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HAIM SAADOUN

Brami, Joseph

Joseph Brami was born in the → Jewish quarter (Ar. *ḥārat al-yahūd*) of → Tunis in 1888. He was an outstanding student at Solomon Dana's yeshiva *Ḥevrat Limmud ha-Talmud* (Association for the Teaching of the Talmud), but at the same time attended the → Alliance Israélite Universelle school and learned French. Thus, he was exposed to French culture and at the same time led a traditional Jewish life. Brami became a teacher of Hebrew in Tunis, giving lessons to groups or at the Zionist club, and tutoring privately outside Tunis. He was, in addition, a correspondent for *Haṣefira* (*Hazefira*), a → Haskala newspaper in Hebrew published in Warsaw and Berlin, filing reports on Jewish life, Zionist activities, and the progress of Hebrew learning in Tunisia.

As a Zionist activist, Brami was one of the founders of → Agudat *Ṣiyyon*, the first legal Zionist organization in Tunis, and the editor of the Zionist newspaper → *Kol Siyyon*, which was published in Judeo-Arabic. Brami was critical of the Alliance Israélite Universelle schools because of their lack of Hebrew courses. He represented Agudat *Ṣiyyon* at the Twelfth Zionist Congress in London in 1921. That same year, he was elected to the first Tunisian Jewish Council, one of the first democratically elected councils in the Muslim world. Also that year, he became the secretary of Moche Sitruk (1846–1928), the chief rabbi of Tunis. From 1922, he was the secretary of the chief rabbinate of Tunis and his salary was paid by the French. He died prematurely in 1924.

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HAIM SAADOUN

Brazil

Brazilian history has been marked by distinct periods of Jewish immigration (both legal and illegal), and Brazilian society evinces an undeniable Jewish influence along a trajectory that began over five hundred years ago. While Brazil may be home to the largest population of → Sephardim and people of Sephardi origin in the Americas, mostly descendants of Portuguese forced converts, the passage of time makes such speculations exceedingly difficult to substantiate. Such claims are further complicated by the fact that the vast majority of the descendants are largely unaware of their Jewish ancestry. Changes in the formation of Brazil, including policies governing immigration, created a context for the subsequent incorporation of Jews of many origins into the nation.

1. History

The Jewish presence in Brazil dates from the arrival of the first Europeans in 1500, as the Portuguese age of exploration coincided with the forced conversion of the country's Jewish population. Several famed explorers and crew members were either Jews or *crisãos-novos* (New Christians), as the forced converts were known in Portuguese, including Gaspar da Gama and Fernando de Noronha. Since Brazil was a Portuguese colony, immigration was limited to avowed Catholics. Although authorized immigration of Jews did not begin until the middle of the nineteenth century, both marraños (crypto-Jews) and overtly practicing Jews managed to enter the territory and establish themselves throughout the more than three centuries prior to legal immigration. Indeed, as

much as 30 percent of the free white population of Brazil in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries may have been of Jewish descent. Brazil's New Christians were certainly not a homogenous population, ranging from committed Christians to secretly practicing Jews, with some maintaining themselves separately while others integrated fully among all strata of Brazil's population.

Before the nineteenth century, the only period of lawful Jewish presence was from 1630 to 1654, during the Dutch occupation of the northeastern city of Recife and its environs. The population of the Dutch territory included Portuguese Jews who had fled to Holland to avoid forced conversion, as well as Portuguese *anusim* who were already living in Brazil. During this period, Jews were actively involved in trade and commerce, including the major economic foci of sugar and slave trafficking (Novinsky "Jewish Roots", p. 36). When the Portuguese regained control of the region in 1654, the Jews either dissolved into the Brazilian population or were expelled along with the Dutch, some going on to establish Jewish communities in the Caribbean, including in Curaçao, and in New Amsterdam (later New York). Current knowledge of this period has been bolstered by the recent excavation of the first synagogue in the Americas, Kahal Zur Israel, built in 1641, and headed by Rabbi Isaac Aboab de Fonseca. Since being designated a national historical site, the building, including the *mikve*, has been restored and now houses a museum, Jewish cultural center, and synagogue.

Over the course of its three hundred years, the Inquisition never established an office in Brazil, although its effects were strongly felt. Periodic visits from officials of the Portuguese Inquisition began in 1591; during a fierce anti-*cristão-novo* backlash in the early eighteenth century, hundreds of New Christians were arrested in Brazil for "judaizing" and sent to Portugal for trial and punishment. A 1773 Portuguese royal decree destroyed the records of forced conversions, erasing the legal distinctions between Old and New Christians and greatly increasing the assimilation of New

Christians into the Portuguese and Brazilian populations; the destruction of these records made it all but impossible to trace the descendants of *cristãos-novos*.

