1977. File 00472, Box 42, Federation CJA Fonds 1001, Jewish Public Library of Montreal.
[34] Chevalier-Caron and Cohen, "La Langue Française Chez Les Sépharades Du Québec : Une Stratégie de Préservation Culturelle et d'intégration Sociale (1960–1980)."

in bringing into focus the complexities of imperial contexts and the formation of both national and diasporic identities which were previously taken for granted. Daniel Schroeter has pointed to the ways in which local identities became "more narrowly defined" according to French colonial interests in the Maghreb in the 19th and 20th centuries.[35] The story of how some North African Jews in Montreal adopted a French-centered Sépharade identity provides insight into the consequences of the processes he describes. Joshua Schreier has demonstrated how the internal context of colonies and especially the distinctive position of Jews could be just as significant as developments in the metropole for understanding colonial processes.[36] Little such attention has been given to developments internal to Montreal, though North African Jewish community activism clarifies the extended and complicated legacies of French colonialism. The few studies of MENA diasporas in the Americas have been particularly effective in unsettling narratives of the fundamental borders of Sephardi and Ashkenazi identity. In particular, Adriana Brodsky's book on Jews in Argentina both stresses the personal nature of these categories while drawing the attention to the importance of institutional and community factors in shaping intra-Jewish relationships and classifications.[37] In that vein, this thesis will argue that the relatively recent migrations of divergent Jewish communities to the distinctive colonial context of the Americas provides an as of yet relatively untapped resource for understanding migration and identity across the rigid borders of the nation-state and empire.

The standard account of North African Jewish migration in the second half of the 20th century has generally read these emigrations through a teleological lens and privileged the

[35] Daniel J. Schroeter, "The Shifting Boundaries of Moroccan Jewish Identities," *Jewish Social Studies* 15, no. 1 (2016): 158–59.
[36] Joshua Schreier, *Arabs of the Jewish Faith: The Civilizing Mission in Colonial Algeria* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press, 2010).
[37] Adriana M Brodsky, *Sephardi, Jewish, Argentine: Community and National Identity, 1880-1960* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2016).

influence of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.[38] New scholarship has since challenged this account by stressing a complex history of coexistence[39] and suggesting answers which exceed the boundaries of the nation-state.[40] Increasingly, scholars have paid attention to the influence of mesostructures in transnational migration, which, as Aviad Moreno concisely writes, "are the frameworks within which individuals understand and grapple with the constraints of their broader social environment, and through which those environments are jointly reproduced."[41] Such intermediary examinations have yielded innovative results in the historical research of Jews and other migrants in general. For North African Jews in Montreal, these mesostructures included the Jewish social services of Montreal, the confesionally divided school system, the shift of linguistic, economic, social, and political power known as the Quiet Revolution, and the bureaucratic process of immigration.

It must be noted that the French context of Quebec was decidedly not the context of France or colonial North Africa. This dissimilarity, however, is what makes studying Jews in Canada particularly fruitful because of what it reveals about the extent of what I call transnational agency. Already by the 19th century, new institutional and personal networks would arise and drastically alter the mobility and scope of reference of certain groups, especially in a Mediterranean basin

[38] For example: Norman A. Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands in Modern Times* (Philadelphia, New York: The Jewish Publication Society, 1991); André N. Chouraqui, *Between East and West: A History of the Jews of North Africa* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1968); Yigal Bin-Nun, "La Négociation de l'évacuation En Masse Des Juifs Du Maroc," in *La Fin Du Judaïsme En Terres d'Islam*, ed. Shmuel Trigano (Paris: Denoël Médiations, 2009), 303–58.

[39] See Mohammed Kenbib, *Juifs et Musulmans Au Maroc: 1859-1948.* (Rabat: Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines, 1994); Jessica M. Marglin, *Across Legal Lines: Jews and Muslims in Modern Morocco* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2016); Emily Benichou Gottreich and Daniel J. Schroeter, eds., *Jewish Culture and Society in North Africa*, *Jewish Culture and Society in North Africa* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2011).

[40] For example: Moshe. Shokeid, *Three Jewish Journeys through an Anthropologist's Lens: From Morocco to the Negev, Zion to the Big Apple, the Closet to the Bimah* (Brighton: Academic Studies Press, 2009).

[41] Aviad Moreno, "Beyond the Nation-State: A Network Analysis of Jewish Emigration From Norther Morocco to Israel," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 2020, 15.

under rising imperial influences.[42] The mobility of Jews within colonial frameworks has been instrumental in understanding the possibilities and contradictions inherent in colonial rule. I argue here that, for North African Jews, this shifting scope of reference could mean seeing Quebec as a province of a larger Francophone world—an informal or invisible French realm—which was open to them. It could also lead them to identify with other Sépharades as new North African diasporic communities settled across the world.

Rather than "possessing" it, transnational agency constituted an aspect of North African Jewish encounters with colonialism, international Jewish philanthropy, and the intersection of new and old national contexts. These encounters determined which opportunities for mobility were available to North African Jews. Rather than confirming colonial projects, it could mean the application of colonial processes outside of their intended contexts. If North African Jews had been expected to identify with French culture, this much had been achieved. But what it meant for these Jews to identify with French culture is still up for debate. As we will see, North African Jews were distinctly aware that Quebec was not France, nor French North Africa, and learned to negotiate with Montreal's separate trajectory. For example, while formal segregation was a salient aspect of the experience of many Jews, Muslims, and settlers in North Africa, the sometimes informal, but equally stringent, segregation of Quebec would mark these new immigrants in unprecedented ways. Crucially, the presence of a significant and anglicized Jewish community would be a strong determinant in the opportunities available to these "New Canadians".

[42] See Patricia M. E. Lorcin and Todd Shepard, *French Mediterraneans: Transnational and Imperial Histories* (Lincoln, London: University of Nebraska Press, 2016); Marglin, *Across Legal Lines: Jews and Muslims in Modern Morocco*.

Background

When Adolphe Teboul, the first North African Jew in Montreal, arrived from Morocco in 1956, he was nominally received by a community just shy of 100,000 Jews. The majority of them were immigrants who arrived from Russia, Poland, and Romania, but a small number of French-speaking Jews had also arrived from Belgium, France, and Iraq.[43] Teboul, like many before and after him, arrived with the help of the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society (JIAS), which lobbied the government to except him from Canada's immigration regulations, helped prepare his documentation, met him at the airport, and provided him with support as he settled in Montreal. In the following years, hundreds, and then thousands, of Jews from North Africa would immigrate to Canada, mostly to Montreal, but also to Toronto. In Montreal, they would settle in more or less the same neighborhoods, would attend the same Protestant schools, and were under the jurisdiction of the same social services as Ashkenazi Jews.[44] That being said, their experience greatly diverged from that of their English- and Yiddish-speaking neighbors.

Ashkenazi leaders were active in discourses on human rights and identity, contributing to the cementing of their rights as Canadian citizens. Significantly, however, the source of their rights as a religious group had its origins in the guarantee of Catholic religious freedom in 1832.[45] Jewish community leaders recognized this, to a certain extent. At the Manitoba Mosaic Congress in October 1970, Joseph Kage, Executive Director of JIAS, spoke on "The French Fact and Cultural Pluralism in Canada". There he asserted that it was "primarily because of French Canada's quest for identity" that immigrant groups in Canada had been accorded "a greater degree of acceptance

[43] Joseph Kage. Interviewed by CBC. Radio Interview. Montreal, May 26th, 1969. Transcript in: File 9, Series QA, Box 1, JIAS Canada Collection Fonds, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives.
[44] A study of the addresses listed for North African Jews across multiple archival and personal sources including petitions, correspondences, and personal interviews indicate that, at least in the first decade of their residence, these Jews largely resided in the same neighborhoods as Ashkenazim, mostly in Cote-St-Luc and Outremont.
[45] David Fraser, *"Honorary Protestants": The Jewish School Question in Montreal, 1867-1997* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 44.

and recognition". He also admitted that immigrants had been anglicized "partly because of the specifics of the school systems, divided along denominational lines".[46] The British North America Act of 1867 formally gave the provincial governments jurisdiction over schools, a fact which led to the recognition of two educational authorities in Quebec: English-Protestant and French-Catholic. As David Fraser has demonstrated, this became a distinctive feature of conflict not only in Quebec, but Ontario, as well.[47] Against the grain, Jews fought to insert themselves into the dominant Anglophone narrative of Canada as a "Christian society and an outpost of British values in North America."[48] At the same time, English-Protestant supremacy was often challenged, and Protestant-Catholic conflicts were the center of the negotiations for confederation. Within this internal fight for recognition and hegemony, Jews in Quebec became identified with the Protestant minority. Their anglicization in Quebec also served to maintain a strong, centralized Jewish community across Canada.[49]

From the end of the 19th century and over the first half of the 20th, Jews in Montreal would establish some twenty agencies to provide social services on par with and often exceeding any organized by other confessional groups. These services, under the umbrella of the AJCS, included a hospital, a library, a nursing home, legal advice, immigration support, loans, daycares, community centers, elderly clubs, and other services.[50] By the 1950s the services offered by these institutions were offered almost exclusively in English. In many ways, North African Jews benefitted from the impressive groundwork laid by Ashkenazim before their arrival; in other ways

[46] Joseph Kage, *The French Fact and Cultural Pluralism in Canada*. File 4, Series QA, Box 1, JIAS Canada Collection Fonds, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives.
[47] Fraser, *"Honorary Protestants": The Jewish School Question in Montreal, 1867-1997*, 11–12.
[48] Harold Troper, *The Defining Decade: Identity, Politics, and the Canadian Jewish Community in the 1960s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 8.
[49] Harold M. Waller, "Power in the Jewish Community," in *The Canadian Jewish Mosaic* (Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, 1981), 153.
[50] AJCS was formerly the Federation of Jewish Community Services.

that I will demonstrate, the legacy of Canada's colonial negotiations would create obstacles for these Jews which highlighted the country's inherent dichotomies.

The inequalities perpetuated by this legacy would lead, after the death of Maurice Duplessis in 1959, to the election of Jean Lesage as premier of Quebec. The confessional split of Quebec had led to the creation of parallel networks of social services of which the Jewish network was but one. Additionally, the majority population of French-speakers had long been socially and financially disadvantaged by an informal Anglophone supremacy. For Lesage's Liberals, elected on a platform of "catching up," the social and legal infrastructure of Quebec drastically needed revamping, centralization, and "modernization." This process of governmental centralization, legal and structural overhaul, and ideological reconfiguration beginning in the 1960s became known as the "Quiet Revolution." For Anglophone Jewish leaders, long used to communication with the federal government in English, this period was one of both resistance and major adjustment. As the Quebec government chartered commissions to inform the rapid overhaul of the province, the established Jewish organs, represented by Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC),[51] struggled to be a part of the conversation and direct policy by submitting recommendations on the questions of the French language, schooling, and the future of social services. Throughout the Quiet Revolution, Jews retained their distinctive status as a "founding" religion of Canada and extracted exceptions from the provincial government.[52] They could not, however, resist the

[51] Canadian Jewish Congress was an organization founded in 1919 to represent Jewish interests to the Canadian government in lobbying for labour rights and support for a national home for Jews in Palestine. CJC worked closely with the agencies of AJCS and the Combined Jewish Appeal. Though it did not directly provide services, it played a major role in representing and directing Jewish organizations. For lobbying, see Tulchinksy, *Canada's Jews: A People's Journey*, 184–87; For CJC's place within the Jewish community structure, see Waller, "Power in the Jewish Community," 153–57.

[52] For example, in 1974 Jews were able to operate a dedicated social service center in Montreal alongside the centralized French and English ones. No other ethnic or religious group received this concession. Andrew Sancton, *Governing the Island of Montreal: Language Differences and Metropolitan Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 194.

political weight of the majority of Quebec's population. By the end of the 1970s, the landscape of social services and public life in Quebec had drastically changed.

Throughout these years of radical transformation, North African Jews continued to arrive to Quebec in greater numbers. Due to Quebec's ethnic-linguistic segregation, French-speaking Jews experienced isolation and social and economic difficulties despite the large Jewish community they were ostensibly joining. Primarily due to linguistic difference—English versus French—but also due to a widespread racialization of North African Jews, few personal interactions between the two groups materialized. An indicator of this fact was the study run by Jean-Claude Lasry and Evelyn Bloomfield-Schachter in 1975 which analyzed the rates of intermarriage of the Montreal Jewish community. The study found that, between 1962 and 1972, fifty percent of North African Jews (thirty-eight percent of men and twelve percent of women) had married individuals not "born" Jewish, though many converted. In particular, North African Jewish men married more French-Canadian women than any other group by far, including Ashkenazim.[53] This suggests, in tandem with the linguistic barrier, that fewer social contexts were available for North Africans to meet Ashkenazim than members of other groups, especially French-Canadians. Instead, the interactions between North African Jews and Ashkenazim were chiefly defined by a relationship with JIAS and the Jewish social service network of Montreal.

The earliest inklings of internal community development began with social gatherings organized by Ralph Lallouz, Pinhas Ibghy, and Emile Perez.[54] These same individuals, along with Joseph Benilous, Jacques Bohbot, and André Amiel, among others, would go on to form the first official initiative to address the problems of North African Jews in Montreal: the Groupement Juif

[53] Jean-Claude Lasry and Evelyn Bloomfield-Schachter, "Jewish Intermarriage in Montreal, 1962-1972," *Jewish Social Studies* 37, no. 3 (1975): 272–73.
[54] Rachel. Interviewed by Roy Shukrun. Personal Interview. Montreal, November 6th, 2019.

Nord-Africain de Montréal (GJNA).[55] The GJNA mainly interacted with JIAS, lodging petitions and complaints, and also continuing to organize cultural and religious events for North African Jews.

The major complaints of these Jews, as demonstrated by a manifesto submitted by the GJNA to JIAS in 1963, were: the lack of accessibility of Jewish education, the lack of a "North African Sephardi" synagogue around which to organize the community, and the disregard of their Ashkenazi coreligionists which they felt was at the heart of their difficulty with integrating.[56] In 1966, a new group was formed called l'Association Sépharade Francophone (ASF). The ASF would continue to advocate for the specific needs of North African Jews while working with rather than against Ashkenazi Jews. Among the lauded accomplishments of the ASF in Montreal were: the founding of a French-language Jewish school, the first in North America, called École Maïmonide; the recognition of a community center for Sephardi Jews, the Centre Communautaire Juif (CCJ); and the institution of the Féstival Séfarad, a yearly event exhibiting the distinctive treasures of Sephardi culture.

The official Sephardi community also occupied a distinctive position in the context of the Quiet Revolution as demonstrated by Jean Bienvenue's letter. First and most evidently, the fact that these Jews spoke French, rather than English, reflected well on the process of internal francization over which the Quebec government had been presiding for a decade.[57] Quebec had long been subject to an effective, if sometimes informal, segregation of its English- and French-speaking populations. In Montreal, English-speakers, most of whom were Protestants, but a

[55] Pinhas Ibghy to GJNA Executive, February 20th, 1964, File 12, Series QF J. Kage Records Subject Files, Box 16, JIAS Canada Collection Fonds, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives.
[56] Letter, Groupement Juif Nord-Africain de Montréal to Canadian Jewish Congress, December 1st, 1963, File 12, Series QF J. Kage Records Subject Files, Box 16, JIAS Canada Collection Fonds, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives.
[57] Sancton, *Governing the Island of Montreal: Language Differences and Metropolitan Politics*, 191.

significant number of whom were Anglophone Jews, held an economic and social advantage over French-speakers. The majority of native French-speakers were Catholic French-Canadians, soon to refer to themselves as Québécois. Studies of Quebec society in the 1950s already demonstrated that deep economic and social divisions which privileged English-speakers existed between the linguistic groups.[58]

The conservative Duplessis government of 1944-1959 opposed new labor codes and federal initiatives for social programs, stigmatized so-called communists and labor organizers in favor of "cozy relations with foreign investors", and refused to take steps which might have raised the appalling number of Francophones completing high school—thirteen percent.[59] In short, Duplessis had done little to correct structural inequalities, mostly cementing the status quo for French Canadians and rejecting "modernization". Though Anglophone Jews, both privileged and discriminated against by their association with English-Protestant supremacy, had little love for Duplessis, they resisted and were slow to adapt to the process of francization that the succeeding governments ensued.[60] By contrast, many North African Jews, due to colonization in Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, had attended French Jewish schools like the Alliance Israelite Universelle (AIU)[61] or French public schools operated by the colonial government.[62] As has been widely documented through oral history and archival sources,[63] the choice to immigrate to Quebec for

[58] Peter Gossage and J.I. Little, *An Illustrated History of Quebec: Tradition and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 225.
[59] Ibid., 206–31.
[60] Troper, *The Defining Decade: Identity, Politics, and the Canadian Jewish Community in the 1960s*, 39–40.
[61] Michael M. Laskier, *The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Jewish Communities of Morocco, 1862-1962* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1984), 333.
[62] Sophie B. Roberts, *Citizenship and Antisemitism in French Colonial Algeria, 1870–1962* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 42.
[63] Comments from several Jewish organizations reference North African Jews expressing the use of French as a motivation for choosing Quebec: Women's Federation of AJCS. Education Committee. *French-Speaking Jewish Immigrants and Their Use of Jewish Social Agencies and Women's Service Organizations*. Montreal: Women's Federation AJCS, March 1966. File 02882, Container 153, Federation CJA Fonds 1001, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal, 4-6, 13; JVS. Alfred Feintuch. *Annual Report for 1964*. January 15th, 1965. File: Fact Booklets & Reports, 1963-1966, Box 32, AJCS/FJCS Unprocessed, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal, 3;

these Jews had been significantly influenced by the promising French character of the province. There were other reasons, as well. For the Quebec government, the fact that they were native French speakers and Jews thus presented an opportunity to demonstrate its support for a francized Jewish community. In return, it gained enthusiastic Francophone supporters who, the government hoped, could convince their coreligionists to accept the "French Fact"[64] and serve as a model for other anglicized minorities.

