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American Freedom and Intersectional Citizenship in Wartime Arab Paris

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Abstract: A scene in the 2011 film "*Les Hommes Libres*" depicts a party in a workers' apartment in Paris in late 1942 or early 1943. The city is under German occupation, but the Arab workers celebrate the impending or accomplished American liberation of their home countries. In the film, this timeline is suggested by Houcine Slaoui's standard song "*al-zin wal- 'ain az-zarqa*," "The Beautiful and the Blue-Eyed," which is also known as "*Lmirikan*" ("The Americans") or merely "Okay Okay" – a document of Operation Torch, the American liberation of North Africa from Vichy/Nazi rule. The performance is laden with multiple and contradictory messages about freedom, enslavement, conquest, liberation, consumption, generosity, solidarity, identity, protection, and vulnerability. This paper teases apart some of these strands concerning the historical situation depicted, the political conditions under which the film was released, the casting, the acting, the voiceover, and the script. In a lengthy section, it considers the "intersectional" identity of Jewish North Africans, borrowing the term from black feminist thought that demonstrates how structural differences result in varying experiences of relative vulnerability. The paper concludes that current relations in Israel, France, Morocco, and the United States can be better understood if taken in light of this complex history.

Keywords: French Colonial History, Jews in North Africa, World War II in Film, Moroccan Pop Music, Global American Culture, Intersectionality.

The 2011 film *Les Hommes Libres*,[1] directed by Ismaël Ferroukhi, has a certain scene of a party in a workers apartment in Paris in late 1942 or early 1943. The city is under German occupation, but the Arab workers celebrate the impending or accomplished American liberation of their home countries, beginning with Operation Torch of November 1942. In the film, this timeline is suggested by the song that is sung during the party: Houcine Slaoui's standard "*Al-Zin wal 'ain az-Zarqa*," "The Beautiful and the Blue-Eyed," which is also known as "*Lmirikan*" ("The Americans") or merely "Ukay Ukay."

The film's depiction of that song's performance is laden with multiple and contradictory messages about freedom, enslavement, conquest, liberation, consumption, generosity, solidarity, identity, protection, and vulnerability. In the following pages, I tease apart some of these strands concerning the historical situation depicted, the political conditions under which the film was released, the casting, the acting, the voiceover, and the script. In a lengthy section, I

1. *Les Hommes Libres*, Directed by Ismaël Ferroukhi (Paris: Pyramide Productions, 2011).

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consider the "intersectional" identity of Jewish North Africans, borrowing the term from black feminist thought that demonstrates how structural differences result in widely varying experiences of relative vulnerability. I conclude by returning to the film clip and its song.

The Clip

The first task is to describe the clip. There are two scenes. First, in a bedroom, Salim is hung over and depressed, in bed during daytime. His friend, Younes, encourages him to get up and get ready to sing at a birthday party. Younes is speaking Arabic to Salim. Salim finally agrees, speaking French and confirming that there will be booze (although presumably no other payment). The next scene is at the party, in a living room with the chairs stacked against the wall. Salim begins by singing: "What on earth has happened?" His words are an opening line from Slaoui's song about the arrival of the American soldiers on the streets of Casablanca, and the social upheaval "modern life" is making on Moroccan society. As he's singing, a third character asks for confirmation in Younes' ear that Salim is Jewish. Younes is non-committal.

As the song goes on and the subtitles say "The Yankees have landed with their bulging pockets," the drumming begins, smiles break out, and people begin dancing. As they dance, Salim continues into the chorus: "Everywhere you go, you hear 'OK, OK.'" On screen, Younes begins to dance. Maryvonne, the landlady or building manager, whose birthday they are celebrating and one of three women at the party, embraces Younes in thanks for organizing the party. Salim stops singing during an instrumental break and begins flirting outrageously with a young man in a hat. Finally, the song fades away and the scene cuts to Maryvonne blowing out the candles on her cake.

The singing character is Salim Halali, a historical figure. He was a professional musician who loved Paris too much to leave it, even though he was Jewish and the city is under German occupation. In the film, the character has just been through a terrifying ordeal. Nazis suspect that the papers claiming he was a Muslim were faked – they were – and so Salim has to take them on a tour of Paris' Muslim cemetery in order to show them the Muslim grave of his father, also hastily faked by Si Kaddour Benghabrit, the rector of the Paris Mosque. The following day, Benghabrit hears the news of Operation Torch, the invasion of Vichy-controlled North Africa by British and American troops. Shortly thereafter, Halali agrees to sing at Maryvonne's birthday. As explained by historian Benjamin Stora, a consultant on the film, these dormitories housed the mostly male guest workers in 1930s and 1940s

France. There was usually a cafe and restaurant on the ground floor, and the workers lived communally on the upper floors.