When Brazil declared its independence from Portugal in 1822, Roman Catholicism was recognized as the official religion of monarchic Brazil. Significantly, the Imperial Constitution of 1824 also allowed for the practice of other religions in private, opening the door to legal Jewish immigration. Some of the first openly Jewish immigrants were Moroccans who settled in the Amazon region over the course of the hundred years from the early nineteenth to the early twentieth century. Whereas some intermingled with the local populations and did not retain much in the way of Jewish practices, others maintained a strong Jewish identity, including the language → Haketia (North African → Judeo-Spanish), and established communal institutions throughout the region. Most Jewish settlers in Belém and other northern Brazilian towns were from Morocco, and many of these were former students in the → Alliance Israélite Universelle school in → Tetouan. The Moroccan Jews were joined by small numbers of Sephardim from → France, Turkey, → Lebanon, → Syria, and → Egypt, as well as Ashkenazim from Germany, Poland, and Eastern Europe (Benchimol, p. 73). Initially working as itinerant peddlers, during the rubber boom of the late nineteenth century Jews played a major role as middlemen (Miller, p. 196), enjoying great commercial success, and sending their children to schools in Rio de Janeiro, then the nation's capital. In 1917, Sephardim in the Amazon constituted the majority of the five to seven thousand Jews in Brazil. By the mid-twentieth century, the majority of Brazilian Jews were Ashkenazi, and most of the Amazonian Jews had relocated to the cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.

Rabbi Shalom Emanuel Muyl joined fellow Moroccans in the Amazon in 1908, but died within a few years during an epidemic. His tomb in the municipal cemetery in Manaus has become a Christian → pilgrimage site as a result of posthumous "miracles" attributed to him.

The incorporation of Rabbi Muyl, now a popular saint known as the Santo Judeu Milagreiro de Manaus (Port. Holy Jewish Miracle Worker of Manaus), into the local culture is a colorful example of the broad acceptance that has allowed Jews to establish a home in Brazil.

With the abolition of slavery in 1888 and the coffee boom, Brazil sought new populations to assist in the transition to a wage-labor economy, opening its ports to immigrants from Europe, the Middle East, and Japan. Jewish immigration increased following the Proclamation of the Republic in 1889, which formally separated church and state and established freedom of worship. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Jews from the → Ottoman Empire joined European Jews in establishing a community, albeit separate ones along the lines of countries and even cities of origin. Sephardim and Mizraḥim (known as *orientais*) from Greece, Italy, Turkey, → Morocco, Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt, among other places, immigrated to southeastern Brazil. In the cities they established dry goods, fabric, clothing, and furniture stores, as well as import/export businesses, and *mascates* (traveling salesmen) distributed these goods in the interior of the country. Jews have been credited with introducing the widespread practice of *prestações* (installment payments) into the Brazilian market. Sephardim and Mizraḥim quickly established themselves at the upper end of Brazil's socio-racial spectrum; the ease of their cultural integration was partly facilitated by the Ladin roots of the → Ladino or French spoken by many of these immigrants. Although most Jewish immigration after World War I was Ashkenazi, Brazil received 10 to 20 percent of the Jews evacuated from Constantinople (Lesser, p. 44). Linguistic and cultural differences kept the Sephardi and Ashkenazi communities separate until the establishment of the first communal institutions by the larger Ashkenazi community drew them together.

National policies were strongly influenced by “scientific racism” and eugenicist ideology that sought to reverse the effects of racial mixing by “whitening” the population through preferential immigration. The acceptability of Jewish immigrants depended on whether Jews were considered sufficiently “white” to contrib-

ute to this national project. Their success in Brazil drew negative attention in the 1930s from Brazilian xenophobes who wildly exaggerated the size of the Jewish population to justify limiting Jewish immigration and publications, although the restrictions were only weakly enforced. By 1943, the political climate had changed, and Brazil entered World War II on the side of the Allied countries. Jewish immigration resumed after the war, with Brazilian Jews actively involved in efforts to bring in Holocaust survivors. Brazil formally recognized the State of → Israel in 1948.

The final significant wave of Sephardim to Brazil came from Egypt (see → Diaspora Communities: Egyptians) in the aftermath of the Suez Canal crisis in the 1950s, along with Jews from other Arab countries. Unlike the earlier groups of immigrants, who faced the challenge of establishing a communities, these refugees found vibrant communities in the major cities of southeastern Brazil nearing the peak of their economic potency. Mutual aid associations had given way to funeral societies, schools, synagogues, and all of the necessary elements for leading a full Jewish life. For those who arrived with money, there was an established Jewish high society, including clubs in São Paulo that rivaled the ones from which Jews had earlier been excluded. For those who escaped with little, there were schools and charities prepared to receive them with scholarships and other forms of aid.