Secondly, Bienvenue's opportune use of the phrase "*notre sol*", "our soil" or "our land", in conjunction with his position as Minister of Immigration reveals a connection between evolving policies of immigration in Quebec which favored French-speaking immigrants and the continuing formulation and assertion of the rights of a Québécois nation. Quebec had only created its own Ministry of Immigration in December of 1968, though three years earlier Gabriel Loubier of the Union Nationale had proposed it, arguing that it would impede the "federal government [from altering] the cultural make-up of Quebec". Jean-Jacques Bertrand, Union Nationale Premier from 1968-1970, had argued that it was the duty of the government to "encourage those who wish to become members of the national community."[65] Successive governments of Quebec used immigration as a tool for maintaining what they saw as the distinctive character of the province, derived from its French language. Correspondingly, control over immigrants was an affirmation

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Rachel. Interviewed by Roy Shukrun. Personal Interview. Montreal, November 6th, 2019. A Jewish Moroccan woman, "Hassiba," also expressed the influence of Montreal's French character as motivation. See Christine Chevalier-Caron, "De l'Alliance Israélite Universelle à l'école Maïmonide," in *Les Sépharades Du Québec: Parcours d'Exils Nord-Africains*, ed. Yolande Cohen (Montréal: Del Busso Éditeurs, 2017), 100.

[64] Quebec's struggle for recognition and equality within Canada was referred to by many as the "French Fact," or the "*Fait Français*". In 1969, the Anglophone Jewish community began to formulate a plan to adapt to the "French Fact" by forming a committee called the "Committee on the French Fact," or the "*Comité sur le Fait Français*." Historians have also sometimes adopted the used of this term. See Harold M. Waller and Morton Weinfeld, "The Jews of Quebec and 'Le Fait Français,'" in *The Canadian Jewish Mosaic*, ed. Morton Weinfeld, William Shaffir, and Irwin Cotler (Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, 1981), 415–39.

[65] Martin Paquet, *Towards a Quebec Ministry of Immigration, 1945-1968* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1997), 13–14.

of Québécois national sovereignty on "our soil". It was unclear to what extent North African Jews could *be* Québécois, but provincial officials such as Bienvenue and some North African community activists would come to believe they had a role to play in this process.

Finally, the letter highlighted an aspect of Quebec's struggle for social and, eventually, political independence from Ottawa which tends to go unmentioned. The fact that Quebec society shifted from a social order which privileged English-speakers to one which privileged French-speakers affected North African Jews and Ashkenazim differently. Not by accident, scholars have avoided the question of how different Jewish communities fit into this shift of fortunes in Canada. Instead, they have time and again focused on how the events of the Quiet revolution alienated Anglophone Jews. Little attention has been given to the complex negotiation of the Quiet Revolution between succeeding governments and different Jewish groups seeking to position themselves strategically. Debates about what it meant to be Canadian or Québécois and policies which aimed to define identities as ethnicities, nationalities, and citizenships were abundant in the 1950s and 1960s, and Jews, both Francophone and Anglophone, were among the most invested parties.

Nominally caught between the English-Protestant and French-Catholic "founding nations" where they occupied a simultaneously privileged and disadvantaged position, Ashkenazim in Montreal argued that, as Jews, they, too constituted a Canadian founding religion.[66] In practice, Ashkenazi Jews became increasingly affiliated with the English-speaking minority of Quebec by virtue of the 1903 law which classified Jews as Protestants for the purposes of education. In 1943 public education in Quebec became obligatory, a fact which quickened their anglicization.[67] The majority of Ashkenazi Jews spoke Yiddish as their first language, however the community had, by

[66] Troper, *The Defining Decade: Identity, Politics, and the Canadian Jewish Community in the 1960s*, 71.
[67] Read, "The Precarious History of Jewish Education in Quebec," 26.

mid-century, largely anglicized and developed English institutions to engage with the federal government and provide English social services internally. As one official in 1966 noted succinctly, "the Jewish community is identified, for the most part, with the financial, social and political interests of the English-speaking Protestant minority."[68] As the government of Quebec advanced its program of modernization and francization, and consequently rearranged the balance of linguistic privilege, some North African Jews would begin to associate with it. North Africans progressively acquired more opportunities to voice themselves through both Ashkenazi institutions and the government's new policies. As this happened, the tense relationship between the Jewish groups, previously subdued, began to bubble above the surface.

[68] Women's Federation of AJCS. Education Committee. *French-Speaking Jewish Immigrants and Their Use of Jewish Social Agencies and Women's Service Organizations*. Montreal: Women's Federation AJCS, March 1966. File 02882, Container 153, Federation CJA Fonds 1001, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal, 4.

Bureaucratic Judaism and North African Jewish Immigration to Quebec

In the second half of the twentieth century, the autochthonous Jewish populations of the northwestern Maghreb, Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, would almost completely emigrate.[69] In Algeria, where most Jews had been made French citizens by the Crémieux decree of 1870, the majority left for France between 1961 and 1962, and a significant minority, less than ten percent, to Israel, in the midst of violent decolonization.[70] Few came to Montreal. JIAS recorded fifty-seven Jews from Algeria arriving in Montreal between 1957 and 1965. An unknown, though certainly small, number of Algerian Jews also arrived without JIAS' assistance.[71] For Tunisian Jews emigrating after 1948, France and Israel were also the primary choices,[72] though 222 arrived in Montreal through JIAS with, again, an unverified number arriving outside that institution.[73] Morocco, which had previously been home to the largest Jewish population in the MENA regions, saw a trend of emigration already before 1948.[74] Through the establishment of the State of Israel and the mounting independence of Morocco, most would immigrate to Israel, France, Canada, and the United States.[75] Though Israel and France would receive most Moroccan Jews, at least in the first leg of their journey, a significant number would choose Montreal, and to a lesser extent,

[69] Approximately 500,000 Jews lived in these countries before 1948. "Jewish Population," *American Jewish Yearbook* 56 (1955).
[70] According to numbers cited by Katz, 130,000 would leave to France and 10,000 to Israel. Ethan Katz, *The Burdens of Brotherhood: Jews and Muslims from North Africa to France* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 212.
[71] Memorandum, Joseph Kage to Jacob Lowy, June 1966, *The North African Jewish Immigrant in Montreal*, File: Jewish Population 1967, Box 32, AJCS/FJCS Unprocessed, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal, 3.
[72] According to Stillman, nearly 100,000 Jews had emigrated from Tunisia between 1948 and 1968. Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands in Modern Times*, 169.
[73] Memorandum, Joseph Kage to Jacob Lowy, June 1966, *The North African Jewish Immigrant in Montreal*, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal, 3.
[74] Yigal Bin-Nun suggests that the patterns of emigration were partly outgrowths of intense internal demographic shifts, mainly rural to urban, since the 18th century, and especially under the French Protectorate. Bin-Nun, "La Négociation de l'évacuation En Masse Des Juifs Du Maroc," 1–2.
[75] According to Jamaâ Baïda, 40,000 Jews remained in Morocco in 1967 of a previous 250,000 in 1948. Jamaâ Baïda, "The Emigration of Moroccan Jews, 1948-1956," in *Jewish Culture and Society in North Africa*, ed. Emily Benichou Gottreich and Daniel J. Schroeter (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2011), 321.

Toronto, as their first or second destination. According to an internal pamphlet used by JIAS, in total, 6,600 Jews from North Africa arrived in Montreal, and more than 3,000 in Toronto, between 1956 and 1976. The vast majority of these Jews were Moroccan. These numbers only account for Jews who arrived with the help of JIAS. Thousands more would arrive unaided through family sponsorship or the other official channels of Canadian immigration. Additionally, the Canadian-born children of these Jews constitute a fundamental part of this story. In all, some 10,000 North African Jews had arrived or were born in Montreal by 1971.[76]

With relevance to this thesis, the story of Quebec constitutes a useful intersection of the ongoing global North African Jewish migrations. Like Israel, the migrations were facilitated by dedicated institutions which facilitated the immigration process,[77] and North African Jews were met with a large population of Ashkenazi Jews, against whom categories of identity shifted and took on new meaning.[78] Unlike Israel, state planning did not disadvantage North African Jews, and North African Jews did not constitute a majority of the Jewish immigrant population of Quebec.[79] Like France, the promise of a Francophone sphere amenable to francized North African Jews was a major source of attraction. Unlike France, their francization at first served as a disadvantage rather than an advantage to North African Jews in Montreal. Like Argentina, they arrived in a settler-colonial society actively debating a national identity, where they eventually formed their own institutions, and where their ethnicities, though internally diverse, were strategically manipulated.[80] Unlike Argentina, where social services were not exclusively Jewish

[76] Burgard, "Les Sépharades Dans Les Études Démographiques," 44.
[77] Moreno, "Beyond the Nation-State: A Network Analysis of Jewish Emigration From Norther Morocco to Israel," 2.
[78] See Aziza Khazzoom, *Shifting Ethnic Boundaries and Inequalities in Israel: Or, How the Polish Peddler Became a German Intellectual* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008).
[79] See Aziza Khazzoom, "Did the Israeli State Engineer Segregation? On the Placement of Jewish Immigrants in Development Towns in the 1950s," *Social Forces* 84, no. 1 (2005): 115–34.
[80] Brodsky, *Sephardi, Jewish, Argentine: Community and National Identity, 1880-1960*; Seymour B. Liebman, "Argentine Jews and Their Institutions," *Jewish Social Studies* 43, no. 3/4 (1981): 311–28.

community agencies, North African Jews in Quebec were obligated to navigate the landscape of Montreal's comprehensive array of Jewish social services. Finally, like all of these contexts and countless not listed, intra-Jewish conflict arose due to the mesostructures of Jewish migration and integration in these various contexts. In the case of Montreal, these would be largely defined by the ethnic-linguistic segregation of Quebec and Jewish community institutions.

The earliest point of contact between North African Jews and the Ashkenazi Jews of Montreal was during the process of immigration with JIAS. This process has been detailed by Lianne Koren, whose assessment reveals how JIAS and the CJC lobbied the Canadian government to permit the admission of North African Jews by leveraging the memory of the Holocaust.[81] As Koren demonstrates, through a 1953 agreement called the "Approved Church Program," JIAS, as a recognized religious organization, was allowed to sponsor North African Jews at the discretion of immigration officials. At first this program was restricted to those who were French Nationals, though eventually it was expanded to include the holders of "Sherifian passports," the latter category which potentially included the vast majority of Moroccan Jews.[82] This initial program was closed in 1960.[83]

By 1962 the Canadian government would promulgate a new Immigration Act which "eliminated racial discrimination as a major feature of Canada's immigration policy".[84] Steven Schwinghamer points to formal and informal discriminatory policies by which the preference for a new Canadian willing to exercise the "responsibilities of citizenship" was, as late as 1965, still

[81] Lianne Robin Koren, "North African Jewish Migration to Canada, 1956-1960: A Holocaust Legacy" (McGill University, 2019), 1.
[82] Ibid., 24–27.
[83] Ibid., 29.
[84] Valerie Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540-2015* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2016), 187.

operative in the Department of Citizenship and Immigration.[85] This last circumstance is noteworthy when juxtaposed with the persistent reference to the "responsibilities of citizenship" by JIAS in several contexts. For example, seemingly reacting to the closure of the North African immigration program by the Canadian government, forty-four North African Jews in Montreal signed a petition asking the government to reopen it. The petition's appeal read: "We appreciate the opportunity given to us and all of us will do our utmost to become good citizens of Canada and share in the duties and responsibilities of Canadian citizens." It continued: "[as] you well know, the situation in the countries of North Africa, is not only not improving, but is actually becoming worse."[86] The petition was delivered through JIAS, and likely it was JIAS who had formulated the language of the letter. It may in fact have been completely a JIAS enterprise, due to the familiar language of impending catastrophe which Koren unearthed in her archival work,[87] the fact that the petition was in English, and the inclusion of the phrase "duties and responsibilities of Canadian citizens", which was both common JIAS lingo as well as a phrase which JIAS officials would have known would play well with the government.[88] Furthermore, it confirms that a working model of what it meant to be a Canadian citizen was a driving force behind both the government's and JIAS' immigration policy. As Canadian policy attempted to mold the character of its population, Jews played a part in determining the Jewish segment of that population. Whether or not JIAS was behind the petition, North African Jews had signed it, and it represented a strategic leveraging of the voices of these "new Canadians".

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[85] Steven Schwinghamer, "'This Is Ticklish Business': Undesirable Religious Groups and Canadian Immigration after the Second World War," *Canadian Issues Thèmes Canadiens*, no. Spring (2017): 44–45.
[86] Immigration Petition, JIAS to the Government of Canada, undated (1963-1964?), File 12, Series QF J. Kage Records Subject Files, Box 16, JIAS Canada Collection Fonds, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives.
[87] Koren, "North African Jewish Migration to Canada, 1956-1960: A Holocaust Legacy," 28.
[88] A JIAS pamphlet likely put together in 1960 already used the familiar motto, "From Immigrant to Citizen". Pamphlet, "Jewish Immigrant Aid Services of Canada", JIAS, 1960?, File: Canadian Immigration Policy, Series 2, Bay 2, Fonds 1074, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal.

Correspondence between JIAS, UHS, and Canadian immigration officials confirms that JIAS' substantial role in North African Jewish immigration did not end in 1960, nor in 1962. Letters and applicant profiles confirm that JIAS continued to sponsor and facilitate the processing of North African Jews through 1964,[89] and in fact continued to lobby the Canadian government directly as late as 1981, arguing then as they had in the 1950s, that "the situation of the Jewish inhabitants in Morocco is precarious".[90] At least these sponsorships up until 1964 follow a similar process to the one outlined by Koren.

A distinctive, highly significant intervention in 1964 was the attempted importation of North African Jews as French teachers for the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal (PSBGM). Though the correspondence regarding this program is only available from 1963, a letter from Kage to Mr. F. C. Grosman, Acting Chief of the Admission Division of the Citizenship and Immigration Department in Ottawa reveals that "qualified French language teachers from North Africa, who arrived in Canada during the past few years, were engaged by the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal, as teachers and French Specialists". This implied that North African Jews, or JIAS on their behalf, had already been seeking out similar employment opportunities. Additionally, Kage argued that, though these candidates were usually ineligible for immigration because they did not have "relatives of first-degree in Canada", they should be excused, since they "would fill a dire need in Canada".[91] Notably, the initiative seems to have been launched in response to an advertisement taken out in various European newspapers by the PSBGM requesting trained French teachers, according to Kage's letter.[92]

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[89] Letter, Ivor Sarc to Joseph Kage, July 22nd, 1964, File 4, Series QF J. Kage Records Subject Files, Box 20, JIAS Canada Collection Fonds, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives.
[90] Letter, Joseph Kage to Mr. W. K. Bell, July 21st, 1981, File 4, Series QF J. Kage Records Subject Files, Box 20, JIAS Canada Collection Fonds, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives.
[91] Letter, Joseph Kage to Mr. F. C. Grosman, January 22nd, 1963, File 3, Series QF J. Kage Records Subject Files, Box 20, JIAS Canada Collection Fonds, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives.
[92] Ibid.

Over the next months, JIAS and UHS worked on submitting the immigration documents for sixteen potential French teachers and, over this period, another difficulty arose. The source of the additional obstacle, however, was not the Canadian government, but the PSBGM. In a letter to Mr. Plasterek from Mrs. E. Bybelezer at Montreal's JIAS office, the latter advised her contact in France to "stress to the proposed immigrant teachers the importance of at least some knowledge of the English language" because "[the] Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal absolutely refuses to hire even highly qualified French teachers, if they do not know some English."[93] This much is easily corroborated. The English schools of the PSBGM were notorious for their incapability "of turning out graduates who could speak French", a fact which Andrew Sancton attributes to the board's "prohibition against hiring Catholics", who in general would have spoken far better French than Protestants.[94] At first glance, this prohibition seemed also to be about the PSBGM's aversion to hiring people who could not speak English. However, the 1961 census found that 30.1% of Canadians of French ethnic background were bilingual, against only 4% of those of British origin. Jews, just behind French-Canadians, were listed as 18.4% bilingual.[95] The bias against Catholics became, paradoxically, a bias against native French-speakers even for French teaching positions. In fact, Liberal leader Georges-Émile Lapalme had advocated in 1959 for the mass importation of French teachers to Quebec, which may parallel loosely the PSBGM's advertisement in European newspapers.[96] The PSBGM's bias, however, was one factor which may have made any corresponding schemes unlikely to succeed.

[93] Letter, Mrs. E. Bybelezer to Mr. S. Plasterek, May 15th, 1963, File 3, Series QF J. Kage Records Subject Files, Box 20, JIAS Canada Collection Fonds, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives.
[94] Sancton, *Governing the Island of Montreal: Language Differences and Metropolitan Politics*, 49–50.
[95] Statistics Canada. *1961 Census of Canada: Population, Language by Ethnic Groups*.
[96] Paquet, *Towards a Quebec Ministry of Immigration, 1945-1968*, 9.

There is no indication whether any of these sixteen Jews from Morocco arrived under the auspices of JIAS' French Teacher program. The last letter available, from Kage to Mr. B. A. Gorman in Ottawa, simply indicates that a "final decision" was pending.[97] Though the 1966 report by the Women's Federation of AJCS referenced two Protestant schools, one with four and the other with five North African Jewish teachers on their staff, it is impossible to say whether they had been hired through the program or separately.[98] In another context altogether, a young woman named Berthe Lasry, according to a petition sent to JIAS in 1964 by her father, had intended to study at the "professorat" in Morocco, likely a reference to the teacher training program of the AIU. Instead, her father wrote, she had been promised a position in a Jewish school by JIAS, a prospect which, he complained, had not materialized. The uncertainty and bureaucratic obstacles involved in JIAS' specialized programs to bring North African Jews to Canada, whether JIAS, the government, or the PSBGM was at fault, could lead to bitter feelings specifically towards JIAS.[99] North African Jews were both eligible and ultimately disqualified because of their experience of French colonization. The situation itself, however, was a result of ethnic-linguistic segregation in Quebec.