Salim Halali was born Simon Halali in 1920 in the city of Annaba, then called Bône, in northeastern Algeria. Halali first came to Paris in 1937 at the age of 17, working his way through the flamenco nightclub scene and settling in the 11th Arrondissement, which he loved. Coincidentally, the lively and densely populated 11th Arrondissement is the neighborhood hit by terrorist attacks in November of 2015 that killed over 100 people. Halali evacuated briefly to Morocco, but he returned to Paris after the war and opened two Middle Eastern-themed nightclubs in succession in 1947 and 1948 in the 8th Arrondissement. In 1949, he moved to Morocco, where he opened in the upscale Casablanca neighborhood of M'aarīf the auspiciously named Le Coq D'Or, the Golden Rooster. It's clear from the clip that Halali is gay, and he was well known for living prominently gay from the 1940s on. The cabaret burned down and Halali returned to France in the early 1960s, where he settled in a beautiful villa in Cannes and threw legendary parties. In 1993 he sold the villa and moved into a retirement home, where he lived out the rest of his days in relative obscurity, dying in 2005.

In this film Halali represents two important groups: French North Africans, and North African Jews. Halali represents the Arabs and Berbers of Paris, the Beurs, who loved their city and who had been inhabiting it and investing it with meaning for nearly a half-century by the 1940s. At the same time, Halali also represents North African Jews, whose population of around 400,000 between Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia was at the time, easily, the largest population of Jews in the Arab countries (Iran, the third-largest national population, was 90,000 in 1940.) It's no surprise that Halali moved to Morocco in 1949, at a time when over 200,000 Jews were living in Morocco.

The actor portraying Halali was an important casting decision. When he speaks Arabic onscreen, it sounds a bit odd coming from an Algerian character because Mahmoud Shalaby is Palestinian. He is a Muslim citizen of Israel, born in 1982 in a rough neighborhood of Acre ('Akka) in Israel. When I first watched the film, I recognized him from Jackie Salloum's 2009 documentary *Slingshot Hiphop*, where he was featured for co-founding MWR, one of the first Palestinian rap groups, as well as from guest spots in the music videos of the Palestinian reggae group Ministry of Dub-Key. In addition to rapping, he is an award-winning actor in French and Arabic films, and he plays various Eastern flutes as well.

Rap in Palestine and among Palestinian-Israelis is complicated due to the split between professionals and amateurs and the calls for a cultural boycott. Professionals, working musicians, must take gigs whenever they can, or else they have to get a day job. Amateurs who already have day jobs are free to refuse gigs for whatever reason, and can maintain their purity more completely. One of the featured groups in *Slingshot Hip Hop*,[2] the group DAM, later faced the perception that some Palestinian rappers were being used and co-opted by the liberal Israeli press to argue that the occupation is not that bad – "See, we rap together as brothers. Can conditions be as bad as they claim?" In this sense, Shalaby walks a fine line between representing the long historical alliance between North African Muslims and Jews against foreign domination (French, German, American, etc.) while at the same time not permitting his participation in that representation to violate current political alliances against his own government's aggression against his fellow Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza.

In fact, even though Shalaby is an Israeli citizen, and as such he may vote for the Israeli parliament and is exempt from compulsory service in the Israeli Defense Force, at the same time he joins other Israelis of Palestinian ethnicity, speaking Arabic and practicing Islam or Christianity, who view themselves as second-class citizens within Israel, ineligible for much of the social assistance that is available to Jewish Israelis and concentrated in poorer communities that do not have adequate infrastructure or educational opportunities. By choosing to cast not just a Palestinian actor but one who is moreover a Palestinian citizen of Israel, Ismail Ferroukhi has underscored the entanglement that continues regarding Israel's position in the Middle East, populated largely by Middle-Eastern Jews and non-Jews, albeit founded and dominated by European Jews. This entanglement is more directly addressed in the second section of this paper.

Notwithstanding an occasional success, Shalaby is a better flutist and rapper than singer. For the voiceover, Ferroukhi needed a legitimate figure who could voice the songs convincingly. He chose Pinhass Cohen, born in 1960 into a musical family. His father, El Azar Cohen (1938-2014), had been a well-known singer and oud player in Morocco, paying in the genre of "Chegouri" music, a variety of Moroccan urban popular song associated with Jewish communities. Pinhass Cohen began performing publicly at the age of 12 with his father and brothers. A standard celebrity photograph shows a teenage Pinhass posing with his father and Salim Hilali in the early to mid 1970s.

2. *Slingshot Hip Hop*, Directed by Jackie Salloum (Astoria, NY: Fresh Booza Productions, 2009).

