



## Mideastern Jews

### *The Impact of World War II*

Hitler's plan for the "Final Solution" of the Jews included the destruction of "some eleven million," which likely included victims from Turkey to North Africa. Simon of Yeshiva University believes that only timing and logistics prevented the annihilation when, after 1940, the Axis turned to that region. Simon provides the first country-by-country account of the war's impact on a million Jews from Morocco to Iran.

Simon recounts how most North African Jews came under the control of the German collaborators in the Vichy government after France surrendered in June 1940. Vichy regime regulations excluded 110,000 Jews from government jobs in Algeria, 68,000 Jews in Tunisia, and 35,000 in Syria and Lebanon.

Italian planes bombed Haifa in July and September 1940. In June 1941, the Luftwaffe bombed Tel Aviv, Jaffa, and Haifa. As German troops approached Egypt via Libya, the grand mufti of Jerusalem, Amin al-Husaini, called on the Arabs to kill Egypt's 80,000 Jews. In Baghdad, the al-Farhud pogrom, الفرهود, the forcible dispossession, killed 169 Jews in mid-1941. Thousands were forced into labor camps in Morocco, Algeria, and Libya. Some were sent to death camps, as were 1,200 Algerian Jews and 2,080 Turkish Jews from metropolitan France. Although Turkish leaders acted neutral, they were often pro-German.

Elsewhere, Simon reports, Jews were rescued, for instance, in Morocco, Iran, and Turkey. Most of North Africa's Jews survived as the French and Italians did not have time to set up death camps while the Nazis found no secure way to get North African Jews into Europe's killing centers. By the end of 1942, the Allies had liberated most of the Levant, and by May 1943, the Axis capitulated in North Africa.

Simon offers a valuable, nuanced, and much needed synopsis of how this war impacted Middle Eastern and North African Jews. This reviewer hopes for a follow-up study to show how still unrepentant of genocides and expulsion, Arab rulers persecuted those communities further, harming both them and the larger societies.

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**Reeva Spector Simon:** *The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa. The Impact of World War II.* New York: Routledge, 2020. 288 pp. \$150 (\$44.95, paper).

This review was first published at Middle East Quarterly 28(Winter 2021)1. Some links were added.

Reeva S. Simon, *Jews Mideast*, 2020