Regardless of its success or failure, the attempt to bring North African Jews as French teachers for the PSBGM represents a microcosm of 1960s Quebec history and linguistic politics. It is also as an example of the Canadian Jewish experience for both Anglophone and Francophone Jews. JIAS' program places North African Jews within the evolving political landscape of Quebec where some of them were already providing a desperately needed function which the PSBGM was

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[97] Letter, Joseph Kage to Mr. B. A. Gorman, August 19th, 1963, File 3, Series QF J. Kage Records Subject Files, Box 20, JIAS Canada Collection Fonds, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives.
[98] Women's Federation of AJCS. Education Committee. *French-Speaking Jewish Immigrants and Their Use of Jewish Social Agencies and Women's Service Organizations*. Federation CJA Fonds 1001, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal.
[99] Jewish Education Petitions, David Lasry, April 28th, 1964, File 12, Series QF J. Kage Records Subject Files, Box 16, JIAS Canada Collection Fonds, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives.

generally at a loss to fulfill—teaching the French language. Teaching was a prospect which had long occupied Moroccan Jews through the teacher training program of the French-language AIU schools.[100] This mechanism for the self-reproduction of French colonial influence within North African Jewish communities did not prepare them for the global Francophone sphere—though it should have. The fact that these Jews could have been rejected, not on the basis of religion, but that of language, in a province in which the majority spoke French, confirms that the predominant dividing lines in Quebec, though they were confessional, were more assertively linguistic. Language, more than religion, was a marker which could invite discriminatory attitudes, and which defined social classes. In practice, linguistic categories were also inextricably bound up with ethnic categories. Furthermore, language tangibly affected the opportunities available to North African Jews, regardless of the strong Jewish community structure present in Montreal which should have transcended these divisions.

Finally, for those Moroccans and Algerians that were hired by the PSBGM outside of this program, the atypical positioning of natively French-speaking Jews to teach the children of an aggressively anglicized community represents a remarkable intersection of colonialisms. The Canadian context complicated the potential for an informal French realm outside of formal French colonial influence. North African Jews who sought a logical extension of the tools acquired in the French Maghreb were frustrated when they arrived in Montreal, where they had assumed a continuous experience. Jews leaving the north of Morocco, in particular, traveled often between France and their native country for work, to visit family, and for vacation. Employment opportunities could motivate the short jump across the Mediterranean. Though Quebec represented a farther jump, the relative ease of air travel, the support of bureaucratic institutions like JIAS, the

[100] Laskier, *The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Jewish Communities of Morocco, 1862-1962*, 290–91.

imagined support of a strong Jewish community, and the supposed French character of Quebec all linked Montreal to this global Francophone sphere in the minds of North African Jews. Instead, the colonial context which had privileged French in North Africa was replaced by one which disadvantaged it in Quebec. To their surprise, French-speaking Jews found that, because they were Jews, part of the French sphere was inaccessible to them.

The Anglophone Jewish Solitude and Social Services in Montreal

Beyond the bureaucratic process of immigration and legal sponsorship, JIAS is widely recognized as having provided support for North African Jews after their arrival.[101] In general, official statements by the Sephardi community have generally expressed their indebtedness for the major role JIAS played in supporting them, but some accounts bring into question this purportedly uncomplicated picture. Jean-Claude Lasry, a former president of Montreal's Sephardi community, would emphasize that North African Jews considered JIAS' treatment of their immigration only "fair".[102] It should be noted that the majority of North African Jews arrived after 1967, at which point JIAS' ability to offer a legally recognized sponsorship to these Jews in lieu of employment offers or family sponsorship was abolished.[103] Still, historians have tended to describe the "reception" of North African Jews in Montreal as unproblematic, if bumpy. As this study will endeavor to show, this was not the case. North African Jews represented a peculiar ethnic, linguistic, and confessional intersection of identities. In fact, it was due to this intersection that they faced difficulties that, until now, have been inadequately researched and assessed. Archival sources and personal testimonies offer some qualifications regarding the role of JIAS and the degree to which Montreal's Jewish community and social service structures as they stood in the 1960s could accommodate North African Jews. As I will demonstrate, these interactions reveal the

[101] In the same JIAS pamphlet cited above, the organization advertised ten separate services for immigrants, including Migration, Reception & Shelter, Social & Adjustment, Naturalization, Resettlement, Education for Citizenship, etc. Pamphlet, "Jewish Immigrant Aid Services of Canada", JIAS, 1960?, Fonds 1074, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal. Historians also credit JIAS without much nuance. See Cohen, "Sephardi Jews in Montreal," 172; Olivier Bérubé-Sassevile, "La Construction d'une Mémoire Commune," in *Les Sépharades Du Québec: Parcours d'Exils Nord-Africains*, ed. Yolande Cohen (Montréal: Del Busso Éditeurs, 2017), 125.
[102] Jean-Claude Lasry, "A Francophone Diaspora in Quebec," in *The Canadian Jewish Mosaic*, ed. Morton Weinfeld, William Shaffir, and Irwin Cotler (Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, 1981), 227.
[103] Messika, "Politiques de l'Accueil: États et Associations Face à La Migration Des Juifs d'Afrique Du Nord En France et Au Canada Des Années 1950 à La Fin Des Années 1970," 156–57.

influence of Canada's divisive ethnic-linguistic framework on intra-Jewish dynamics in this early period of immigration and settlement.

French-speaking Jews from North Africa, the vast majority from Morocco, had begun arriving to Canada in 1956 in small numbers.[104] Completely distanced from Yiddish and mostly unable to speak English, these Jews had faced a communal and migratory trajectory dissimilar to that of the Ashkenazi community of Canada. The legacy languages of these Jews were not Yiddish, Hungarian, or Russian, but Arabic and on occasion Berber (Tamazight). Furthermore, the language adopted by them, the native language of most of these new immigrants to Canada, was not English, like their coreligionists, but French. For North African Jews, the frame of reference by which Yiddish formed a component of communal identity, was absent and even irrelevant. Largely educated in the French-language Jewish school network of the Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU) and speaking to their own parents or grandparents in Arabic, the language of these immigrants was different from that of the established Jewish community.

This problem was not solely one of ethnic, cultural, or religious identification, as it has often been framed.[105] The language employed by Jews in Quebec had real, tangible consequences. As stated above, the vast array of social services provided by the Jewish community were organized, communicated, and offered in English. To understand the significance of this, we must keep in mind the distinctive confessional structure of Quebec. As Sancton writes:

> "…well into the twentieth century, Quebec's social services were provided almost exclusively by the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches and by various ethnic-based organizations like the St. Patrick's society."[106]

[104] According to a pamphlet produced by JIAS, 546 Jews arrived in Canada from North Africa in 1957. Series QC B J. Kage Records Statistical Documents, Box 5, JIAS Canada Collection Fonds, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives.
[105] Anctil, *Histoire Des Juifs Du Québec*, 339; Bérubé-Sassevile, "La Construction d'une Mémoire Commune," 113.
[106] Sancton, *Governing the Island of Montreal: Language Differences and Metropolitan Politics*, 50.

Another of these "ethnic-based organizations" was the collection of agencies belonging to the established Jewish community: AJCS, the Baron de Hirsch Institute, Neighbourhood House, the Jewish Vocational Service, the Golden Age Program, the Jewish General Hospital and Nursing Home, the Jewish Public Library—all of these bodies and more formed an insular universe which most English- and Yiddish-speaking Jews rarely needed to leave. Garth Stevenson noted that ethno-linguistic groups "lived in almost completely separate worlds, with complete networks of autonomous and parallel institutions."[107] Though this assessment is too clear-cut, communal seclusion did form an aspect of Jewish experience in Montreal.

A report based on the 1971 Montreal Jewish census revealed that as late as that year, over a decade after the Quiet Revolution had begun to transform the structure of Quebec society, the Jewish community was still remarkably insular. Eighty-seven percent of respondents reported that most or all of their friends were Jewish, fifty-three percent that all or most of their neighbours were, and thirty-five percent reported the same regarding all or most of their business associates. As Waller and Weinfeld wrote, one could indeed speak of a "Jewish solitude."[108] Well past this date Ashkenazi community structures still largely operated almost exclusively in English. Additionally, French-language Catholic institutions including hospitals were generally inaccessible to Jews, a fact which cemented the prominence of ethnic social services in communal experience.[109]

Few sources exist in the Ashkenazi community archives which detail the experience of North African Jews in English-speaking Jewish institutions as early as their first arrivals in 1956 and 1957. It is only by 1966, a decade after the immigration had started, that the established

[107] Garth Stevenson, *Community Besieged: The Anglophone Minority and the Politics of Quebec* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), 46. Reproduced in Troper, 44.
[108] Waller and Weinfeld, "The Jews of Quebec and 'Le Fait Français,'" 418.
[109] Anctil, *Trajectoires Juives Au Québec*, 181.

community began to seriously, though inwardly, take note of the distinct problems faced by these Jews. This discrepancy can be explained several ways.

Firstly, the number of North African Jews by this year was still relatively small. According to numbers used by JIAS in 1966, only 3,230 Jews from Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia had arrived in Montreal.[110] Though this did not include Jews who had arrived without the help of JIAS, the Canadian-born children of those who had, or North African Jews who arrived from France and Israel, the number was, relative to the rest of the community, miniscule.[111] Additionally, as remarked by Olivier Bérubé-Sasseville, North African Jews were virtually invisible in the censuses conducted by the community up until the end of the 20th century.[112] Significantly, in 1966 the most active association run by North African Jews, the ASF, previously the Fédération Sépharade de Langue Française (and before that the GJNA),[113] began to position itself and advocate differently than it had before.[114] Finally, the ethnic-linguistic divide in Quebec meant that, in general, most French-speaking Jews rarely interacted with their English-speaking coreligionists. The Ashkenazi community conducted itself almost entirely in English and very few of its leaders could speak any French, let alone boast fluency.[115] In a 1963 letter to Joseph Benilous, the secretary of the GJNA, Kage himself apologized because "as you may know, my French is still not too good".[116]

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[110] 222 from Tunisia, 57 from Algeria, and the rest from Morocco. Memorandum, Joseph Kage to Jacob Lowy, June 1966, *The North African Jewish Immigrant in Montreal*, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal, 3.
[111] To the figure 3,230 we would need to add, according to Kage, an estimated five hundred who had arrived via France, likely without the help of JIAS.
[112] Burgard, "Les Sépharades Dans Les Études Démographiques," 51–52.
[113] The various iterations of North African community groups are as follows: Groupement Juif Nord-Africaine (GJNA), Fédération Sépharade de Langue Française (FSLF), Association Sépharade Francophone (ASF), Communauté Sépharade du Québec (CSQ), and the Communauté Sépharade Unifiée du Québec (CSUQ).
[114] "L'Association Sépharade Francophone," *Bulletin Du Cercle Juif*, October 1966.
[115] Troper, *The Defining Decade: Identity, Politics, and the Canadian Jewish Community in the 1960s*, 60.
[116] Letter, Joseph Kage to Joseph Benilous, Groupement Juif Nord-Africain de Montréal, February 6th, 1963, File 12, Series QF J. Kage Records Subject Files, Box 16, JIAS Canada Collection Fonds, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives.

Though they lived in the same neighborhoods, most Ashkenazim rarely interacted with French-speaking Jews,[117] a fact evidenced by the manifesto of complaints lodged with JIAS in 1963 which accused the Canadian Jewish community of ignoring them and their problems.[118] The testimony of Rachel, a Moroccan Jew who immigrated to Montreal with her husband and children in 1958, also emphasizes the isolation of this experience as she relates her family's first years in Montreal. It was not until a few years later, when her family moved to an apartment filled with other North African Jews, that this loneliness was alleviated.[119] Rachel's testimony points to the consequences of the ethnic-linguistic divide in Quebec and the unintended island occupied by French-speaking Jewish immigrants. In that period there were simply very few arenas in which English- and French-speaking Montrealers could meet. This applied as much to Jews as it did to non-Jews. As Harold Troper writes, "[it] wasn't that the two groups were talking past one another. It was that they were barely talking at all."[120] There were, however, some occasions for Ashkenazi and North African Jews to cross paths. By and large, these occasions were within Jewish social service institutions.

[117] Anctil, *Histoire Des Juifs Du Québec*, 336.
[118] Letter, Groupement Juif Nord-Africain de Montréal to Canadian Jewish Congress, December 1st, 1963, JIAS Canada Collection Fonds, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives.
[119] Rachel. Interviewed by Roy Shukrun. Personal Interview. Montreal, November 6th, 2019.
[120] Troper, *The Defining Decade: Identity, Politics, and the Canadian Jewish Community in the 1960s*, 44–45.

Missing the Mark: The Jewish Vocational Service and the Golden Age Association

On November 27th, 1963, Mrs. A. Kirshner, the Executive Director of the Montreal Jewish community's Golden Age Program, sent a letter to Joseph Kage at his office, the headquarters of JIAS. In it, Kirshner included the schedules of the program's various meetings across different synagogues and institutions and detailed the costs and approximate attendance of the clubs.[121] Likely the letter was in response to repeated inquiries by JIAS regarding the activities of the program, since she wrote that the schedules should help Kage's staff contact the program's workers and specified how "referrals" to the club could be made. By referrals, Kirshner meant the sponsorship of new Jewish immigrants by JIAS to the club to exempt them from membership fees. Kage, the Executive Director of JIAS and the former Director of JIAS' social services department, was well aware of the importance of referring new immigrants with little knowledge of Montreal's insular community structure to those who could help them. Montreal's network of social services was complex. It could be intimidating and difficult to navigate without direction and lacking the ability to speak English. Near the end of the letter, Kirshner assured Kage that "[all] meetings are conducted in the Jewish language"; of course, rather than Hebrew, she was referring to Yiddish.

Kage himself, in a report from his previous position as director of JIAS' social service department, referred to the fact that many Jewish immigrant parents had "voiced the desire for their children to learn Hebrew and Jewish."[122] This usage of "Jewish" to refer to Yiddish was by no means universal, but it signified a communal identification among its native and legacy speakers. It was far more common before North African Jews became a visible part of the community. Yiddish—literally translated as "Jewish"—was at that time still one of the major

[121] Letter, Mrs. A. Kirshner to Joseph Kage, November 27th, 1963, File 12, Series QF J. Kage Records Subject Files, Box 16, JIAS Canada Collection Fonds, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives.
[122] JIAS, Social Services Department. *Helping the Immigrant to Become a New Canadian*. Montreal: JIAS, 1961?. Kage, Joseph—Education, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives.

languages spoken by the Jewish community of Montreal. The established community and especially its youngest generation, which was almost entirely Ashkenazi, had been for decades undergoing anglicization. Still, the majority of Montreal's elderly Jews were still immigrants whose could converse fluently in Yiddish. Thus, it seemed natural to, even in English correspondence, use the phrase "the Jewish language."

The Golden Age Association was a social service organization which planned activities for senior Jewish citizens in Montreal and worked to foster a feeling of belonging for elderly Jewish immigrants. It was founded in 1950 by the National Council of Jewish Women and became a constituent agency of the Federation, later AJCS, in 1963, when it was renamed the Golden Age Association (GAA).[123] In their 1966 report studying the extent to which French-speaking Jews were utilizing Jewish community services, the Women's Federation of AJCS had gleaned that "70 people representing about 60 families" took part in "an all French-speaking group of senior citizens." Out of this number, sixty were "North African" and ten were "French-speaking Europeans".[124] Interestingly, most of these Jews reportedly spoke at least two languages, though only two spoke English, and one spoke only Arabic.

At a meeting of AJCS's board of trustees on November 25th, 1965, the president of the GAA, Mrs. I. Gesser, informed the board that a total of 1,167 members were registered throughout Montreal, and that seventy were part of the French club, which was held separately. Gesser noted that "[an] interesting aspect has been the development of a closer liaison between French and Yiddish-speaking members of the organization."[125] This "closer liaison" might refer to a

[123] Joe King, *Six Decades: The First Sixty Years of Federated Jewish Services in Montreal* (Montreal: Allied Jewish Community Services, 1977), 13.
[124] Women's Federation of AJCS. Education Committee. *French-Speaking Jewish Immigrants and Their Use of Jewish Social Agencies and Women's Service Organizations*. March, 1966. Federation CJA Fonds 1001, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal, 16-17.
[125] Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Trustees of AJCS, November 25th, 1965. File 00434, Box 42, Federation CJA Fonds 1001, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal.

purportedly successful summer program at the Laurentian Fresh Air Camp attended by nine Jewish Moroccans, as well as various joint trips undertaken by the clubs.[126] The cross-referencing of the 1966 report and Gesser's statement also suggests that "Moroccans" was often used as a shorthand for "North African". It is conceivable that some of these members were Algerian or Tunisian Jews, as well, though this cannot be confirmed.

Though the GAA framed the program as successful, North African Jews related that it could put them in a particularly vulnerable and isolated position. The group itself was physically separated from the others outside of special activities such as the summer camp. Most of the members had been referred to the GAA by JIAS, demonstrating the difficulty in navigating the community structure for these immigrants. Additionally, though the GAA claimed it was "sufficiently staffed with French-speaking personnel", the Women's Federation's report indicated that:

> "Moroccan older adults have objected to the practices and treatment they have encountered as recipients of our Jewish agency services. Many of the receptionists, intake workers, doctors, social workers, and psychologists do not speak French and are unaccustomed to relating to the Moroccan Jew."[127]

Though this complaint was delivered through GAA's response to the survey, it surpassed the bounds of that one program. Elderly North African Jews were more generally confined within the framework of a social service structure which could not communicate with them.

Most notable was how the GAA blamed their Moroccan clients. They explained that:

> "In the opinion of the Executive Director of the Association, the Jewish Moroccans in this French-speaking group are slow in making a good adjustment either in the agency or the community. It was pointed out that the Moroccans are a small proportion of the total senior citizen population in the agency. The customs, habits, and manners are seen as different and alien from the predominantly Western and East European ties of the majority served by the agency. […] the Jewish Moroccan

[126] Women's Federation of AJCS. Education Committee. *French-Speaking Jewish Immigrants and Their Use of Jewish Social Agencies and Women's Service Organizations*. March, 1966. Federation CJA Fonds 1001, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal, 18.
[127] Ibid., 18.