By the 1980s, Cohen was a well-known artist and heart-throb in Moroccan popular music, perhaps the Jewish-Moroccan with highest public profile. This positive season ended, however, in the late 1990s, when Pinhass Cohen and his father were accused of money laundering. The Moroccan government charged him with having illegally transferred over eighteen million dirhams, around 1.5 million Euros, from Moroccan banks to European banks. He was convicted in 2000, fined 10 million dirhams, and sentenced to three years in prison. He served six months in the notorious Oukacha prison in Casablanca. When he was released, Cohen relocated to France. His Moroccan supporters noted that he always claimed to be only a Moroccan, and he never sought an Israeli passport. According to his website, he has booking agents in Tel Aviv and New York.

One Moroccan journalist, writing in 2000, was convinced that Cohen had been the target of an anti-Jewish witch-hunt in relation to Moroccan popular sentiment over the Al-Aqsa Intifada of September 2000: "Pinhass Cohen is not pro-Israeli, much less a convinced Zionist."[3] I could find no evidence of any public concerts in Morocco for the next 10 years, although he doubtless played private parties, given the demand. It appears Cohen was totally crushed by the experience. Despite his living in France, in 2005 Cohen told an interviewer that his exile was involuntary: "Everyone knows that Morocco is my homeland and that my compositions are totally Moroccan."[4] Cohen's vocal performance in this film in 2011 appears to be a significant event in his return to public performance in Morocco. In June 2014, Cohen played the Mawazine festival in Rabat. Mawazine is the premier music festival in Morocco in terms of attendance, with well over a million attendees over nine days' worth of concerts on seven stages. It is supported by the state and by state-owned as well as private corporations, and it features top-shelf pop musicians – in 2014, Cohen was billed alongside headliners Justin Timberlake, Ricky Martin, and Alicia Keys. The festival is also very closely associated with King Mohammed VI, so Cohen's invitation to perform is a clear sign of his rehabilitation in the eyes of the Moroccan state. His family still lives in Casablanca; perhaps someday he will return as well.

Cohen is invisible in the film, although his distinctive voice is clearly audible singing the song that I call "Al-Zin wal 'ain az-Zarqa," "The Beautiful and the Blue-Eyed." This particular song has been famous in Morocco since its release in 1942 or 1943. Houcine Slaoui, its composer, was an extremely

3. Abdellah Chankou, "Pinhas piégé," *Maroc Hebdo International* 440, Nov. 17-23 (2000): 15, cited in Elmedlouai 2001.

4. Pinhass Cohen, "Interview," *Aujourd'hui le Maroc*, Jan. 10, 2005.

productive musician, writing dozens of songs and becoming very famous – the first Moroccan musician to record in Paris with Marconi – before dying mysteriously in 1951 at the age of 30 or 33. (His date of birth is alternately given as 1918 or 1921). I should note that I am heavily indebted here to Jamila Bargach and her brilliant article from 1999 that analyzes race, gender, and consumerism in the song.[5] In any case, the song is a response to invasion, and the lyrics speak of social transformation:

Aya aya aya 'la had zmān

Ay ay ay, at this time

What changes have befallen us

Wa shnu ṣār

Dkhelt l-mirikan

When the Americans came,

U-nas tquwat u-nsa 'lina jāru

People got empowered and women rose against us

The song continues to detail all the social mores being broken so terribly, particularly by women young and old. Candy, chewing gum, cigars, scarves, makeup, and even alcohol are being consumed by formerly docile women. Inflation has caused transportation to be more expensive, all with the result that the narrator, a young Moroccan man, can't compete against the blond, blue-eyed foreigners for the attention of the young women. Consumerism and modernity challenge working-class patriarchy, but there is a racialized current as well: Slaoui was black, and it's likely he was descended from formerly enslaved members of the royal retinue. Slaoui's hometown was Salé – the stage name "Houcine Slaoui" means "Hussein from Salé" – and the city lies on the opposite bank of the mouth of the Bouregreg River from the royal city of Rabat.

Bargach makes the key observation that generally, Moroccans of darker complexion tend to be dominated by those with lighter complexions –that by drawing attention to fair features, Slaoui is also subtly drawing attention to color discrimination and class consciousness in Morocco.[6] Moroccans listening to the lyrics recognize truths in the message that speak beyond more facile readings that have focused merely on the Americans or the consumer

5. Jamila Bargach, "Liberatory, Nationalising and Moralising by Ellipsis: Reading and Listening to Lhussein Slaoui's Song *Lmirikan*," *The Journal of North African Studies* 4, 4 (1999): 61-88.

