

# The Dispersion of Egyptian Jewry

*Culture, Politics, and the Formation  
of a Modern Diaspora*

Joel Beinin

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS  
*Berkeley · Los Angeles · London*

# Contents

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Acknowledgments  | xi        |
| <b>I. Introduction</b>   | <b>I</b>  |
| The Jews of Egypt  |           |
| Authenticity and Cosmopolitanism                                     |           |
| Interdisciplinary Renegotiation of History, Diaspora,<br>and Memory  |           |
| The Neo-Lachrymose Conception of<br>Jewish-Arab History              |           |
| Alternatives to Neo-Lachrymosity                                     |           |
| Operation Susannah   |           |
| From Pillars of the Community to Compradors                          |           |
| Middle Eastern Jews (Mizrahim) and the Zionist<br>National Narrative |           |
| Encountering Egypt   |           |
| <br>   |           |
| <b>PART ONE:</b>   |           |
| <b>DISCOURSES AND MATERIALITIES OF IDENTITY</b>                      |           |
| <br>   |           |
| <b>2. Communitarianisms, Nationalisms, Nostalgias</b>                | <b>31</b> |
| Between Two Homelands: Egyptian Jewish<br>Representations of Egypt   |           |
| <i>Millet</i> , Minority, and Citizenship                            |           |

- The Karaites: An Arab Jewish Community  
 Cosmopolitanism and Egyptianism: The Jewish  
 Haute Bourgeoisie  
 French Culture, Radical Politics, and Middle-  
 Class Jewish Youth  
 Nostalgias: Beyond Nationalism?
3. Citizens, *Dhimmis*, and Subversives 60
- The Arab-Israeli Conflict and the Jews of Egypt  
 The 1948 Arab-Israeli War  
 Emigration/Aliyah  
 Status Ambiguities  
 The Jewish Presence  
 Layla Murad: Popular Culture and the Politics of  
 Ethnoreligious Identity  
 Denouement
4. Nazis and Spies: The Discourse of Operation Susannah 90
- The 1948 Arab-Israeli War and the "Discovery"  
 of Egyptian Nazism  
 The Israeli and Anglo-American Jewish  
 Discourse  
 The Official Egyptian Story  
 The International Campaign for the Defendants  
 After the Executions  
 Marginalizing the "Heroes of the Affair"  
 Can the Perpetrators of Operation Susannah Speak?

## PART TWO:

## DIASPORAS AND THE RECONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY

5. The Graduates of ha-Shomer ha-Tza'ir in Israel 121
- Ha-Shomer ha-Tza'ir and Egyptian Zionism  
 Kibutz Nahshonim  
 Ha-Shomer ha-Tza'ir and the Underground  
 in Egypt  
 The Egyptian *Gar'in* and Kibutz 'Ein-Shemer  
 Autobiography and Ethnography
6. The Communist Emigres in France 142
- The Palestine Question and the Jewish  
 Communists  
 Emigre Politics and Reterritorialization

- Exile and Communist Politics  
 The Suez Crisis and Aftermath  
 Political Nomadism  
 Egyptian Jews as Intermediaries in the  
 Arab-Israeli Conflict  
 Egyptian Jews in Paris and the Arab-Israeli  
 Conflict after the 1967 War  
 Henri Curiel, the PLO, and the Israeli Council for  
 Israeli-Palestinian Peace
7. The Karaites of the San Francisco Bay Area 179
- The Karaite Emigration from Egypt  
 The Karaite Jews of Egypt in Baghdad by the Bay  
 Assimilation and Estrangement from the Jewish  
 Community  
 Organizing the Karaite Jews of America  
 The San Francisco and Daly City Synagogues  
 Reform Karaites  
 On the Perils of Ethnography

## PART THREE:

EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI PEACE AND  
EGYPTIAN JEWISH HISTORIES

8. The Recovery of Egyptian Jewish Identity 207
- Rewriting the History of Zionism  
 The Assertion of Egyptian Jewish Identity  
 Peace and Victimhood  
 A Native Daughter  
*Harat al-Yahud* (The Jewish Quarter): An Arab  
 Jewish Neighborhood  
 The Ambiguous Legacy of Levantine Culture  
 Post-Zionism
9. Opposing Camp David and Remembering the Jews of Egypt:  
 Trends in Recent Egyptian Historical Writing 241
- Can Jews Be Egyptians?  
 Jewish Capitalism in Egypt  
 Colonial Capitalism  
 The Egyptian Sugar Company  
 Was There a Jewish Bourgeoisie?  
 Contention and Dialogue across the Borders

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Appendix: Interview with Jacques Hassoun: “I am Jewish because I am Egyptian. I am Egyptian because I am Jewish.” | 269 |
| Notes   | 275 |
| Bibliography  | 307 |
| Index   | 323 |
| Illustrations appear after page 118   |     |