> appears to be dependent on being given services with minimal motivation to obtain them for himself. […] The Jewish Moroccan senior citizen also has difficulties with western concepts, such as making appointments, coming on time for appointments, or accepting age limits as requirements for group membership. […] The Jewish Moroccan senior citizen has difficulty in moving out of his own environment, leaving his home and familiar surroundings. For this reason he has not been able to make full use of the new Golden Age Association Building and facilities."[128]

Several conclusions can be drawn from this statement. Firstly, it is clear that the GAA's initial assessment that North Africans were suitably integrated in the agency was at best only partially true. Through the subdued language used by the GAA, we can garner the frustration of both North African Jews and the agency itself, a frustration which is mirrored in the community documents of other agencies. The statement also corroborates Rachel's feeling of isolation by describing the archetypal "Moroccan senior [citizen]" who is faced with the ordeal of "moving out of his environment". This may have had less to do with the advanced age of the people in question and more with amplified linguistic and social difficulties. The belief that North African Jews were unable to "integrate" or properly benefit from Jewish community services due to a cultural incompatibility would repeatedly rear its head and prove itself to be a defining principle of community policy towards these Jews.

This account of North African Jews in the GAA should be read as a complex interaction of colonial legacies. The institutions maintained by Ashkenazim in Montreal were Anglophone due to British colonial influence and English-Protestant supremacy. This was true even in Quebec, where North African Jews had chosen to migrate in the hopes of utilizing a linguistic advantage. Even if the GAA served Yiddish-speaking Jews in Yiddish, it still struggled to serve French-speaking Jews in French, though Quebec was ostensibly a French province of Canada. The "Jewish solitude" was Jewish, but Ashkenazim had undeniably associated themselves with the English minority along ethnically and linguistically divisive lines. This is not to denigrate Ashkenazim,

[128] Ibid., 18-19.

who struggled to be accepted within Montreal's public spaces, but simply to state a fact. Demographically, Quebec was a French-speaking province. In practice, it was a French-speaking province, unless you were Jewish. These divisions may have affected elderly North African Jews more acutely, due to their particular needs. As such, though they likely did benefit from the GAA's activities, especially when they opened French-dedicated clubs, the program was one of many which had not been conceived with North African Jews in mind. This lack of foresight was not inherently malicious, but it had unintended consequences for the experiences of these Jews in anglophone institutions. The GAA serves as one example of how the assumption that North African Jews were welcomed by and unambiguously benefitted from existing Ashkenazi institutions requires revision.

In 1966, North African Jews still comprised a significant minority of the members of the GAA. This circumstance was not true of all agency programs. One program in which North African Jews became disproportionately represented was the Jewish Vocational Service (JVS). The JVS was founded in 1945 in response to the unemployment in the 1930s, as well as discrimination against Jews, an "overconcentration of Jewish youth" in offices, and a "general lack of any kind of realistic planning for the future on the part of our Jewish young people."[129] This description illustrates well the expansive role which Jewish community services aimed to play in Montreal Jewish life.

The JVS began with career counselling services and a job placement program for both immigrants and local Jews who were "physically and emotionally handicapped" called the "Sheltered Workshop" program, and soon provided counselling services to other Jewish

[129] Alfred Feintuch, *Jewish Vocational Service 1945-1985: A Proud Record of 40 Years of Service* (Montreal: Allied Jewish Community Services, 1985), 1.

institutions such as the Jewish General Hospital.[130] In 1961 they opened a separate department called the "Work Adjustment Centre" which concentrated on training "young handicapped persons" for "regular industry". By the 1970s it was offering "remedial training" for teenagers with learning disabilities.[131] Another department, the "Indefinite Term Workshop," per its name, aimed to train "more handicapped" people for whom the program had no perceived end date. By 1964, and perhaps earlier, North Africans formed "the most significant emigré group" using the JVS' services.[132]

According to their response to the Women's Federation's 1966 report, the JVS, like the GAA, received most of their North African referees through JIAS. The JVS indicated that they were "probably the second agency that [North Africans] come in contact with in Montreal". The JVS, in turn, referred North African Jews to other agencies like the Herzl Health Centre, the Jewish General Hospital, the Baron de Hirsch Institute, and the Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Association (YM-YWHA). Unsurprisingly, they noted that almost all of these Jews spoke only French. As of 1964 they employed two French-speaking professionals but were uncertain if this would meet the requirements of future immigration. Finally, roughly 200 Moroccan Jews were placed in jobs in 1964.[133] Again, it is unclear whether all of these were in fact Moroccan, and some of them may have been Algerian and Tunisian. For comparison, JIAS reported 989 North African Jews arriving in Canada through its services in 1964.[134]

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[130] Ibid., 4-6.
[131] Isadore Glustein, *The Function of the Jewish Vocational Services* (Montreal: Mcgill University Special Education, 1974), 2.
[132] Feintuch, *Jewish Vocational Service 1945-1985: A Proud Record of 40 Years of Service*, 6–8.
[133] Women's Federation of AJCS. Education Committee. *French-Speaking Jewish Immigrants and Their Use of Jewish Social Agencies and Women's Service Organizations*. March, 1966. Federation CJA Fonds 1001, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal, 13.
[134] Memorandum, Joseph Kage to Jacob Lowy, June 1966, *The North African Jewish Immigrant in Montreal*, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal, 3.

As "the second agency" these Jews encountered in Montreal, the JVS could be a gateway to the Jewish community, or an unexpected dead-end. Though the JVS' intention was to "[guide] the individual to take his place in society as a responsible citizen", its program could have unintended consequences for North African Jews.[135] Firstly, as specified by their initial purpose, the JVS was meant to direct employment for Jews, young and old, *within* the Jewish community, not outside of it. For North African Jews this meant placement within mostly Anglophone Jewish businesses, where they were at a linguistic, social, and financial disadvantage. The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, established in 1963, revealed that "British bilinguals" earned less than Anglophone "monolinguals", a presumably oxymoronic reality due to the supposedly "bilingual" landscape of Montreal. Additionally, there was a significant $1,898 discrepancy with regards to annual pay between English and French speakers.[136] Compared to all of Canada, English-speakers in Quebec earned thirty percent more than the national average, and French-speakers earned thirty-five percent less than them.[137] It was not that "the acquisition of French [created] a handicap," but that "those lower in position within a given occupation and education level [were] more likely to need a knowledge of French." As Sanction concisely writes, "[this] interpretation tells us a great deal about the status of French-speakers in Montreal's work world in the 1950s."[138]

For North African Jews, this disadvantage for French-speakers, first exponential due to the sub-standard wages common in the JVS' sheltered workshop program, was again doubly disadvantageous in light of their distinctive intersection of identities as French-speaking Jews. This

[135] Glustein, *The Function of the Jewish Vocational Services*, 1.
[136] Stanley Lieberson, *Language and Ethnic Relations in Canada* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1970). Reproduced in Sancton, 20.
[137] Denis Monière, *Ideologies in Quebec: The Historical Development* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 230.
[138] Sancton, *Governing the Island of Montreal: Language Differences and Metropolitan Politics*, 20.

was because the JVS was not pitching North Africans' skills to the larger Canadian and especially Québécois job markets where their knowledge of French might help place them in a French-speaking business. Instead, the JVS worked within the confines of the exclusive labor needs of Jewish businesses where they were destined to occupy sub-optimal positions. In close collaboration with JIAS and AJCS agencies, the JVS functioned as a perpetuator of Jewish communal and economic insularity. Participating Jewish business owners already employed mostly Jewish employees and dealt with a mostly Jewish clientele. In turn, they did not need to look outside of their communal structures to fill vacant Jewish positions and were thus discouraged to appeal to a wider—read French-speaking—client base. Finally, though this was not the intention of the JVS, whose mission was certainly beneficent in theory, in practice it could turn North African Jews into a working class for middle-class Ashkenazi businesses.

This pattern, though lessened due to the public francization of Quebec, reproduced itself as late as 1977, as evidenced by Jacques Bensimon's documentary, *20 Ans Après*, in which Bensimon interviewed a Moroccan Jew in the sheltered workshop program. Though the documentary as a whole is somewhat polemic, the interview reveals how this arrangement could affect North African Jews. The unnamed interviewee, aged fifty-nine, reveals that he had been a mechanic in Morocco, from where he had arrived twelve-and-a-half years before. He had eight children, two of which were married. The man worked five days a week and received forty dollars every two weeks making automotive parts for Anglophone Jewish businesses, a salary below the "minimum fixed by the government". Most devastating in the scene is the man's visible bitterness and resignation, apparent even in the short interview.[139]

[139] Jacques Bensimon, *20 Ans Après* (Canada: National Film Board of Canada, 1977).

Moreover, though they constituted far less than half of the Jewish population of Montreal, in 1974 North African Jews made up about fifty percent of the clients in the indefinite term workshop, the program reserved for severely "handicapped" people.[140] The ambiguity of the language used to describe this program however makes it unlikely that the program was mostly meant to serve physically and mentally disabled people. The JVS's 1964 annual report lists only a negligible proportion of clients in the program as being physically or mentally disabled (twelve and five percent respectively), along with twenty-three percent having "psychiatric problems" and the rest, sixty percent, simply being "advanced in years".[141] If age was the main determinant in the placement of Jews into the indefinite term workshop, that such a disproportionate percentage of them in 1974 were North African Jews may speak to the continued disadvantage of North Africans within Ashkenazi institutions decades after their first arrivals. Though not all North African Jews faced these same issues, as immigrants facilitated by JIAS, the JVS could be central to their experience.

Another reality described by several internal community reports offers additional clarification to these experiences. In their 1964 annual report, part of which informed the Women's Federation's 1966 report, the JVS's Executive Director, Alfred Feintuch, speculated on the causes of North African Jews' problems benefitting from the program. Noting that "they have been a particularly difficult group to integrate into the labour market", Feintuch referenced their "special problems" and "negative attitudes" as obstacles. To explain these obstacles, Feintuch paid particular attention to the unfulfilled expectations of North African Jews: firstly, that they had assumed, coming to Quebec, that they could use French, and were consequently surprised to find

[140] Glustein, *The Function of the Jewish Vocational Services*, 6.
[141] JVS. Alfred Feintuch. *Annual Report for 1964*. January 15th, 1965. File: Fact Booklets & Reports, 1963-1966, Box 32, AJCS/FJCS Unprocessed, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal, 10.

that "the Jewish community is almost entirely English-speaking"; secondly, that the positions held by these Jews in their countries of origin led them to "unrealistic salary expectations"; finally, and most strikingly:

> "[…] many of our previous Jewish émigré groups had been able to use Yiddish, not only as a means of communication but as an invisible bond with the rest of the Jewish community. Because the Moroccans do not speak Yiddish, many of our Jewish employers do not feel this sense of group identification with them."[142]

This is significant because it clarifies what the expectations for a Jewish communal identification in Montreal were. Judaism as a marker of confessional identity or practice functioned only limitedly as a means of rapprochement for these Jews. Rather, this categorical aspect of Judaism had functioned as a bureaucratic register which had opened the door for North African Jews to Canada and which determined the social services and schools they could use. In theory, this category of Judaism connected all Jews in Montreal, European, North African, Iraqi, etc. It could not, however, entirely bridge the distance of language and a perceived racial or ethnic difference. A more personal experience of "Jewishness" divided these groups in ways for which the structural make-up of Montreal in this period could not account. Here it is evident that the experience of Jewishness in Montreal was tightly bound up with language, whether Yiddish, English, or French.

As shown above, part of the "unrealistic expectations" of North African Jews can be mediated through the difficult reality for French-speaking people within Montreal's job market in general. In the JVS, they again are shown to occupy an unintended no-man's-land within this context. As testified by Rachel and numerous other North African Jews, the decision to emigrate to Montreal was in no insignificant part contingent on their ability to use French. As new immigrants to a place where a confessional-linguistic identity determined in large part experience

[142] Ibid., 3.

and opportunity, they sometimes found themselves unable to use either their French language or their Jewish designation to their advantage. Even within the bounds of Jewish community structures, their Jewish-linguistic difference could serve as a deterrent instead of a link between them and their Ashkenazi coreligionists.

Rachel's interview provides another perspective of North African Jewish employment. Neither her nor her husband took part in the JVS' sheltered workshop program. Because they had arrived with four children, she could not go to work, and so her husband was the sole financial provider. He had been a photographer in Morocco and would later work as a photographer for JIAS. Before that, however, Rachel stressed that the early years of their immigration were harrowing. Her husband, she said, could be at work for three months and then out of work for another three.[143] Particularly, Rachel's testimony nuances the assumption that North African Jews' relationships with French Canadians were inherently more harmonious than with Ashkenazim. This was a claim which Jean-Claude Lasry had often made, seemingly to point towards the muted divisions present between Ashkenazim and North Africans.[144] Rachel recalls that her husband entered a photography contract with a French Canadian business owner who never paid him; she recalls, even more powerfully, that her husband never revealed that he was Jewish to any of his French Canadian business associates, for example when he worked for the city of Montreal. He was sure that his colleagues were speaking behind his back, calling him "dirty Jew,"[145] though they never said it to his face.[146] Though the demonstrable extent of this anti-semitism is unclear, Rachel's interview reveals that her husband's experience with French colonial authorities during the Second World War had marked him through the recognizable France-origin insult "dirty Jew."

[143] Rachel. Interviewed by Roy Shukrun. Personal Interview. Montreal, November 6th, 2019.
[144] Jean-claude Lasry, "Sephardim and Ashkenazim in Montreal," *Contemporary Jewry* 6, no. 2 (1983): 29.
[145] "Sale Juif".
[146] Rachel. Interviewed by Roy Shukrun. Personal Interview. Montreal, November 6th, 2019.

Regardless, Rachel's testimony broadens our understanding of North African Jewish employment in Montreal during the early years of their immigration.

In his 1966 report to Jacob Lowy, president of AJCS, titled *The North African Jewish Immigrant in Montreal,* Joseph Kage revealed his thoughts regarding North African Jewish employment. He wrote that these immigrants could face isolation due to "an accelerated break-down of the closely-knit kinship group" and that they might need assistance "coping with […] seasonal lay-offs." Kage stipulated that "the social services that these immigrants need are in general similar to those required by other Canadians", but that North Africans might be especially disadvantaged "due to a lack of skill or North American know-how."[147] Partly, Kage's experience with immigrants successfully led him to predict the employment issues that North Africans would encounter. However, he also displayed a tendency to reject the idea that North Africans' needs were different than other immigrants to Quebec, a tendency that would be reproduced elsewhere to the frustration of the immigrants themselves.

The JVS represents another example whereby simply being Jewish was not enough for North African Jews to fully benefit from a Jewish social service institution. As I have demonstrated, this case incorporates an element of cultural alienation, but the difficulties encountered by North African Jews were also determined by the divisive landscape of Quebec. As Jews they were most likely to find employment with other Jews whose businesses were mostly conducted in English. As French-speakers they were most likely to occupy low-level positions. Ethnic insularity was not simply a facet of Montreal Jewish life, but of Montreal life in general, a consequence of both formal and informal segregation with the nominal goal of ensuring the rights of both English and French "founding nations." As the example of the JVS shows, Jews were, in

[147] Memorandum, Joseph Kage to Jacob Lowy, June 1966, *The North African Jewish Immigrant in Montreal*, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal, 5, 8.

fact, looking out for Jews. However, they could only practically support Jews within the framework which was being reproduced across the provincial landscape. Though Bensimon's *20 ans après* frames the interviewee's bitterness as a symptom of the Ashkenazi domination of Sephardim, Ashkenazim were reinforcing the same ethnic-linguistic lines which had been erected elsewhere in Montreal.

Neighbourhood House, the YM-YWHA, and North African Jewish Communal Development

Another Jewish community organization which became disproportionately representative of North African Jews was Neighbourhood House. Likely founded sometime in the 1940s, it began as a separate organization and became a branch of the YM-YWHA after 1966.[148] Neighbourhood House provided day camp and summer camp programs, a wide range of youth activities, language classes, as well as a nursery program for working parents. In 1962 the Clark Street location had about 1,100 members and forty children in the day nursery.[149] Documents from the late 1950s make no particular mention of a growing North African or French-speaking Jewish population using the services. However, a testimonial by Adolphe Teboul, the first North African immigrant to arrive in Montreal in 1956, and Rachel Teboul indicates that their children frequented Neighbourhood House at its Darlington Street location.[150] The Women's Federation report in 1966 found that a sizeable Moroccan population was being served by the YM-YWHA's Snowdown Branch and that somewhere between seventy-five and ninety-five percent of these members spoke only French.[151] By 1969, Neighbourhood House stated that sixty percent of the Darlington location's 1,200 members were "French-speaking Jews" or "North Africans".[152] The Women's Federation report also conveyed that the Snowdown Y felt that it had enough French-speaking

[148] Women's Federation of AJCS. Education Committee. *French-Speaking Jewish Immigrants and Their Use of Jewish Social Agencies and Women's Service Organizations*. March, 1966. Federation CJA Fonds 1001, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal, 9.
[149] Neighbourhood House. *Some Facts on Neighbourhood House Programs*, May 21st, 1962. File 6, Series C, Box 33, FJCS Fonds, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal.
[150] Adolphe Teboul and Rebecca Teboul, "Adolphe Teboul, Premier Immigrant Du Maroc Au Canada," Moreshet Morocco, 2016, https://moreshet-morocco.com/2016/07/20/adolphe-teboul-premier-immigrant-du-maroc-au-canada/.
[151] Women's Federation of AJCS. Education Committee. *French-Speaking Jewish Immigrants and Their Use of Jewish Social Agencies and Women's Service Organizations*. March, 1966. Federation CJA Fonds 1001, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal, 7.
[152] YM-YWHA. *Neighbourhood House Branch*, 1969?, File 00777, Series MB1, Box 22, Federation CJA Fonds 1001, Jewish Public Library of Montreal.

staff, while Neighbourhood House did not. Accompanying this complaint was the recurrent problem that "[these] families experience difficulties in getting information from receptionists, switchboards and written publicity. […] The language problems seem to be a source of many difficulties and is seen by the families as a major impediment for their successful adjustment here." Nevertheless, Neighbourhood House testified that all its "interviews, meetings, etc." with French-speaking adults were conducted in French.[153]

Though Neighbourhood House was a space for intra-Jewish contact, this did not necessarily translate into more fruitful interactions between English- and French-speaking Jews. On November 6th, 1968, David Timsit, a young Moroccan Jew and student at Northmount High School was invited to attend a meeting of AJCS' board of trustees to talk about his experiences at Neighbourhood House. David explained that Anglophones and Francophones both participated in the activities, though "he noted that there was a tendency on the part of French children to separate themselves and to congregate together." Still, David expressed his hope that "working together at Neighbourhood House might improve this situation."[154] David's address to AJCS' board of trustees represents a rare case of young North African Jews' needs being heard by Ashkenazi leaders. That this occasion revolved around Neighbourhood House is suggestive of the organization's importance in this history.