6. Bargach, "Liberatory, Nationalising and Moralising by Ellipsis," 79.

capitalism in the lyrics. And yet, despite the dominant image from the song of American soldiers who are blond and blue-eyed, savvy Moroccan consumers in the 1920s-1940s would also have been aware of American popular media, which was heavily influenced by African-American forms such as jazz.

Blackness and Jewishness are closely linked in Moroccan history for a variety of reasons. Today, the Moroccan signifier of blackness is Gnawa music and culture, localized at the site of Essaouira, simultaneously the epicenter of Gnawa music and a major city for Jewish history, as well as the hometown of Andre Azoulay, royal counsellor and sponsor of the annual Gnawa festival. The presence of the descendants of formerly enslaved Africans as well as Jewish business owners can both be traced back to the significance of Essaouira, formerly Mogador, to Portuguese colonial and industrial production of the 15th century.[7] In other words, a history of blackness in Morocco involves a history of Jewishness as well as colonialism – they are entangled through the centuries.

The second major emphasis of this paper is to ask the question, Who was a Jewish North African? The most complex aspect of Salim Halali's identity involves his status as an Algerian Jew. My provisional conclusion is that between 1830 and 1960 Jews in and around France and Francophone North Africa underwent a dizzying series of rapid transformations in social status. These transformations in turn depended upon larger forces, most notably French national formation, French colonial conquest (and settler colonialism), the various places of ethnic and religious minorities within national formation and colonial conquest, and finally the articulation of the metropole and colonies into the global system, including the articulation of financial investment and the structural relations of neocolonialism.

This section is divided into two parts. Part 1 proposes a legal and historical background of Jewishness and economic anti-Semitism in pre-colonial and colonial Europe and the Mediterranean. Part 2 raises the question of intersectionality by poaching in broad daylight from legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw. Crenshaw devised her method to challenge too-easy feminist solidarities given racial and class divisions. In turn, I apply her method to examine not gender but rather the variegated intersections of class, ethnicity, religion, and legal status that determined fortunes and even survival for various colonial citizens and subjects in North Africa in the 20th century. I attempt to map the intersectional identities of North African Jews over the

7. See Vincent J. Cornell, "Socioeconomic Dimensions of Reconquista and Jihad in Morocco: Portuguese Dukkala and the Sa'did Sus, 1450-1557," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 22 (1990): 379-418.

late-19th to mid-20th centuries, the most pertinent and dangerous periods. And doing that involves a recapitulation of the work of Timur Kuran, Ethan Katz, and Sarah Sussman.

The participation of Jewish minorities in European banking derives from the old Christian legal injunction, once shared with Judaism and Islam, against usury, taken literally as the charging of interest. One key biblical text is Duet. 23:20: "Unto a foreigner thou mayest lend upon interest; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon interest; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all that thou puttest thy hand unto, in the land whither thou goest in to possess it."

This injunction was interpreted by Christian theologians as proscribing interest-bearing loans with individuals belonging to groups with whom the Christian prince was at peace. Groups that were at war with the prince, in contrast, could lend money back and forth in interest-bearing loans at will. David Graeber[8] has argued that this "solved" two problems – it gave the vulnerable Jewish community, banned by design from many other livelihoods, a way to make a living; and it provided the prince a vulnerable community that could be exploited with impunity, to financial as well as political ends.

Islamic law, like Jewish and Christian law, also prohibited usury, but its prohibition was universal. No Muslim leader could legally do away with the prohibition against entering into a business enterprise as a full partner, sharing the risk and the reward. No joint stock companies were permitted to be formed – any merchant who wanted to invest in businesses in Muslim-ruled states was required to follow Muslim law. For example, a cooperative venture of a voyage between five merchants would entail a contract for the purposes of that voyage, with the five members' investments and percentage yields specified, and the contract would be broken up and accounted for at the conclusion of the voyage. A new voyage needed a new contract.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, this "quirk" had become a "limiting factor," as Timur Kuran has noted.[9] Individual Muslim merchants all along the Mediterranean found it difficult to compete with the European joint stock companies, which could survive beyond a single voyage to consolidate gains and marshal resources across several voyages and enterprises. During the age of imperialism, when European princes sought inroads into North Africa by

8. David Graeber, *Debt: The First 5,000 Years* (New York: Melville House, 2011), 287-8.

9. Timur Kuran, "The Islamic Commercial Crisis: Institutional Roots of Economic Underdevelopment in the Middle East," *Journal of Economic History* 63, 2 (2003): 414-46.

wringing concessions from Muslim princes, often the first concession was access for these foreign companies to operate legally in that port city.