Within the community structure, Neighbourhood House represented a massive social service endeavor beyond a place for youths to hang out and for working parents to leave their children. In 1962 only one Federation agency, the "Family & Child Welfare Department,"

[153] Neighbourhood House's realistic answer regarding its need for French staff may reflect its history working with French-speaking people. Women's Federation of AJCS. Education Committee. *French-Speaking Jewish Immigrants and Their Use of Jewish Social Agencies and Women's Service Organizations*. March, 1966. Federation CJA Fonds 1001, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal, 8.
[154] Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Trustees of AJCS, November 6th, 1968. File 00434, Box 42, Federation CJA Fonds 1001, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal.

possessed an annual budget larger than that of Neighbourhood House, which was $71,580.[155] Though the social service landscape would dramatically evolve over the coming years, a worthwhile juxtaposition is with the budget of 1981. In that year, Neighbourhood House's and the YM-YWHA's allocation, $561,600, still greatly exceeded that of any other AJCS agency.[156] Neighbourhood house provided activities for youths and adults in its service area and even was a part of surrounding school programs.[157] It also functioned as a guidance program for up-and-coming Jewish community officials. McGill University used the organization "for the training of graduate and undergraduate social work students."[158] Future Jewish community officials would work as interns at Neighbourhood House, where they might encounter for the first time a sizeable group of North African Jews, and then go on to formulate Jewish community policy as a part of a committee.[159] The organization's role within the Jewish community was thus substantial.

In comparison with other AJCS agencies, Neighbourhood House held a significant position *outside* the Anglophone Jewish community. In 1962, about fifteen percent of its members were non-Jews.[160] By 1969, as much as thirty to seventy-five percent of its teenage activity participants could be non-Jews. Additionally, though it identified itself as an organization with a particular responsibility to "the Jewish community", it also recognized its "history of service to low income groups" and "its responsibility of service to New Canadians and immigrant groups".[161] For immigrants, North African Jews in Canada less than five years represented fifty percent of the

[155] Federation of Jewish Community Services. *Budget Committee's Recommendations 1963, Approved by the Executive Committee*, 1963. File 00012, Box 32, AJCS/FJCS Unprocessed, Jewish Public Library Archives.
[156] AJCS. *Auditor's Report*, July 31st, 1981. File 9, Series DB 07, Box 14, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives.
[157] YM-YWHA. *Neighbourhood House Branch*, Federation CJA Fonds 1001, Jewish Public Library of Montreal.
[158] YM-YWHA. Sheila Finestone. *Presidential Report September 1967 – September 1969*, October, 1969, File 00777, Series MB1, Box 22, Federation CJA Fonds 1001, Jewish Public Library of Montreal.
[159] Phyllis Amber. Interviewed by Julian Binder. Personal Interview. Montreal, March 15th, 2018.
[160] Neighbourhood House. *Some Facts on Neighbourhood House Programs*, May 21st, 1962. FJCS Fonds, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal.
[161] YM-YWHA. *Neighbourhood House Branch*, 1969?, Federation CJA Fonds 1001, Jewish Public Library of Montreal.

members in 1969.[162] North Africans also formed a part of this low-income contingent,[163] though this "history" included serving low-income French and Black Canadians, as well.[164] This partially explains the disproportionate representation North African Jews enjoyed in Neighbourhood House relative to their total population in Montreal.

Neighbourhood House was exceptional in that it defined itself internally as bilingual; even if this distinction was nominal, its record of serving French Canadians may have better prepared this organization linguistically for serving the waves of North African Jews which would subsequently arrive. Furthermore, it was far less strange to see people who were not Ashkenazim, such as French and Black Canadians, at Neighbourhood House then at, for example, the JVS and the GAA. This fact made North African ethnic representation less exceptional there, as well. Like the JVS and the GAA, most immigrants were referred to Neighbourhood House by JIAS, whose sponsorship meant a reduction of or an exemption from fees.[165] Neighbourhood House's surging North African population then was likely an intersection of low fees conducive to the new immigrants' low incomes, a history of dealing in French and with a heterogenous population, running French-language programs, references from JIAS, and its central location in the physical Jewish community. In this light, Neighbourhood House represents an exceptional example of how a social service less determined by Jewish insularity *could* serve North African Jews.

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[162] YM-YWHA. Sheila Finestone. *Presidential Report September 1967 – September 1969*, October, 1969, Federation CJA Fonds 1001, Jewish Public Library of Montreal.
[163] The Women's Federation report conveyed Neighbourhood House's "concern for the level of family income and problems of employment in relation to the Moroccans." Women's Federation of AJCS. Education Committee. *French-Speaking Jewish Immigrants and Their Use of Jewish Social Agencies and Women's Service Organizations*. March, 1966. Federation CJA Fonds 1001, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal, 9.
[164] Though not mentioned in the available correspondence, photos taken in the 1940s show Black Canadian youths and adults participating in lunches and activities. PR00295, *Neighbourhood House*, 83-445b Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal.
[165] Neighbourhood House. *Some Facts on Neighbourhood House Programs*, May 21st, 1962. FJCS Fonds, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal.

Neighbourhood House's disproportionate representation of North African Jews eventually became a platform for disproportionate community efforts. In 1969, the first issue of *Présence*, the first published organ of Montreal's official Sephardi community, then the ASF, announced that AJCS and the YM-YWHA would be opening French departments.[166] The departments, it reported, would be headed by James Dahan, a leader of Morocco's Jewish scout movement, whose goal would be to "supervise youths, train leaders, […] give life to these agencies […], and instill a community interest in our youth."[167] Under Dahan, the French department began to organize very successful scout and leadership programs for young North African Jews.

This announcement, however, was somewhat misleading. The French department of the YM-YWHA, for all intents and purposes, simply meant Neighbourhood House and the opening of a French section of the Snowdown Y branch which had informally already existed. Furthermore, the creation of these "departments" did not put AJCS services for Francophones on par with those offered to Anglophones. The French departments were a space for North African Jews to develop their own "cultural" services with some AJCS funding. Neighbourhood House thus served as a rare outlet for North African Jewish community development actually organized and managed by North Africans. Through their near-majority share of members, reproduced nowhere else in the landscape of Montreal Jewish community services, North African Jews had gained a voice in the organized Ashkenazi structure.

A closer look at this process reveals even more direct ways in which North African Jewish involvement at Neighbourhood House influenced the Ashkenazi community's policies. In 1977,

[166] *Présence* was in practice both the paper of the Sephardi community and the bulletin of the new French departments under North African management. Though precise documentation is lacking, it seems likely that *Présence* was also funded by the budget of the French departments allocated by AJCS.
[167] "Tout Vient à Point," *Présence*, September 1969, 2.

the Communauté Sépharade Francophone (CSQ)[168] would become a constituent agency of AJCS.[169] An examination of the events leading up to this "merger" reveals that Neighbourhood House played a key role. In 1969, along with the new French departments, the Comité sur le Fait Français was created. Though the committee was broadly intended to improve the relationship between English-speaking Jews and Québécois, its mandate would eventually include attempts at improving the level of French within the Ashkenazi community itself.[170] Parallel to these developments, in 1971, a sub-commission of another committee was organized to treat the question of a community center for Sephardi Jews (read North African). In 1974 this committee became, confusingly, the Comité Francophone, whose express responsibility was a "[response] specifically to the question of, and need for a sépharade community center which had for a number of years been under discussion in AJCS and the sépharade community."[171] In 1975 this committee, staffed by Ashkenazim as well as North Africans, recognized that Neighbourhood House in fact had a primary responsibility to and significance for the needs of the "Sephardi Community".[172] The negotiations of this committee would eventually lead to the merger of the CSQ with AJCS.

The North Africans staffing the Comité Francophone were the North African executives of Neighbourhood House and the ASF. The Ashkenazim staffing the Comité Francophone were the same as those staffing the Comité sur le Fait Français. This somewhat convoluted institutional history reveals that a significant part of the North African Jewish community's development was

[168] Previously the ASF.
[169] AJCS. Executive Committee. *Report of Comité Conjoint AJCS-CSQ*, August 24th, 1977. File 00472, Box 42, Federation CJA Fonds 1001, Jewish Public Library of Montreal.
[170] AJCS, *Comité sur le Fait Français*. *PROJET ACTION RAPPROCHEMENT*, December 28th, 1979. File 4, Series ZB P15/29, Container: Amber, Phyllis, CJC Documentation Collection Fonds, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives.
[171] AJCS, *Comité Francophone*. *RAPPORT DU COMITÉ FRANCOPHONE*, March 15th, 1977. File 4, Series ZB P15/29, Container: Amber, Phyllis, CJC Documentation Collection Fonds, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives.
[172] Ibid., *Report from the committee to study the role of Neighbourhood House within the association*, November 13th, 1975. CJC Documentation Collection Fonds, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives.

achieved through Neighbourhood House. Former directors of Neighbourhood House could become presidents of the CSQ, like Michel Chokron. Additionally, extraordinarily close ties existed between the committee working to prepare the Anglophone community for an ever more Francizing Quebec and the one working for Sephardi community development. The Ashkenazi community had a limited number of adequate French speakers, so those that were active in the community quickly became ubiquitous in all activities related to the "French Fact".[173] This meant that the same Ashkenazi Jews developing "rapprochement" programs with French Canadians were negotiating the improvement of French-language services with North African community activists. In fact, the 1977 merger was welcomed by the Comité sur le Fait Français as an opportunity for a "closer working relationship with the sépharade community in general terms, and more specifically *in the activities of our committee*."[174]

As a condition for the CSQ-AJCS merger in 1977, Neighbourhood House would be renamed the Centre Communautaire Juif (CCJ), a community center responsible for the needs of French-speaking Sephardi Jews.[175] In the same year, before the CCJ's inauguration, Jean-Claude Lasry, the president of the CSQ and a central figure of the merger, argued that their struggle for the CCJ represented his community's learned experience that French "departments" could not respond to their needs. AJCS' concession, which Harold Troper calls "parallelism",[176] was simply a way "de noyer le poission"—to avoid the issue.[177] In 1977 this seemed a surer fact, but a decade earlier Neighbourhood House served as proof that the perceived lack of "integration" into

[173] Phyllis Amber. Interviewed by Julian Binder. Personal Interview. Montreal, March 15th, 2018.
[174] Emphasis added. Memorandum, Rosetta Elkin and Jack Gottheil, co-chairpersons to Fait Français Committee, August 18th, 1977, File 4, Series ZB P15/29, Container: Amber, Phyllis, CJC Documentation Collection Fonds, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives.
[175] AJCS. Executive Committee. *Report of Comité Conjoint AJCS-CSQ*, August 24th, 1977. Federation CJA Fonds 1001, Jewish Public Library of Montreal.
[176] Troper, *The Defining Decade: Identity, Politics, and the Canadian Jewish Community in the 1960s*, 45–46.
[177] Bensimon, *20 Ans Après*.

Ashkenazi community structures was not a result of "cultural difference" or North Africans' "unrealistic expectations". David Timsit's hope that Neighbourhood House could bring English- and French-speaking youths closer together remains a hopeful indicator of this. That two decades after the initial immigrations a young generation of community activists had drifted away from advocating for the Ashkenazi community to adapt to them speaks to the fact that Neighbourhood House was an exception.

The story of Neighbourhood House reveals a basic misunderstanding in the historiography of North African Jews in Canada. Historians have assumed that North African Jews both desired and erected their own institutions, but what does this mean? What institutions did North African Jews establish? With the help of the Quebec government, the ASF founded a French-language Jewish school which eventually joined the Association of Jewish Day Schools along with other Anglophone and Ashkenazi-run schools.[178] In 1977, the official Sephardi community merged with AJCS, effectively becoming another Montreal Jewish agency. As we have seen, North African community activism was mostly expressed through relegation to French departments which began as and effectively still were, structures within the existing Montreal Jewish community. The narrative of Sephardi Jews in Montreal desiring separate institutions from the moment of their immigration with the exclusive purpose of preserving a cultural identity is demonstrably incorrect. The current Communauté Sépharade Unifiée du Québec (CSUQ) remains structurally a part of the total Jewish community, and at no point were these "Sephardi institutions" completely divorced from the anglophone institutions which had predated them. The only brief exception was École Maïmonide.

[178] Chevalier-Caron, "De l'Alliance Israélite Universelle à l'école Maïmonide," 106.

Neighbourhood House remained a central piece in North African Jewish community efforts in Montreal throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Originally an Ashkenazi community center which served some French-speaking Montrealers, it inadvertently became a distinctively valuable social service—and an opportunity—for North African Jews. An atypical set of conditions made it a relatively successful service for North African Jews when others were widely inaccessible. Unlike other social services, their high share of Neighbourhood House's clientele offered them a rare opportunity to become leaders rather than hope to reach the ears of Ashkenazi leaders, so that it effectively came under the management of North Africans, while being funded by AJCS. This was evident by 1971, when the Bulletin du Cercle Juif, the French-language organ of the CJC, stated that the objective of The French Department of the YM-YWHA was the "preservation of Sephardi culture".[179] This goal already went far beyond the "adaptation" of Anglophone Jewish services. Through Neighbourhood House, North African Jews worked with Ashkenazim who formed an important political vanguard for their Anglophone community. More than this, North African Jews directly participated in these developments as Quebec society was changing.

The success of Neighbourhood House can be seen as the exception which proves the rule. Neighbourhood House worked for North African Jews, not because it was a Jewish social service, but because it was a social service that did not exclusively serve Jews. The liminality of the space allowed North African Jews to move across dividing lines which were more securely fortified elsewhere. Furthermore, the decision to compartmentalize the anomaly into Francophone departments is emblematic of the larger divisive context. It seemed natural in 1969 to separate English and French, especially after it became clear that one could no longer simply be "Jewish".

[179] This assertion was published when the *Bulletin* included articles written by some North African Jewish community activists. This view was thus likely not shared by the entire CJC, but its publishing is still significant. "LE DEPARTEMENT FRANCOPHONE DU Y.M.-Y.W.H.A. & N.H.S. DE MONTREAL BRANCHE SNOWDON," *Bulletin Du Cercle Juif*, January 1971.

Finally, the efforts of North African community activists in Neighbourhood House proves that their strategies for communal development were not simply to create their own institutions, but to gain a voice within the existing Jewish community.

Survival or Strategy: Who Speaks for North African Jews?

As the number of North African Jews settling in Montreal grew, especially after 1966, it became clearer to Ashkenazi individuals and institutions that there was a problem. Joseph Kage iterated often that all immigrations came with their fair share of integration blues, but the attention reserved for North African Jews after 1966 suggests a growing consensus that they posed a different kind of problem. At the same time, the Ashkenazi community was dealing with a Quebec no longer satisfied with English supremacy and seeking to "catch up". Throughout this tumultuous period, Quebec would replace the omnipresent role of the Catholic church in favor of new responsibilities for a progressive government in all areas of social and cultural life.[180] In the first decade after the end of the Duplessis era, the government of Quebec signed up for a federal hospital insurance scheme, nationalized the powerful hydroelectric trusts and created Hydro-Québec, established a Ministry of Education and one of Immigration, opened a whole new network of educational institutions called CÉGEPs, reformed the civil code, vastly improving the legal options available to women, and funded small and medium businesses in an initiative that was aimed at reducing the influence of corporations and improving the socioeconomic position of Francophones.[181] These structural changes were accompanied by social and cultural shifts, as well. Sunday church attendance for Catholics was cut in half, and Quebec participated in a "sexual revolution".[182] A major part of the changes was aimed at improving the relatively poor opportunities available to Francophones.

In an interview, Phyllis Amber would alternate between saying that the Anglophone Jewish community's response "wasn't fear, it was action", and that Jews were indeed afraid:

[180] Marc Vallières et al., *Histore de Québec et de Sa Région III* (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2008), 1613.
[181] Gossage and Little, *An Illustrated History of Quebec: Tradition and Modernity*, 233–38.
[182] Ibid., 240–41.

> "It was a time of very great turmoil and social upheaval, political and social upheaval. A very exciting time, scary at the time, as Jews we didn't know what was going to happen, but there was such a vibrancy in that period. […] Meetings up to your eyeballs. Talk to me about going to a meeting today […] I break into a rash!"[183]

Archival documents and periodicals readily support this statement. The period of the 1960s and 1970s was one of intense activity for the Jewish community of Montreal. As the government established commissions to guide its actions, Jews, along with other ethnic-religious communities, sent letters and "mémoires" to the researchers, convened countless meetings to determine community positions, and printed hundreds of articles on the subject of the "French Fact." Part of this effort at publicization was a reflection of the well-known fact that the Jewish community had previously not needed to conduct itself in French. The sudden need to relate to a government looking to integrate previously insular networks into a centralized one with responsibility also to Francophones jarred community leaders, forcing them to position themselves tactically.

The multiple aspects of Jewish identity—first and foremost language—became more and more strategically employed to try and direct the winds behind the sails of the Quiet Revolution. Jewish leaders were not necessarily against Quebec "coming into its own", but significant effort was required to ensure that, whatever Quebec became, it continue to be a place where Jews could live.[184] Simultaneously, both Ashkenazi and North African Jewish community leaders became more embroiled in the apparent incompatibility of their groups within existing institutions. Like oil and water, they could not seem to mix.

To address these realities, Ashkenazi students and committee members took on the voices of North African Jews, projecting observed problems and conceivable solutions. Rarely did they breach the divide to include North Africans in these meetings and reports. Though the ethnic-

[183] Phyllis Amber. Interviewed by Julian Binder. Personal Interview. Montreal, March 15th, 2018.
[184] Ibid.

linguistic segregation of Quebec itself was not the impetus for all of the reports and theses, it was often the driving force behind the circumstances they described. The reports and theses would point to a "clash of cultures" at the heart of North African Jewish problems which posited an incompatibility between the groups. This perception therefore both stemmed from and reinforced the ethnic-linguistic dividing line which defined Quebec in this period. Within the framework of this shift, Jews became more and more represented within internal documents and publications in terms of cultural specificity. On the other side, North African Jews, more and more designated as culturally backwards and continuously feeling the structural divisions imposed by Quebec's divisive landscape, aimed to redefine themselves along more advantageous—Francophone—lines.

A somewhat ignored reality of this period is that Ashkenazim often adopted a racialized categorization which tended to justify the structural difficulties encountered by North African Jews. The 1966 Women's Federation report theorized that in Morocco, Jewish "needs for education, social welfare and religious services" were the responsibilities of the government and the wealthy. This understanding justified the stereotype that North Africans were unwilling to contribute in Montreal and was underwritten by their inability to grasp "the common western concept of participating in or involvement with the quantity or quality of service."[185] A response from Mr. J. R. LeRoy, principal of Baron Byng high school, one of the few protestant schools to offer a program in French, "observed that there was an element of 'foreigness' to the Moroccan students who seem to lack a frame of refence for their new life in Canada." LeRoy proposed "an indoctrination in the Canadian way of life and the role of the Jewish community in Canada".[186] Everyday interactions between Ashkenazim and North Africans, as between landlords and tenants,

[185] Women's Federation of AJCS. Education Committee. *French-Speaking Jewish Immigrants and Their Use of Jewish Social Agencies and Women's Service Organizations*. March, 1966. Federation CJA Fonds 1001, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal, 2-3.
[186] Ibid., 22-23.

also became platforms for racialization, with Moroccans in particular being often accused of excessive filthiness and noise.[187] Time and again, North African Jews were associated with "eastern" habits and behaviors which were juxtaposed disadvantageously with their "western" Ashkenazi coreligionists in Montreal.[188]

As North African Jews gained visibility within Ashkenazi institutions, they began to use their new command of Jewish spaces to counter these racialized and prejudicial stereotypes. Using especially Jewish news spaces, they would clarify what the problems faced by North African Jews actually were. This section will examine two French publications to propose that the voices of North African Jews played a role in the elaboration of intra-Jewish conflict in Montreal, and that this conflict was laid out closely along linguistic and perceived ethnic lines. It will therefore answer the question, as best it can: who spoke for North African Jews? Crucially, this will involve assessing why and how North African Jewish voices were being adopted. By doing so, it will seek to demonstrate the events and micro and macro influences which helped to crystallize a new Sépharade identity.

In the 1960s and 1970s, a relatively small number of Ashkenazim spoke French, and the community was not ready to become fully bilingual. Their trajectory in Canada had meant their anglicization and segregation from most French speakers. Still, North African Jews had become a fact of life and were fast becoming a larger, more visible one. As they grew in numbers and as the Quiet Revolution became noisier, periodicals became an important space for them to speak for themselves. However, few outlets existed through which North Africans could express themselves

[187] "Sabra". Interviewed by Roy Shukrun. Personal Interview. Montreal, November 6th, 2019.
[188] Amber and Lipper, *Towards an Understanding of Moroccan Jewish Family Life: Including the Perceptions of Moroccan Immigrants to Montreal*, 1.

in French. One was the CJC's own official French organ, the Bulletin du Cercle Juif. The other was the official organ of the ASF, *Présence*.

What is significant about these sources is that the circumstances which reflected a greater ethnic-linguistic divide in Quebec were reproduced within intra-Jewish spaces. The liminal space occupied by North African Jews *as Jews* spurred Ashkenazim to fill the gaps between them with tropes aimed at clarifying why they could not integrate properly across the dividing lines. At the same time, the shifts of linguistic privilege upending Quebec society spurred North Africans to reinvent themselves as Sépharades and to frame their issues as a classic conflict of Ashkenazim versus Sephardim.

Bulletin du Cercle Juif

The first known Jewish publication written in French in Quebec was the Bulletin du Cercle Juif, operated by the Cercle Juif de Langue Française, a group made of French-speaking Jews employed by CJC. The Bulletin was founded in 1954 by CJC and was edited by Naim Kattan for thirteen years.[189] Its purpose was to improve CJC's relationship with French Canadians and thus was a free publication. In practice, the Bulletin was sent to French-speaking Jews and a French-Canadian elite and made little headway into Quebec society at large.[190] However, North African Jews also sometimes read the periodical, as demonstrated by a letter sent to the Cercle Juif in January 1973 by Jacob Bendayan. In the letter Bendayan thanked the editor, writing that since his family's arrival five years before they had regularly received the publication, and that they all appreciated "the noble and admirable task that you are assigned in defense of the collective interests of the Francophone Jewish community of Greater Montreal." The letter was signed Jacob Bendayan, "born in Morocco (Tangier)."[191]

Bendayan's letter contradicts an assessment of the periodical which claims that its quality, independence, and thus importance significantly plummeted after Kattan's departure in 1967.[192] This date coincides with the greater space occupied by North African Jewish community activists in the Bulletin. This claim of quality reduction may partially refer to a shift in leadership and audiences. In fact, in 1968 Ralph Lallouz, formerly of the GJNA, took over as president of the

[189] Naim Kattan was born in Baghdad in 1928 and emigrated to Montreal in 1954 where he founded the Bulletin with CJC. He has since authored numerous novels and countless articles as a contributor to newspapers such as *Le Devoir*. Kattan worked closely with CJC and was probably the most prominent French-speaking Jew in Montreal at the height of his career. He remains a major figure in the history of Jewish Canada.
[190] Lewis Levendel, *A Century of the Canadian Jewish Press, 1880s-1980s* (Ottawa: Borealis Press, 1989), 259.
[191] Letter, Jacob Bendayan to *Cercle Juif de Langue Française*, January 23rd, 1973, File: Cercle Correspondance, Series DB-05 Meyer Levy, Community Relations. Box 8, CJC Fonds, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives.
[192] Jean-Philippe Croteau, "L'intégration Scolaire Des Juifs Francophones et Le Bulletin Du Cercle Juif (1954-1968)," *Bulletin d'histoire Politique* 10, no. 3 (2002): 156; Levendel, *A Century of the Canadian Jewish Press, 1880s-1980s*, 260.

Cercle Juif de Langue Française. Also, in 1968 an unprecedented number of North African Jews joined the board of the Cercle, all of them representatives of the ASF. From the late 1960s on, the Bulletin would report increasingly on the goings-on of the ASF and in some cases would publish blatantly personal news relevant only to one ASF official or another.[193] This shift may partially reflect Jacob Bendayan's interest, and the amplification of voice offered to North African Jews within the Cercle and the Bulletin. Whether that voice was being heard outside of French or ASF circles is another question.

Prior to the increased representation of the ASF in the Cercle, the Bulletin reported little concerning North African Jews. Between 1959 and 1960, the only mention of North African Jews was a rather pessimistic article describing the Jewish situation in Morocco reprinted from La Chronique Parisienne[194] and an interview with Raymond Landry, a student who had interviewed some French-speaking Jewish families "from Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa".[195] Through to 1965, the only references to North African Jews are the increased numbers of immigrants to Montreal, particularly from Algeria. It is interesting that Bulletin made note of Algerian Jews and not Moroccan Jews, who were far more numerous, and in fact this may represent the periodical's orientation towards France, since many Algerian Jews had French citizenship.[196] Thus for the first decade of its existence, though it published articles about the possibilities of bilingual schools in Montreal, the Bulletin was not particularly aware of or concerned with the

[193] See for example an article which congratulates Salomon Benbaruk's son, Léon, for completing his degree at McGill and being accepted to Oxford as a Rhodes scholar. The article even includes a glowing biography of Benbaruk himself. The article starkly contrasts the *Bulletin's* official reports and reflects more the increased representation of the ASF in the *Bulletin*. "M. Léon Benbaruk à l'Honneur," *Bulletin Du Cercle Juif*, December 1971.
[194] Etienne Milhaud, "Une Visite Du Maroc," *Bulletin Du Cercle Juif*, March 1959.
[195] Raymond Landry, "L'EDUCATION A LA FRATERNITE MONDIALE ET LES JUIFS DE LANGUE FRANCAISE," *Bulletin Du Cercle Juif*, March 1960.
[196] "EDITORIAL," *Bulletin Du Cercle Juif*, January 1962.

problems faced by North African Jews.[197] It was in 1965 that more and more articles began to reflect the activities of the ASF; similarly to the case of Neighbourhood House, this was likely due to the increased physical space in the Cercle as well as the increased intellectual space in Montreal occupied by North African Jews. Where they had been simply one group of French-speaking Jews in Montreal in the late 1950s, by the mid-1960s they were becoming the majority.

From 1965 on, the Bulletin exploded with news regarding the ASF and the role of Francophone Jews in Quebec. Interestingly, the news was rarely framed as being solely about North African Jews, but nearly always about Sephardi Jews of French language—Sépharades. This suggests that this new outlet for North African voices was being used to demarcate a public identity, rather than a private one, and particularly with reference to the specific issues which these Jews encountered. Additionally, this public identity was associated with the events of the Quiet Revolution. For example, in March 1965, an editorial appeared which encouraged Francophone Jews to participate in the French "renaissance" of Quebec. It stipulated that Francophone Jews had a duty to explain this cultural renewal to their English-speaking coreligionists.[198] This editorial could have been written by Naim Kattan and not a member of the ASF, but it reflected a new emphasis on the "duty" of Francophone Jews which emboldened and led to the publication of more ASF-related content.

In August 1966, the Bulletin published an advertisement for a bilingual school proposed by l'union des Sépharades, but which would not come to fruition until 1969 under the auspices of the ASF.[199] In October 1966, then president of the ASF André Amiel wrote that even if they benefited from Jewish institutions like hospitals and JIAS, North African Jews were isolated and

[197] Croteau, "L'intégration Scolaire Des Juifs Francophones et Le Bulletin Du Cercle Juif (1954-1968)," 156–57.
[198] "EDITORIAL," *Bulletin Du Cercle Juif*, March 1966.
[199] "Ecole Juive Bilingue," *Bulletin Du Cercle Juif*, August 1966.

cut off from the rest of the Jewish community *because* its institutions, like the CJC, were representative and unified. Through them, he said, one could make their voice heard. He entreated:

> "Stop soliciting us, but on the contrary, bring our contribution to all that our Anglophone coreligionists do to makes this country beautiful and marvelous. We should not forget that the realization of our wishes as Jews can only be achieved within the framework of the large Jewish community of Montreal."[200]

For Amiel, the ASF was a way for North Africans to gain a voice within the Ashkenazi framework. It seems clear, when reading these early sources, that what North African community activists wanted was not at all a separate community, but adequate representation and services within existing Jewish structures. Rather than hoping to benefit from established institutions without contributing, Amiel implored Anglophone Jewish leaders to allow North Africans to contribute. The creation of North African associations was partly a response to this imbalance and the desire to overcome it, and thus to become equal partners of the Montreal Jewish community. The divisive landscape of Quebec, however, made this challenging at best.

In February 1967, Salomon Benbaruk published another entreaty on behalf of the ASF, explaining that its purpose was to bring North African Jews into the fold of the existing Jewish community. Crucially, he framed the split as one between Ashkenazim and Sephardim, but defined these categories based on language: "Yiddish" against "judeo-arabic […] and actually French, too."[201] In April 1968, Benbaruk again published an article, this one called "Do we need a French-language Jewish school?", for which the given answer was, naturally, yes. Benbaruk justified his argument by openly acknowledging the French, rather than the bilingual, future of Quebec. He wrote:

> "…only through a UNIFIED school system the primary language of which is the language of the majority of the country, which is to say French, and with English second […] can there be equality in instruction and in diplomas. The *Québequois* or the inhabitant of Quebec has to express

[200] "L'Association Sépharade Francophone." *Bulletin Du Cercle Juif*, October 1966.
[201] "Association Sépharade Francophone," *Bulletin Du Cercle Juif*, February 1967.

> themselves, study, speak and begin in the first place with French and then be necessarily bilingual."[202]

This stance was undoubtedly a bold statement that went far beyond the position of CJC. For example, in its proposal to the Gendron Commission, conducted between 1968 and 1973, CJC argued that the best course of action for schooling in Quebec was a two-track, bilingual school system.[203] This plan echoed the Anglophone Jewish community's fears that they would be forced to integrate into a monolingual French system. These fears had been stoked by the St-Leonard affair, a crisis which revolved around the instruction language in public schools, and which had led to the formation of the Gendron Commission.[204] Benbaruk in particular tended to take stances that were more extreme than other community activists. Still, the fact that his article was printed in a Jewish organ in the midst of sit-ins, bloody demonstrations, and separatist bombings aimed at protesting the St-Leonard situation proved that the ASF had gained a larger voice in the Bulletin, and that they were increasingly identifying themselves with a future Quebec which privileged Francophones.[205]

Haim Hazan, another community activist involved with the ASF, began publishing articles in the Bulletin as well, especially concerning the ongoing negotiations between the Catholic School Commission of Montreal and the ASF for opening a French-language Jewish school.[206] In 1971, an article advertising the Francophone department of the YM-YWHA and Neighbourhood House appeared in the Bulletin, stating that their objectives were: firstly, "the preservation of

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[202] Salomon Benbaruk, "AVONS-NOUS BESOIN D'UNE ECOLE JUIVE DE LANGUE FRANCAISE?," *Bulletin Du Cercle Juif*, April 1968.
[203] CJC, *Proposal for Submission by C.J.C. to the Gendron Commission of Inquiry on the Position of the French Language and on Language Rights in Quebec*, File: Proposal for Gendron Commission, Series QA-01, Box 10, JIAS Canada Collection Fonds, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives.
[204] Sancton, *Governing the Island of Montreal: Language Differences and Metropolitan Politics*, 77.
[205] Marc V. Levine, *The Reconquest of Montreal: Language Policy and Social Change in a Bilingual City* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 72.
[206] Haim Hazan, "Dispositions Prises Par La Commission Des Ecoles Catholiques Relatives Aux Eleves de Confession Juive," *Bulletin Du Cercle Juif*, October 1969.

traditional Sephardi culture based on Hebrew and French"; and secondly, "the survival of Sephardism in harmony with the ambiance of a Francophone North America [which is to say] the preservation of intercommunity relations and the historic future of Sephardism in Quebec."[207] Both of these articles demonstrated efforts of the North African community activists of the ASF working towards a future with a closer relationship to French Canadians than the Anglophone Jewish community could have imagined. In 1964, Percy Caplan, selling the old Neighbourhood House building, had been surprised to find that a Catholic institution could even enter into real estate business with Jews, and North Africans were being turned away from French Catholic schools.[208] In 1969, largely due to North African community activism and the formulation of policies privileging French in Quebec, Neighbourhood House was the center of an imagined "historic future of Sephardism in Quebec" and the ASF opened a French-language Jewish school inside a wing of a Catholic school.[209] These developments were representative of the major shifts taking place throughout Quebec and which were, through community activists, being reproduced within intra-Jewish spaces.

The early 1970s only saw the ASF's share of the Bulletin increase. It reported on the ASF's elections, Ralph Lallouz's promotion to vice president of CJC's French departments, and the anniversary of École Maïmonide, the ASF's French-language Jewish school. The Bulletin had gone from being completely unaware of or uninterested in North African Jews to including their activities in every issue. It is prudent to note that the Bulletin becoming one organ of the ASF within CJC meant that only *some* North African Jews had gained a voice through it. The Bulletin was far from being a representative of the ASF, let alone all North African Jews in Montreal. In

[207] "LE DEPARTEMENT FRANCOPHONE DU Y.M.-Y.W.H.A. & N.H.S. DE MONTREAL BRANCHE SNOWDON."
[208] Chevalier-Caron, "De l'Alliance Israélite Universelle à l'école Maïmonide," 99–100.
[209] Ibid., 106.

particular, it favored the voices of a few men in the ASF and did not include North African Jewish women's voices. It also remained an organ of CJC, and it still represented its views. This fact could lead to private disagreements spilling into the public sphere, disagreements which stemmed from the increased boldness of the ASF's perceived association with Quebec's French future.