The second concession was often for non-Muslim courts to be set up that could rule over disputes that occurred solely between Western merchants. In most cases, conflicts between a Western non-Muslim merchant and a local Muslim one would still be decided according in local courts – i.e., under Islamic law, which did not recognize interest-bearing loans, joint-stock companies, limited liability, and other Western innovations. But when two Dutch merchants in Cairo had a falling out, it made sense for a European judge to rule between them there.

Inter-religious contracts were thus more difficult to enforce, which led to Western companies avoiding working with local merchants as much as possible. A solution came from among the local merchants themselves: Some of them were Christian and Jewish members of the local Arab community. The third and key concession – key for minority identities in the Mediterranean – was usually for local non-Muslim merchants to gain access to these Western courts. The local prince was generally in favor of such innovations – like his Medieval Christian counterparts, he felt constrained by the injunction against interest-bearing loans. Often, he and the other local investors could utilize the local non-Muslim merchants as middlemen in European trade. Through them, they were able to charge interest and invest in joint-stock companies and all those other "illegal and immoral" practices. And in this way, Kuran argues, religious identity was weaponized in the financial colonization of the Middle East. All along the southern coast of the Mediterranean, merchants who were Christian and Jewish had a powerful "friend" in Europe, and this protection racket extended all the way to their fellow co-religionists.

In fact, one might see analogies between a Jewish banking family in 16th-century Genoa and a colonial elite minority family in Cairo three hundred years later – vulnerable, precarious, dependent, and in possession of very few options, but momentarily prosperous at times, and with a consistently dependent relationship to European political power.

This economistic account of religious identity of course ignores other aspects of confessional identity. I have kept my account to their economic role in order to draw attention to the limited nature of the description – the potential characteristics of a single entity's identity are multiple and sometimes contradictory. A single merchant can be wealthy and famous, highly educated, close to power, while at the same time vulnerable, subject to different laws and taxes. This is a basic assumption of Kimberlé Crenshaw's thesis

concerning intersectionality. I should note here that I agree completely with Prof. Crenshaw's caution not to take "intersectionality" as a trendy word for "identity." Instead, she argues, the proper focus should be on "how structures make certain identities the consequence of and the vehicle for vulnerability."[10] So when I present the following section's "map of identities," I beg you to see it as a map of shifting and even contrastive levels of vulnerability. The focus should be on varying levels of exposure to structural violence, the likelihood that one's social identity alone would be responsible for one being more likely to face violence.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, in the three French zones of the Maghrib, the labels of Jew, Christian, and Muslim were three social categories that were operated according to numerous logics, all colonial at a certain level, but there were local variations. For example, in Algeria, higher and higher levels of concessions were won throughout the modern period. At great cost over the course of 30 years of unrelenting warfare, the French conquest persisted, killing one third of Algerians, despite France undergoing four separate forms of government between 1830 and 1860. French were more unified over Algeria's conquest than over their own basic political identity – it was the singular focus of France. Between 1848 and 1962, when Algeria was legally part of France, residents of Algeria could also become citizens of France, if they were sufficiently non-Muslim, including Jews after 1870.

In contrast, Morocco and Tunisia faced lower levels of French colonial conquest. Morocco remained an Independent state with various incursions and enclaves throughout the modern period, leading to much greater levels of dependency after 1860. It capitulated to become a protectorate in the French and Spanish zone only between 1912 and 1956. The French zone was marked by extraordinary levels (extraordinary for the French state) of indirect rule, with many prior political structures left intact. In contrast, extraordinary levels of armed resistance met the rulers in the Spanish zone, who never achieved the same levels of social dominance. Independence came in 1956 on basically cordial terms with France and cooperation or one might say exploitation continued apace.

Tunisia had been nominally an Ottoman state with ever-higher levels of concessions sought from the rulers of Tunisia by Europeans, culminating in French conquest and a protectorate in 1881. Tunisia saw more significant numbers of settlers than in Morocco, although nothing near the levels of

10. Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," in *The Public Nature of Private Violence*, eds., Martha Albertson Fineman, Rixanne Mykitiuk, (New York: Routledge, 1994), 93-118.

Algeria, prior to independence in 1956, on more-or-less similarly cordial terms with France. Nevertheless, although Morocco and Tunisia were both protectorates, dominated by French citizens living and working there, and there was as always in French colonies a route to citizenship through secular education, this route was less assured than in Algeria, which was France proper.