For example, in June of 1968 the Bulletin printed a response by CJC to an article which had been published in Journal La Presse by André Luchaire. Luchaire, to the dissatisfaction of CJC, had conducted an interview with Elias Malka, then president of the ASF. The article was titled "Canadian Jewish Congress accepts the principle of French Jewish schools." In the article, Luchaire wrote that this new position put an end to "a long tradition of indifference [by CJC] to the French Fact." Reciting information gained from Malka, Luchaire wrote that, though most Montreal Jews were "Ashkenazi", the French Jewish community was "almost totally of Sephardi rite." "In fact," Luchaire added, "when one says Sephardi in Montreal, they mean Francophone." In the interview, Malka lamented about the situation of North African Jews having to send their children to Protestant schools, "where they are anglicized." The CJC, Luchaire wrote, had in fact constituted an "oligarchy" which had for years been subject to criticism. The article further lauded the efforts of the ASF in advocating and organizing Francophone activities and opportunities for North African Jews.[210]

CJC's response was indignant. They rebuked Luchaire for accusing them of a long-standing indifference to the French Fact and listed more than a dozen points which refuted his statement. CJC, they argued, had created the Cercle Juif de Langue Française in 1948 and the Cercle held meetings in French; had published successful pamphlets and documents in French; had always advocated for teaching French as a second language, pointing towards their "mémoire"

[210] André Luchaire, "Le Congrès Juif Canadien Accepte Le Principe Des Écoles Juives Françaises," *Journal La Presse*, May 25, 1968.

submitted to the Gendron Commission; and had the Jewish taxpayer, who paid taxes to the PSBGM, to think of. These first points were aimed at listing the accomplishment of CJC with regard to the French Fact. The rest of the points targeted every claim made about Sephardim.[211]

More than half of the article was concerned with the apparent misconceptions which Luchaire had acquired from Malka. It was true, the article read, that North African Jews had made the question of French more acute, but "this new community must admit that, while it easy to repeat resolutions already emitted by CJC since 1962-1966, it is harder to realize these by having them approved by the government and then funding them with special budgets […]." The article quickly took on a bitter tone, continuing: "Until today, the Jewish community of Quebec, principally 'Ashkenazi,' has funded its own school budgets. The Sephardi Francophone community, which expresses the urgency of French Jewish schools, is surely ready to do the same."[212] Amazingly, the CJC was publicly calling out a Jewish association whose aspirations seemed to be threatening both its legitimacy and its record. For the ASF to feature so prominently in a criticism of CJC was unacceptable. It was evident that the ASF could not afford to fund its own proposed school, and this budgetary discrepancy became a jab at the smaller group's illegitimacy as a representative of Montreal Jewry.

The article went on and condemned the group claim made about Sephardi identity. Luchaire, it read, had been gravely mistaken in equating "Francophone" with "Sephardi," and by assuming that North African Jews had brought French culture to the Jewish community of Montreal. Even the fact that these Jews represented the majority of Francophones was mistaken. While Sephardi Jews were often uniquely Francophones, Ashkenazim, they countered, were not

[211] "REPONSE DU CONGRES JUIF CANADIEN A Monsieur André Luchaire de Journal La Presse," *Bulletin Du Cercle Juif*, June 1968.
[212] Ibid.

necessarily unilingual. In fact, they corrected, "Sephardi Jews numbered 10,000 at the most", while "'Ashkenazi' Jews, notably those of the new generation, exactly 38,234 individuals, are perfectly bilingual and thus Francophones, too […]."[213] Furthermore:

> "'Ashkenazi' Jews actually have as much interest and right, if not more, than Sephardi Jews to a good and egalitarian French education. André said erroneously, tendentiously, and with much exaggeration, that Sephardi Jews would be the authentic emanation of the French-speaking Jewish community that considers itself responsible for the survival of French culture brought here by the immigrants from North Africa."[214]

CJC concluded by stating that it was the representative of "ALL" Jews. It advised an unnamed organization to avoid creating a myth of "discrimination against Sephardi Jews, or a disinterest in them by the CJC, or their monopoly of the French Jewish population, when they are only a minority […]." The Jewish community, they amended, was more united than ever.[215]

Though the article was written as a response to Luchaire, it was evident that the intended readers were Elias Malka and the ASF. CJC had sent the article in a letter to the editor of Journal la Presse, and likely expected the ASF to read it in the Bulletin. In speaking with Luchaire, the ASF had crossed confessional lines and forced CJC to be on the defensive within its own ostensible community. For North African Jews this bureaucratic category of Judaism had been detrimental, a fact which CJC still did not understand. To a large extent, historians still do not recognize this fact. Though the trend was to relegate them to French departments, North Africans could not claim to be the Francophone Jews of Montreal, and the reason was clear: in the context of a Quebec suddenly privileging French, CJC could not afford to be painted as a monolingual, anti-French institution. Though its 38,234 supposedly fully bilingual Ashkenazim was unverifiable and almost certainly untrue, it was for CJC a necessary illusion in the context of the Quiet Revolution. The

[213] Ibid.
[214] Ibid.
[215] Ibid.

idea that "Sephardim" should be the voice of Jews to the Quebec government or society, the voice of French-Jewish Quebec, simply hit too close to home, and endangered the precarious position of the Anglophone Jewish community as Anglophones and as Jews.

From the ASF's point of view, strengthening their ties with French Canadians by speaking to journalists like Luchaire and appealing to the government was a means for French-speaking North African Jews to improve their position and address their issues. These avenues became crucial as the Ashkenazi community continually lagged on adapting itself to the French fact. In 1977, Manny Batshaw, executive director of AJCS, was interviewed in Jacques Bensimon's documentary. In the interview he pushed back against the idea that Sephardim required special consideration and stressed that his duty was to the "total Jewish community".[216] CJC's response to Luchaire's article demonstrates that this sentiment had been even more pronounced in the 1960s. While CJC still operated on the bureaucratic category of Judaism which confessionally included North Africans while racializing them and excluding them linguistically, the ASF aimed to reinvent themselves so as to transcend these categories.

Furthermore, it should not be lost on us that CJC felt the need to exceptionally frame its response in terms of "Ashkenazim" and "Sephardim". CJC was decidedly not in the habit of identifying itself as an Ashkenazi organization, but as the voice of "[ALL]" Jews. Rather, it picked up on the Francophone Sephardi identity that the ASF had utilized in its communication with Luchaire—and which formed the basis of the association itself—and adopted the paradigm to frame its own complaint. Suddenly, when the ethnic-linguistic divide reared its head outside of the segregated Jewish solitude, the CJC was "Ashkénaze," and the North Africans, at least those represented by the ASF, were "Sépharade."

[216] Bensimon, *20 Ans Après*.

CJC's response was not necessarily unreasonable. As stated above, the late 1960s were a period of intense separatist activity and tumultuous structural change. The established Jewish community was working hard to secure guarantees for a Jewish future in Quebec. Though to some, like Luchaire, that meant denying the French Fact, to others it simply meant a slow process of negotiation with the new governments and internal adaptation. At the same time, the ASF was leveraging its position as a native French-speaking segment of the total Jewish community in a way that was more convincing than Ashkenazi community's oft-cited statistic about its rate of bilingualism.

Even CJC used the voices of North African Jews to bolster their own appearance of bilingualism. In their submission to Gendron Commission drafted by Joseph Kage, they had directly pointed at North African Jews, writing that the Jewish community's "trend towards bilingualism has steadily increased since W.W.II due to immigration, and particularly since 1957, when immigration from North Africa brought to Canada thousands of French speaking Jewish families."[217] When it was necessary, CJC knew to leverage the native French-speaking part of their community, especially to resist forced francization policies which would catch the Anglophone community by surprise. The public acknowledgement of the intra-Jewish split along ethnic-linguistic lines, however, endangered the ability of Anglophone institutions to argue an exception from the need for francization. No matter their efforts, Ashkenazim were tied to a history of English supremacy in Quebec, while North Africans could claim an authentic connection to "French culture" stemming from their experience of colonization. When these divergent streams

[217] CJC, *Proposal for Submission by C.J.C. to the Gendron Commission of Inquiry on the Position of the French Language and on Language Rights in Quebec*, JIAS Canada Collection Fonds, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives.

met in Quebec under the pressures of a linguistic power-shift, the publicity of this previously subdued ethnic conflict was perhaps inevitable.

Présence

The Bulletin was only ever a partial outlet for the ASF. They gained a larger share of its space as the years passed, but it remained the official French publication of CJC. This mattered less, however, as they launched their own organ in 1969, *Présence*. Likely funded by the budgets of AJCS's new French departments, which were Neighbourhood House and the Snowdown Branch of the YM-YWHA, *Présence*, unlike the Bulletin, was unequivocally the voice of the new self-styled Sépharade community of North African Jews in Montreal. It hailed the achievements of the ASF and other North African Jews, it advertised businesses owned by North Africans, and monitored what it saw as a diaspora of North African Jews around the world, especially in Israel. *Présence* is still in publication today under the name La Voix Sépharade.

Présence was a space in which the community activists of the ASF could negotiate their identities as Sépharades as well as report on activities and issues they felt were being ignored by CJC and Ashkenazi institutions. Furthermore, it was an opportunity for them to draw in other North African Jews into their official structures and to take on a more serious role vis-à-vis their kin still arriving in significant numbers. In the first issue which began in September of 1969 with the opening of École Maïmonide, Elias Malka sketched the perceived role of the ASF and *Présence*. Malka wrote that it had been thirteen years since the first North African Jews arrived in Montreal; thirteen, like the age at which boys had a *bar-mitzva*, meant that the community had now come of age, and was ready to take on "our adult responsibilities." Malka encouraged all who were capable to volunteer in "improving the social services which already exist and work to adapt them to the specific needs of this new community."[218] It is significant that, even as they opened their own school and published their own paper, the ASF continued to insist that they wanted to

[218] Elias Malka, "Editorial," *Présence*, September 1969.

adapt existing social services and *not* to replace them with their own institutions. This did not represent the whole picture, and Jean-Claude Lasry would later somewhat argue differently with regard to the Centre Communautaire Juif, but this earlier claim upsets how the aspirations of North African Jews in Montreal have been understood.

Présence was often used by ASF officials to shape the boundaries of their "new community." Malka wrote that the Anglophone community now found itself with a second community "for which they were not ready" and that the readers needed to help "prepare a tomorrow when we can be proud of our origins and our belonging to a rightfully considered ethnic group."[219] The publication was careful about when it referred to North African Jews as Sépharades, and seemed aware that the use of Sépharade to describe them as an ethnic group was tenuous. Similarly, in 1972 Jean-Claude Lasry, as president of the ASF, wrote in *Présence* that "we surprise ourselves in researching oriental music, dishes and patisseries from back home, to speak Arabic… Our traditions rise to the surface like bubbles that we tried unsuccessfully to keep at the bottom." Presidents of the ASF thus were conscious that the adoption of the term Sépharade was groundwork for a future North African Jewish community which they were, hopefully, working towards. Lasry wrote that the North African community of Montreal was one of the most beautiful in the world: "it suffices to compare with Paris, Ashdod or Washington."[220] In these early issues, "North African" was consistently used by these activists to refer to themselves rather than Sépharades, and even their identification as a diaspora was with "North Africans" rather than "Sephardim." In the later issues, the use of Sépharade became more widespread.

"Ashkenazi" also became a recurring category and language played a major role in its usages. In the first issue's article announcing the French departments of AJCS, the development

[219] Ibid.
[220] Jean-Claude Lasry, "Message Du Président," *Présence*, 1972.

was justified with specific reference to "the nature of the problems encountered by Francophone immigrants, notably North Africans." The Jewish institutions of Canada, it read, had been for a long time supporting Ashkenazim who, from either "central or eastern Europe", did not speak "any of the official languages of Canada." This changed in 1952 when, for the first time in Jewish-Canadian immigration history, there were immigrants who "spoke one of the official languages of Canada." Immediately after this, the article described the problems as reflecting:

> "conceptual and philosophical differences concerning the role of social services. These conceptions—anglo-saxon and '*latine*'—affected by the different Ashkenazi and Sephardi ritual considerations—did not allow for sympathy between assistant and assisted, administrator and administrated…inexact appreciation, miscomprehension, indifference, malcontent, panic […]."[221]

Unlike the issue's editorial, here it seemed clear that the ASF was intensely aware that North African Jews had faced major problems since their arrival in Montreal. Additionally, these problems were framed simultaneously as one between language groups and one between Ashkenazim and Sephardim. North Africans, they argued, had at least spoken one of Canada's official languages when they had arrived. The article thus framed this community as a better fit for the linguistic landscape of Canada. Though Ashkenazim had anglicized and adapted to one of the two official languages, Sephardim already spoke one natively. The first issue of *Présence* stressed, as well, that only one of the two was truly valuable in the future Quebec, writing: "French is no longer a fashion statement in Quebec. To make for ourselves a future, it has become VITAL."[222] The use of "Ashkenazi" and "Sephardi" were therefore inextricably linked to the ethnic-linguistic divide in Canada and the corresponding shift of power in Quebec.

The ASF also used *Présence* to push back against tropes about North African Jews, and in these counterarguments juxtaposed Ashkenazim and Sephardim. Ashkenazi Jews' assessment of

[221] "Tout Vient à Point." *Présence*, September, 1969.
[222] "Notre École," *Présence*, September 1969.

a typical North African Jewish family arrangement made repeated appearance in official and unofficial studies of their problems and tended to obscure the structural disadvantages facing North African Jews in Montreal. Especially the status of women became a sore spot for North African Jews who were commonly suspected of being less progressive and more oppressive towards women by Ashkenazi Jewish leaders like David Weiss, and community members like Amber, Lipper, and Godfrey.[223] Large North African families who arrived in Montreal in these years had fewer opportunities in general, as has been demonstrated, and North African women were here faced with an intersectional disadvantage.

As they gained visibility and voice, North African Jewish community activists attempted to counter these stereotypes. For example, in the first issue of *Présence*, Lison Chocron wrote an article which stated that men had finally realized that "their liberty does not end where ours begins". In the manifesto style of the issue, she urged women not to return to their old roles, but rather to serve the "our noble Sephardi cause" which is the same as serving "our community and the feminine cause."[224] Chocron thus utilized the adoption of the new Sépharade identity to distance North African women from the debilitating tropes associated with their countries of origin. Problematically, these appeals were sometimes voiced by men. For example, in 1973 Jean-Claude Lasry published a short piece in which he argued that, unlike Ashkenazi women, who always took the name of their husbands, Sephardi women kept their own last name, proving that

[223] David Weiss was the executive director of the Baron de Hirsch Institute in 1966. In the 1966 Women's Federation report he was quoted as criticizing North African Jews for being from an "essentially authoritarian, paternalistic culture" which caused "internal tensions" due to the independence desired by children and women in the family. Similar criticisms are found in theses by Amber & Lipper and Godfrey. Women's Federation of AJCS. Education Committee. *French-Speaking Jewish Immigrants and Their Use of Jewish Social Agencies and Women's Service Organizations*. March, 1966. Federation CJA Fonds 1001, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal, 12; Amber and Lipper, *Towards an Understanding of Moroccan Jewish Family Life: Including the Perceptions of Moroccan Immigrants to Montreal*, 126; Godfrey, "Achievement & Adjustment of Jewish Moroccan Students," 103.
[224] Lison Chocron, "Présence Féminine," *Présence*, 1969, 6.

they were more progressive.[225] Again, Sephardim and Ashkenazim became opposed categories within the context of criticism regularly utilized to justify the disadvantageous position of North African Jews in Montreal. This position was imagined as resulting from a "clash of cultures", a theme which the ASF here adopted, reversing the two stations so that they were more progressive than "Ashkenazim." In fact, this feminist stance was taken in connection with cultural and legal changes happening in Quebec. In September 1974, *Présence* published an article by Susie Bouchard, explaning soon-to-be-implemented marriage reforms.[226] Though *Présence* did not always center the voices of women, a progressive outlook was central to the new Sépharade identity.

Présence sometimes reported on the activism specifically organized by North African Jewish women. On February 15th, 1972, the Women's Division of the ASF congregated at the Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue of Montreal and discussed their tasks. They stated that in North Africa, life had been good, but now, in North America, they had to adapt. "Why," they asked rhetorically, "wouldn't we simply associate with the Women's Federation of AJCS" which, they admitted, was a strong group. They answered that it was because, though as Jews their goals were the same, as "*SÉPHARADES*" and "*FRANCOPHONES*", they had different needs and problems. As an example, they gave a typical North African Jew's experience at the Jewish General Hospital where "we cannot receive information in French, speak to the doctor, understand his questions! And what about the elderly who speak only Arabic and feel doubly lost and isolated." They hoped to organize a service which would help Jews be served in French or Arabic, so that they could feel "*chez nous*"—at home.[227] *Présence* therefore became a space to voice problems which were rarely

[225] Jean-Claude Lasry, "Note Sur l'avant-Gardisme Sépharade de La Femme," *Présence*, January 1973, 2.
[226] Susie Bouchard, "Un Vaisseu, Deux Capitaines!," *Présence*, 1974.
[227] "La Division Féminine," *Présence*, September 1972.

admitted by Anglophone Jewish institutions. The Gendron Commission had found between 1968 and 1973 that there was "no such thing as a bilingual hospital" in Montreal, only "hospitals which were clearly English or French."[228] Of course, due to the segregated nature of Montreal's social service networks, Jews were directed to the English Jewish General Hospital, where they encountered the problems listed by the ASF's Women's Division.

The ASF often connected itself to progressive developments in Quebec and imagined that it was part of those developments. The first issue in 1969 imagined that École Maïmonide would "make of our children Québécois conscious and proud of their attachment to the lines of Abraham and Jacob" and also that they would be "proud Canadians".[229] These community activists were eager to associate with Quebec their own progressive leanings and bright future. The September-October issue in 1972 included a lengthy article which detailed the imagined history of Sephardi Jewry until their propitious ascension in Montreal, and which listed the ambitious tasks of "Montreal Sephardim". The ASF wrote that:

> "thanks to the unique and cosmopolitan atmosphere of Quebec, and thanks to our own Sephardi, Andalusian, and Castilian roots from Morocco, we are particularly privileged to accomplish this task. We envision here in Montreal no less than a veritable renaissance of global [Jewry,] […] to be the light of French civilization in North America and […] to effect a great Sephardi renaissance […]."[230]

Not only was the reimagining of Sephardim linked to ethnic-linguistic divisions in Quebec and Ashkenazim, but the efforts of North African community activists could be conceptually included in a timeline from Spain, to Morocco, and Quebec. The "renaissance" of North African Jews in Montreal was no less than a worldwide Sephardi and Jewish renaissance. The article pointed to

[228] Sancton, *Governing the Island of Montreal: Language Differences and Metropolitan Politics*, 178.
[229] "Notre École."
[230] Charles Abraham, "En Avant Sépharades Montréalais!," *Présence*, September 1972.

their "privileged" position with regards to achieving such a renaissance in the "unique" context of Quebec, and thus conceptually linked the Sephardi renaissance to the ongoing ethnic-linguistic power shift in Quebec. Along with the aspirations of the government of Quebec and Québécois activists, North African Jewish community activists dreamt of a Francophone renaissance in their new home.