In his recent article in the *American Historical Review*, Ethan Katz, focusing on the interplay in French attitudes towards Muslims and Jews in the Metropole and the colonies, finds that overall, with regard to the North African colonies, two regularly divergent interests of the French state resulted in France alternately praising and condemning both Jews and Muslims. He ties these interests, on the one side, to the values of French liberalism, where the state seeks to confer and sustain citizenship and political rights; and on the other side, in contrast, to the values of French nationalism, where the colonial project supports and sustains settlement and identities.[11]

In this way, the French government could officially be philo-Semitic at times – offering citizenship to Jews under the Cremieux Decree in 1870, for example – even as it officially promoted the Islamophobic view that Muslims were hopelessly unfit for modern citizenship. This is the discourse of rights and responsibilities in liberal democracy. Meanwhile and contrastingly, French citizens and settlers in the colonies could offer a modest Islamophilia alongside anti-Semitism, the proposal that good and honest Muslim peasants in the colonies were unwitting dupes of wicked and powerful Jews.

Of course, Katz reminds us, all this took place within the context of colonial invasion, conquest, settlement, and continued manipulation by the French state. These categories – native, white, non-white, European, Jew, Muslim, Arab, Berber, citizen, subject – were all politically motivated with policy goals, usually involving acquiescence and recruitment to systematic political and economic domination by the French state. Katz also makes the very key point that however clear their contingent and pragmatic nature – created for a specific and opaque political purpose – these categories became self-fulfilling prophecies. They were articulated and hardened by an efficacious bureaucratic state.

A more complete working-out of these issues of intersectionality can be found in Sarah Sussman's work on Jews from Algeria and French Jewish identity. Within the context of close communities of Jews in France late in the colonial period and following, where European Ashkenazi Jews from

11. Ethan B. Katz, "AHR Roundtable: An Imperial Entanglement: Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and Colonialism," *American Historical Review* 123, 4 (2018): 1190-209.

central and eastern Europe were dominant over the North African Sephardi Jews, Sussman points out the relative higher status of Algerian Jews vis-à-vis Moroccan and Tunisian Jews: The Algerian Jews considered themselves "rapatriés": Like pieds-noirs, the Christian residents of Algeria who considered themselves to have "come back" or "repatriated" to France after the liberation of Algeria, despite many of them never having been originally French families to begin with. In French Algeria, Portuguese or Greek or Italian families had "become" French by virtue of their religious identity as Christian. That is, their religious identity had become instrumental to their civic identity, such that they felt that coming to France was "coming home." Sussman shows how Jewish identity had been similarly instrumental for Algerian Jews. Like the pieds-noirs, they shared in the "nostalgerie" of the time and place.[12]

In contrast, the Moroccan and Tunisian Jews were insufficiently French. They were immigrants, Arabic-speaking with much closer ties to their fellow Arabs. Not having undergone the *mission civilisatrice* that took place in Algeria, the Moroccans and Tunisians still spoke Judeo-Arabic at home and spoke French with a thick Arabic accent. Sussman notes, however, that this linguistic distinction held only within the French Jewish community, since all of the Algerians, Christian and Jewish, including Jacques Derrida, spoke *pataouete*, a distinctive variety of urban Algerian French that was a major element in the distinctive self-hatred they expressed when relating to broader French society.

Overall, Sussman generalizes two main discourses: Sentiments of loss and displacement, and multiple and interlocking identities of Jews in North Africa and North African Jews in France:

1. Colonial subject, alongside Berber and Arab Muslims;

2. Religious minority in Muslim society, alongside Christians, Bahais, and others;

3. Postcolonial elites, for those who went to the Alliance Israelite Universelle schools and learned French. Sussman notes that the role played by Yiddish in firming up group solidarity among Polish Jews was played, for Algerian Jews living in Algeria and even in France, by the French language: "For the Algerian Jews, *French* [emphasis in original] was a Jewish language;"[13]

12. Sarah Sussman, "Jews from Algeria and French Jewish Identity," in *Transnational Spaces and Identities in the Francophone World*, eds. Hafid Gafaiti, Patricia M.E. Lorcin, and David G. Troyansky (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 217-41.

13. Sussman, "Jews from Algeria and French Jewish Identity," 234.

4. Immigrant to France, alongside others from the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe but especially the pieds-noirs after 1962;

5. Religious minority in France, alongside other Jews, Muslims, and others;

6. Émigré, for those who chose to return to North Africa – the "return" becomes a kind of re-emigration.

This could be considered a kind of sextuple consciousness. Nevertheless, I would like to draw attention to the moments of vulnerability at many of the encounters, and the times when they result in solidarities of mutual vulnerability with Muslims.

Polysemiotics of Operation Torch: Two Auditions

I return at this point to the film clip and the competing liberations that were understood, from both sides of the Mediterranean, during Operation Torch in November 1942, which brought the "*Mirikan*" (Americans) to Morocco. Operation Torch was the first major entry of the Americans into the European theater during World War II. It was also an experimental "dry run" for Operation Overlord, the D-Day invasion of Normandy, that would take place 19 months later. During Torch, General Dwight Eisenhower directed the operation from Gibraltar. The landings were divided into four groups (one each to the north and south of Casablanca, one to Oran in Algeria, and the fourth to Algiers). Finally, both American and British flotillas and troops were involved, although individual American officers were cosmetically inserted into the British command structures in order to convince the French that the British were not invading them again – Americans as proxies for the British in "French" North Africa.

In the first audition, the liberation of Vichy-controlled Morocco: Technically, Moroccans in 1942 were experiencing their 30th anniversary of French occupation. True, since 1940 rule from Paris had been replaced by rule from Vichy, and Hitler was known to be the true boss. What the Americans offered, potentially, was liberation from French rule. We know that Eisenhower was no fan of European colonialism, particularly during the 1950s (and notwithstanding the British-American coup d'État in Iran). Overall, in Morocco in 1942, there is an ambivalence felt toward the Americans that is not shared toward the French, who are subject to much more concrete resentment from Moroccans.

Actually, though, nothing technically changed in Morocco with regard to legal authority, and this was the case even after the Americans invaded.

French administration of North Africa continued, in many cases with exactly the same personnel who had ruled under Petain and before him, Paris.

In the second audition, the liberation of Nazi-occupied Paris: This is what we saw in the clip, and it "plays" much more sympathetically with Western audiences. All sorts of North Africans with various relationships to France and French people, as well their friend and landlady or manager Maryvonne, are celebrating as they look eagerly ahead to the arrival of the Americans to liberate Paris from the Nazis. There is solidarity between Europeans and North Africans in the scene, a solidarity that the film is attempting to recall and reinstate in Europe in 2011 and after. This emphasis on solidarity reimagines the song and downplays its critique of French colonial domination and its local counterpart, Fassi domination of the economic and political sphere in French Morocco and its postcolonial heir.

In conclusion, I find four kinds of American freedom in the film clip. Clearly these freedoms are not commensurate – they are riven with gaps, overlaps, and contradictions.

1. Freedom of France and its territories from German occupation and domination;

2. Freedom of North Africans from French occupation and colonial oppression;

3. Freedom of non-Americans to gain access to a taste of American popular culture;

4. Freedom of America and American capital to act in a racialized postwar world and to recreate that world in its own image through postwar globalization.

With regard to the last two freedoms, Houcine Slaoui's text in the song is ultimately ambivalent about American power – there is empowerment to accompany the domination. Partly, this results from the triple domination, the triple invasion by France (1912), Germany/Vichy France (1940), and the United States (1942). The last invasion has the feeling of a liberation as well, as Slaoui's blackness comes to index in Morocco a cosmopolitan worldliness after 1942 that perhaps was less evident before the invasion. In fact, this is the reading that is dominant in the film, and one that Bargach finds absent in Morocco. Moroccans – and particularly Jewish ones – did welcome the Americans as liberators. At the same tie, the success of Slaoui's song expressing ambivalence about the "liberators" suggests that their liberation was not universally appreciated as such. In fact, the substitution of Free

French for Vichy France, again ruling Morocco indirectly, was not probably seen as all that great an improvement. And overall, Bargach's insight remains convincing that the "Americans" of the song are probably a substitution by Slaoui that is politically less risky for him that mentioning for the real institution enacting social dislocation through "modernity" in Morocco: continued rule by France.[14]

There is an additional a fascinating layer of ambivalence in the film, nevertheless, since the audience for the song in the film is the emigrant community living in France, and already somewhat French, perhaps in ways that Moroccans in Morocco were not. Moreover, Paris at the time was under military occupation by the Germans, unlike Vichy France, which includes the North African colonies. Thus singing about an American liberation, even one that will not necessarily liberate their homeland, is a deeply subversive act in the presence of informers for the German military occupation.

I conclude with a reminder of my principal figure, Salim Halali, who was born Simon Halali in French Algeria in 1920. He was thus a French citizen at birth, albeit a poor one – he stowed away on a ship bound for Marseilles at age 14 and made it to Paris by 1937, building up a singing career just as Europe was burning. Halali survived throughout the war in Paris, never leaving, despite the danger. He just pretended to be a Muslim, and Muslims protected him. He opened a cabaret in 1947 after the war.

He was a French citizen and Arabic-speaking Jew in Algeria, then a North African immigrant in Paris. During and after the war, he consciously avoided returning to North Africa (which was no haven for French Jews under Vichy rule), not even to Morocco, until 1949, when he decided to return… not to Algeria but to Morocco! He lived in Morocco through Moroccan independence and the war in neighboring Algeria, before returning to the south of France in 1962 – precisely at the same time that the pieds-noirs were doing the same thing.