As the government hoped, *Présence* often advocated for Jews to make a choice for French over English. In December 1973 the ASF printed an article titled "The importance of language" and at the top quoted Quebec's Minister of Education, François Cloutier, who had said at the inauguration of École Maïmonide: "You are one of us, and I count on you to remain one of us." The article outlined the problems of Francophone Jewish students in the PSBGM and tried to counter "common prejudices" about the French language. It argued that, though English was seen as the language of "business", "the Jewish Community", and "America", this attitude "rejects your cultural heritage". French did not mean "discarding English" and in fact mastering French prepared children for careers in Quebec, where they would "certainly […] build their future."[231] By advocating for the use of French, North African activists were both aiming to solve the problems faced by their community while also acquiescing to the terms of an explicit agreement with Quebec officials. In exchange for their French advocacy, the ASF acquired tangible as well as structural advantages. For example, they received governmental subventions which helped them to establish a permanent headquarters and were given the exclusive opportunity of opening a French-language Jewish school within the public system.[232]

This was a point which the ASF repeated often in the pages of *Présence*. North African community activists took pride in the fact that they had received special consideration by the

[231] "L'importance de La Langue," *Présence*, December 1973.
[232] Yossi Levy, "Bilan d'une Année," *Présence*, September 1973.

government of Quebec in being integrated into the public system, and thus were able to offer free education. École Maïmonide, they said, would facilitate their integration into Quebec society, and stressed that "Anglophone Jews who want to educate their children in French are evidently welcome".[233] What they repeated most often, however, was that, in 1972, École Maïmonide had been recognized by the Minister of Education as a school of "public interest".[234] This further confirmed to North African activists that their efforts were securing a place for their future community in Quebec. As the Anglophone community prepared for an increased number of Anglophone Jews attending Jewish day schools, as well, École Maïmonide became another area where the ethnic-linguistic divide manifested.

In 1962, Stanley Yetnikoff, a member of the Education Committee of CJC, presented a brief to the Royal Commission on Education in Quebec. The brief advocated for the creation of a separate and public Jewish school system, arguing that Jews had long been overpaying their share of taxes for the PSBGM.[235] A Jewish public-school system was not created, though in 1969 École Maïmonide was, funded by the Catholic School Commission. Also in 1969, several Jewish schools had come together to form the Association of Jewish Day Schools, meant to be an intermediary between Jewish schools and the Ministry of Education. École Maïmonide eventually joined the Association but was the only French-language school being represented. In six years of operating, École Maïmonide had expanded from elementary school and was opening each year a new high school class. High school tuition, unlike elementary tuition, and transportation to the school were not fully covered by the government, and consequently the ASF had acquired large deficits.

[233] "Dernière Heure," *Présence*, 1969.
[234] "ÉCOLE JUIVE DE LANGUE FRANÇAISE: ÉCOLE MAIMONIDE," *Présence*, September 1972.
[235] Read, "The Precarious History of Jewish Education in Quebec," 31.

In July 1975, Claude Chriqui, then president of École Maïmonide, wrote an article in *Présence* about the place of the Sephardi school within the Association of Jewish Day Schools and AJCS, which had just recently decided it would start subsidizing Jewish schools. "Finally," Chriqui wrote sarcastically, "a part of the money collected by the CJA will come back to our school." Chriqui accused AJCS and the Association of not distributing to them their fair share, which they desperately needed for "room to breathe." AJCS had decided to contribute, according to Chriqui, because Jewish schools were not fulfilling the requirements of minimum French instruction to qualify for more provincial grants. In turn, he alleged, the Association of Jewish Day Schools and AJCS were using an equation which was "sectarian, coercive, and biased" to determine how much money each school received. By this he was referring to an argument by the Association which alleged that École Maïmonide did not offer enough hours of Hebrew language instruction to qualify for a larger share. "They fight when the Minister of Education applies this formula in the instruction of French, but do not hesitate to use it when it is convenient for them!"[236]

Chriqui did not shy away from arguing that this was discrimination, and that it was one of a typical style: Ashkenazim against Sephardim. He wrote: "We are losing money at every level of this equation of shares (this makes you think of the Sephardi Jews of Israel? Of course not, we must not, it's only a coincidence!)"[237] *Présence* did not always accuse Ashkenazim in Montreal of the same kind of discrimination faced by North African or Sephardi Jews in Israel. It did often publish articles in support of North Africans in Israel whom, they wrote, did encounter discrimination.[238] But the growing prominence of the Ashkenazi-Sephardi struggle in Israel sometimes became used as an analogue for intra-Jewish relations in Montreal. Chriqui was a major

[236] Claude Chriqui, "ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH DAY SCHOOLS VS MAIMONIDE, OU UN EXEMPLE TYPIQUE," *Présence*, July 1975.
[237] Ibid.
[238] See for example: "LES NORD-AFRICAINS EN ISRAËL," *Présence*, September 1972.

North African Jewish community leader as the president of École Maïmonide. His comparison of the treatment of the school with that of Sephardim in Israel pointed towards the growing sense of a larger Sephardi diaspora. However, the fact that this comparison was based in a dispute about the value of language in Quebec is crucial. Montreal was, unmistakably, not Israel, and the dynamic between North African Jews and Ashkenazim was based in the particular context of Quebec. The privileging of English and French respectively in their schools and the framing of this conflict as a classic intra-Jewish dynamic between Ashkenazim and Sephardim is perhaps the sharpest example of how these identities became crystallized in Quebec.

Furthermore, Chriqui's complaint reveals the North African side of a dispute which is rarely told. Ashkenazi community leaders would sometimes criticize North Africans for not paying their fair share for Jewish social services and community institutions. Chriqui voices an opposite and equally valid concern: North African Jews were contributing to the CJA, as demonstrated by donor lists for years before 1964,[239] but they could feel justifiably as though the services they were paying for were not working for them. In fact, in its first issue, *Présence* included a staged interview with ASF president André Amiel with the goal of advertising the importance of contributing to the CJA's annual campaign.[240] Also of relevant interest is the 1977 merger agreement between the ASF—then renamed the CSQ—and AJCS. The merger contract stipulated that the CSQ, rather than raising funds for itself, would have to "participate fully in all AJCS planning, educational, and fund-raising activities," and would have to select individuals to serve on planning and fund-raising committees, and to "mobilize campaign workers", which is to say,

[239] Donor lists kept by the Women's Federation of the CJA provide proof that North African Jews were being canvassed by and donated to the CJA. These lists were populated with the names of "New Canadians" and were split between the countries or general areas of origin, such as "Morocco," in 1964 and "Middle East" or "Europe" in 1962. Women's Federation of the CJA. *List of Prospects, 1964*, Montreal, February 17th, 1964. File: Special Canvass (New Canadians), 1964, Box 32, AJCS/FJCS Unprocessed, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal.
[240] "L'APPEL JUIN UNIFIE," *Présence*, September 1969.

canvassers. Additionally, the CSQ would have to provide the AJCS with a list of the names and addresses of "all Sephardi Jews known to them or to the related organizations" so they could receive community news, benefit from outreach programs, and "be listed as CJA campaign prospects or contributors."[241] North African Jews had contributed to the CJA, and the ASF had advertised it, but the Anglophone community relied on delegation to effectively canvass them. This dynamic, alive and well in 1977, is a poignant example of the state of the relationship between North African and Anglophone Jews more than twenty years after their immigration had begun.

Présence was an inimitable outlet for North African Jews in Montreal. No parallel resource existed in Montreal which frankly described the problems encountered by North African Jews and offered a counter-perspective to the official positions taken by CJC vis-à-vis the Quiet Revolution. As La Voix Sépharade, it continues to be both the official organ of community activists who work to give meaning to the term Sépharade. From its inception in 1969, *Présence* was on the defensive, seeking to justify its existence and the special consideration the ASF was being accorded by Quebec government officials. It was also on the offensive, adopting trappings which had not been current in North Africa and trailblazing, innovating, and negotiating what it meant to be a Jew, a Francophone, a North African, and Sépharade, all in the divisive landscape of Quebec. The example of *Présence* demonstrates that the enactment of a Sépharade identity was not only an attempt at cultural preservation. Cultural preservation was key, but the definition of the culture to be preserved was fluid. In addition to cultural preservation, the activities of the ASF and later the CSQ were informed by the ethnic, linguistic, social, political, and economic divisions inherent in Quebec and the significant shift of these circumstances during the Quiet Revolution.

[241] AJCS Executive Committee. *Report of Comité Conjoint AJCS-CSQ*, August 24th, 1977. Federation CJA Fonds 1001, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal.

Conclusion

This thesis has aimed to demonstrate how the inclusion of North African Jews into Canadian Jewish historiography forces us to rethink some of the field's major themes. Additionally, it has attempted, through the close reading of community documents and periodicals, to uncover aspects of North African Jewish experience which have yet to be reflected in relevant scholarship. North African Jews had been admitted to Canada by their inclusion in a bureaucratic definition of Judaism. This category functioned to class them transnationally and opened Canada's doors to them when it was closed to other, particularly Muslim, residents of the Maghreb.[242] The same bureaucratic association limited North African Jews to the use of Jewish social services in Montreal which, due to Canada's trajectory, were almost exclusively anglophone. As I have established, North African Jews experienced tangible and challenging difficulties due to the ethnic-linguistic segregation of Quebec, but also because of their specific designation as Jews. Their bureaucratic categorization as Jews often functioned for them as a *disadvantage* when it came to receiving social services in hospitals and other agencies like the GAA and the JVS. This reality contradicts the understanding of Canadian Jewish historians until now, which has assumed that their French language and Judaism were doubly advantageous. The narrative of a relatively easy integration of North African Jews in Montreal is simply incorrect.

Furthermore, this bureaucratic Judaism could not entirely serve as a bridge between the two communities on an interpersonal level. Intra-Jewish relationships were defined by an ethnic-linguistic category which the bureaucratic one was meant to emulate. For Ashkenazim, this category was determined by common roots in eastern Europe, Yiddish as a first or legacy language, and an alignment with Canadian English supremacy. Ashkenazim sometimes voiced their

[242] Koren, "North African Jewish Migration to Canada, 1956-1960: A Holocaust Legacy," 31.

expectations that North African Jews conform to English, but they never expected them to become Ashkenazim. Kage would often express his desire for North Africans to retain their cultural specificity, but wrongly understood their community activism as separatism. In a memorandum, Kage went so far as to equate the ASF with Quebec separatism. [243] But Kage, like other anglophone Jewish leaders, continued to stress that the same bureaucratic structure which had been constructed for Ashkenazim would work for North Africans. Ashkenazi leaders were unable to see that North Africans constituted an intersection for which existing structures, based on the ethnic-linguistic divide in Quebec, did not account.

Crucially, though existing structures were often disadvantageous for North African Jews, community activists did not always or even predominantly seek to erect their own, separate institutions. Canadian Jewish historians need to reevaluate what they mean when they speak of "Sephardi institutions". If they are referring to North African Jewish associations such as the GJNA and the ASF, these were small, though radically important, groups whose main influence was through JIAS, the Bulletin du Cercle Juif, or Neighbourhood House. *Présence* was often used to voice concerns over intra-Jewish conflict which existed precisely *because* North African Jews had not created their own institutions. Did the GJNA organizing get-togethers for North African Jews constitute a separate institution? Did Neighbourhood House becoming a French department of the YM-YWHA constitute one? According to current historiography, we might think of the founding of École Maïmonide in 1969 and the CCJ in 1977 as milestones of a community trying to separate itself. But the inclusion of École Maïmonide in the Association of Jewish Day Schools and the CSQ's merger with AJCS in 1977 disrupt this teleological reading. Neighbourhood House became the CCJ as a consequence of the merger and remained firmly within existing community

[243] Memorandum, Joseph Kage to Jacob Lowy, June 1966, *The North African Jewish Immigrant in Montreal*, File: Jewish Population 1967, Box 32, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal, 11.

boundaries both financially and administratively. Rather than seeking to sever ties, North African community activists sought to strengthen them and solve the particular problems they faced. North African Jews negotiated the inclusion of École Maïmonide and their lack of representation in the total Jewish community because they had yet to be considered equal partners in it. Rather than a progression from dependence to independence, this history can be read as a progression from invisibility to visibility, and from misrepresentation to auto-representation within a shifting framework.

Through the 1960s and 1970s, the government of Quebec continued to remodel the province and standardize social service reception, notably increasing economic and educational opportunities available to Francophones. Since North African Jews were disadvantaged both by limits applied to them as Jews and as French-speakers, the greater integration of disparate social service networks into the growing public one also disproportionately benefited them. On the contrary, anglophone Jews had previously received exclusively Jewish social services from insular institutions that were increasingly expected to minimally operate in French. The conversion into bilingual institutions, which was slow, and which never truly materialized internally, cost money, time, and was experienced as a threat to the established Jewish community. From a purely Ashkenazi perspective, the transformations of the Quiet Revolution can be unproblematically seen as a period of anxiety. There is truth to this. However, it is just as important to recognize that the same events were experienced by North African Jews in a nearly opposite manner. It is also significant that programs for the Ashkenazi community to transition to bilingualism were intertwined with negotiations for greater internal North African representation and leadership.

The structural developments of the Quiet Revolution offered North African Jewish community activists opportunities to solve problems which the Ashkenazi community was reticent

to address. Ashkenazi institutions did put resources at the disposal of North African Jews. JIAS opened the door for them and they did use Jewish social services, but their experiences within these institutions were inconsistent at best. Ashkenazi support of North Africans was at its height, not when they received them as immigrants or directed them to social service agencies, but when they included them as community leaders within existing structures. Notably, it was the government of Quebec which offered up first a wing in a Catholic school and then a whole school building for École Maïmonide. Furthermore, the government privileged the French language of these Jews and made them feel as though Quebec could be home for them while many Ashkenazi Jews were made to feel increasingly estranged. Though the experiences of Ashkenazim are a valid aspect of this story, it must be recognized that the government of Quebec made tangible efforts to include Jews in the shifting landscape of the province. Their concern was to improve the position of Francophones who had long been deprived by English supremacy.

Alongside this project, the government rarely forced the Jewish community to do anything in this period. As early as 1970, the government offered to pay for a program to francize Jewish institutions if they could come up with one.[244] Government grants were made available to Jewish schools, though it required that a certain amount of French be taught. Due to ethnic communities' submissions to the government, the Gendron commission had not advised coercion, but encouragement.[245] The sources I have presented suggest that the developments of the Quiet Revolution, which include a measure of Quebec French nationalism, contributed more to the improved situation of North African Jews than did their initial reception by established Jewish community structures. As such, the role of multiculturalism in Canada as the major determinant in

[244] Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Trustees of AJCS, May 25th, 1970. File 00434, Box 42, Federation CJA Fonds 1001, Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal.
[245] Sancton, *Governing the Island of Montreal: Language Differences and Metropolitan Politics*, 78.

the Jewish "success story" is brought into question. For North African Jews, nationalism in Quebec could be concretely positive. Rather than alienate them, it could make them feel more at home, and could help them to imagine they had a future there.

The adoption of a Sépharade identity was connected to similar "Sephardi revivals" elsewhere as North African and other MENA communities settled around the world. Crucially, North African Jews used this new category to navigate the limitations of bureaucratic Judaism in Montreal and to escape the racialized stereotypes implicit in Ashkenazi assumptions. These assumptions could include social backwardness, the oppression of women, delinquency, the illusion that they were not contributing to the community, and other harmful expectations associated with their supposedly "eastern" mindsets. The first North African Jewish immigrants clearly expressed the importance of maintaining their cultural traditions. However, their structural and racialized experiences in Montreal were critical factors in the formulation of a Sépharade identity.

Empowered by Québécois' reinvention of their identities, North African Jewish community activists seized on that platform to reposition themselves strategically. Sometimes this could mean calling themselves Sépharades who were also Québécois, members of a multiethnic nation in the making. Their ability to do so expands the boundaries of how historians should understand Quebec nationalism and its relationship to Jews in this period. Other times this could mean framing their specific issues in Montreal as a classic conflict of Ashkenazim oppressing Sephardim, with Israel as the main referent. North African Jews expressed solidarity with Jews whom they perceived to be experiencing similar or worse conditions than them. This comprises a dimension of Canadian Jewry's response to Zionism and circumstances in Israel which has not yet received attention by historians. The official Sephardic community consistently advocated for

Zionism and Israel while sometimes being critical of discrimination and even racism against North African Jews. In the adoption of a Sépharade identity, they thus were able to both build and maintain networks of identification with Jews around the world.

There remains much work to be done on this subject. Sources from the Sephardi community itself still await analysis to fully appreciate the history of North African Jews in Quebec. A more comprehensive history should also include developments in Toronto. The juxtaposition of the two North African communities could suggest further ways historians might revise assumptions about Canadian Jewish history. The experience of North African Jewish women in Quebec also remains a critical lacuna in this story. Since so few outlets for expression were offered to North African Jews within Ashkenazi institutions, those that did exist were almost entirely reserved for men. This is especially true of the earliest years of immigration. Especially because they have been subject to an intersectional disadvantage as Jews, women, and North Africans, historians must work harder to recover their voices from archival documents. I have tried here to describe some aspects of these people's history which have not before been given the attention they deserve. A genuine inclusion of North African Jews into the historiography of both Canada and North African Jews across the world are therefore goals to which this thesis is, hopefully, a meaningful contribution.

Abbreviations

AIU — Alliance Israélite Universelle
AJCS — Allied Jewish Community Services
ASF — Association Sépharade Francophone
CCJ — Centre Communautaire Juif (Neighbourhood House)
CJC — Canadian Jewish Congress
CSQ — Communauté Sépharade du Québec
CSUQ — Communauté Sépharade Unifiée du Québec
GAA — Golden Age Association (Golden Age Program)
GJNA — Groupement Juif Nord-Africain
JIAS — Jewish Immigrant Aid Service
JVS — Jewish Vocational Service
PSBGM — Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal
YM-YWHA — Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Association

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