So, I would argue that like many French Jews consumed with nostalgerie, like the millionaire rockstar-philosopher Bernard-Henri Levy, when they decided to return to buy summer homes in the former colonies, it was a natural consequence of neocolonialism that so many chose Morocco instead of Algeria, due to the warmer embrace there of foreign direct investment. Thus my conclusion justifies my economically deterministic account of religious identities. Salim Halali successfully escaped the Nazis, but ultimately he could not escape the world system bequeathed by colonialism.

14. Bargach, "Liberatory, Nationalising and Moralising by Ellipsis," 82.

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الحرية الأمريكية وتقاطعات المواطنة في باريس العربية زمن الحرب

ملخص: مشهد في فيلم "الرجال الأحرار" لعام 2011 يصور حفلة في شقة للعمال بباريس في أواخر عام 1942 أو أوائل 1943. وكانت المدينة وقتئذ تحت الاحتلال الألماني، لكن العمال العرب يحتفلون بالتحرير الأمريكي الوشيك أو المنجز لأوطانهم. وفي الفيلم، تم اقتراح هذا الجدول الزمني على نغمات أغنية حسين السلاوي الشهيرة "الزين والعين الزرقة،" ("الجميلة والعيون الزرقاء،") والتي تُعرف أيضًا باسم "لمريكان" ("الأمريكيون") أو ببساطة بنغمات "حسنًا، حسناً (أوكي، أوكي)"– إنها الأغنية الوثيقة لعملية الشعلة، إيذانا بالتحرير الأمريكي لشمال إفريقيا من حكم ڤيشي/النازي. وقد جاء الأداء مفعما برسائل متعددة ومتناقضة حول الحرية والاستعباد والغزو والتحرير والاستهلاك والكرم والتضامن والهوية والحماية والضعف. وتستعرض هذه الورقة بعضًا من هذه الخيوط فيما يتعلق بالوضع التاريخي الذي تم تصويره، والظروف السياسية التي تم فيها إطلاق الفيلم، وحيثيات التمثيل، والتعليق الصوتي، والسيناريو. وفي قسم مطول من المقال، يدرس الباحث الهوية "المتقاطعة" ليهود شمال إفريقيا، مستعيرًا المصطلح من الفكر النسوي الأسود الذي يوضح كيف تؤدي الاختلافات الهيكلية إلى تجارب مختلفة من الضعف النسبي. وتخلص الورقة إلى أن العلاقات الحالية في إسرائيل وفرنسا والمغرب والولايات المتحدة يمكن فهمها بشكل أفضل إذا ما تم تناولها في ضوء هذا التاريخ المعقد.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تاريخ الاستعمار الفرنسي، اليهود في شمال إفريقيا، الحرب العالمية الثانية في السينما، الموسيقى الشعبية المغربية، الثقافة الأمريكية العالمية، التقاطعية.

Liberté américaine et citoyenneté intersectionnelle dans le Paris arabe en temps de guerre

Résumé: Une scène du film de 2011 "Les Hommes Libres" représente une fête dans un appartement ouvrier à Paris fin 1942 ou début 1943. La ville est sous occupation allemande, mais les ouvriers arabes célèbrent la libération américaine imminente ou accomplie de leur pays d'origine. Dans le film, cette chronologie est suggérée par la chanson standard de Houcine Slaoui "*al-zin wa-al 'ain az-zarqa*," "The Beautiful and the Blue-Eyed," également connue sous le nom de "*Lmirikan*" ("The Americans") ou simplement "Okay Okay "– un document de l'opération Torch, la libération américaine de l'Afrique du Nord de la domination vichy/nazie. Le spectacle est chargé de messages multiples et contradictoires sur la liberté, l'asservissement, la conquête, la libération, la consommation, la générosité, la solidarité, l'identité, la protection et la vulnérabilité. Cet article met en évidence certains de ces aspects concernant la situation historique décrite, les conditions politiques dans lesquelles le film est sorti, le casting, le jeu d'acteur, la voix off et le scénario. Dans une longue section, il examine l'identité "intersectionnelle" des juifs nord-africains, empruntant le terme à la pensée féministe noire qui montre comment les différences structurelles entraînent des expériences variées de vulnérabilité relative. Le document conclut que les relations actuelles en Israël, en France, au Maroc et aux États-Unis peuvent être mieux comprises si elles sont prises à la lumière de cette histoire complexe.

Mots-clés: Histoire coloniale française, Juifs en Afrique du Nord, Seconde Guerre mondiale dans le cinéma, musique pop marocaine, culture globale américaine, intersectionnalité.