By the mid-twentieth century, the community included Jews from over sixty countries of origin, including other Latin American nations. As of the mid-1970s, approximately 14 percent of the Jewish families in São Paulo were Sephardi, with nearly 10 percent of Jewish immigrants having come from Arab countries, roughly half of them from Egypt (Rattner, *Tradição e Mudança*, pp. 99, 108, 191).

2. Contemporary Communities

Although some sources have claimed a population as high as two hundred thousand, demographers like DellaPergola estimate the number of Brazilian Jews to be about one hundred thousand, representing a tiny fraction of

Brazil's 180 million citizens. Most of this population is concentrated in three cities in the southeast, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Porto Alegre, with additional small communities scattered throughout the country. While there is a considerable Orthodox influence, ranging from Modern Orthodox to an active Hasidic movement, most practicing Jews in Brazil may be classified as conservative, although not necessarily in line with institutional Conservatism. There are two Reform synagogues in the country, one in São Paulo and the other in Rio de Janeiro, and no developed Reconstructionist movement. Economically, Jews of all subethnic groups have historically enjoyed a privileged position, and have made major contributions to Brazilian business, politics, liberal professions, academia, literature, journalism, and film and television. Paradoxically, greater integration has also meant that the community is more vulnerable to Brazil's economic instability. Whereas during the immigration period mutual aid societies provided assistance to newly arrived Jews, now third- and fourth-generation Brazilian Jews are increasingly slipping below the middle class and seeking assistance from a handful of Jewish charitable organizations.

In contrast to neighboring → Argentina, and in spite of having infamously received Nazi fugitives, there is little organized antisemitism (see → Anti-Judaism/Antisemitism/Anti-Zionism) in Brazil. As of 2003, Brazil has recognized antisemitism as a form of racism punishable under the antidiscrimination statute of the 1988 constitution; an active public-private collaboration oversees successful and well-publicized prosecutions under the statute.

Although historically Brazil's Jewish communities were marked by the usual distinctions along lines of ethnicity, country of origin, and religious denomination, the last several decades have brought considerable interaction and mixing such that even synagogues show signs of what some have called the "Brazil Effect." In the city of São Paulo, for instance, the large Orthodox synagogue founded by the Syrian → Safra banking family is headed by a Lubavitch rabbi, while Mizrahim attend services at the conservative Congregação Israelita Paulista, originally founded by German immigrants

(and the largest synagogue in Latin America). Both are examples of the kind of blending of subethnic groups that began as early as the 1930s. Additionally, the synagogues that formerly served the German communities of São Paulo and Rio have each elected Sephardi presidents (Lesser, p. 172).

São Paulo is home to the Hebraica social and athletic club, considered the world's largest Jewish club. With approximately twenty-eight thousand members, roughly half of the Jewish population of São Paulo, the club serves as a community center as well as the principal point of encounter between the Jewish community and the broader Brazilian society, hosting major musical events and receiving local and national politicians, as well as international dignitaries. Jewish community organizations are inclusive and not overtly marked by their Sephardi or Ashkenazi origins, in large part because Brazilian Jews have embraced the popular Brazilian ideology of cultural/racial equality and use it to explain both the commingling of Jewish subethnic groups and the mostly felicitous acceptance of Jews into the Brazilian nation.

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MISHA KLEIN

Brod, Simon

Simon Brod, a businessman of Ashkenazi origin, was born in → Istanbul in 1893. His father was a tailor who had fled there from Russia. Simon and his brother Max went into business importing fabrics from England and were very successful, in due course opening a store in Istanbul’s main textile marketplace.

During World War II, Simon Brod joined the Refugees Rescue Committee organized by the leaders of the Istanbul Jewish community. He threw himself into the task of obtaining safe passage for Jewish refugees from Nazi-occupied Europe who hoped to transit Turkey on the way to Palestine. Using his excellent contacts in the Istanbul Police Directorate, other local agencies and organizations, and the Passport Section of the British consulate, he was able to obtain visas for many of them. Brod lost his fortune when the → Capital Tax Law of 1942 went into effect. He died on August 12, 1962 and was buried in Istanbul’s Ashkenazi cemetery.

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RIFAT BALI

Brudo, Berta

Berta Bensusen Özgün Brudo (1926–2008) was a famous Turkish poet. She was born in Çanakkale, but moved to Istanbul to attend the Işık Lisesi (IstanbulIşıkHigh School) there. Upon graduation she worked at Şark Sigorta (Şark Insurance) for several years. In addition to her poetry, she wrote articles, composed music, and drew caricatures.

Brudo’s books of poetry include *Berta’nın Şiirleri* (Berta’s Poems; 1986) and *Beşyüz Yılın Destanı* (Epic of 500 Years, 1991). She also wrote a memoir entitled *Yedi Nesil Öncesinden Günümüze Yolculuk* (A Journey from Seven Generations Ago to Today, 1998), in which she described her dreams, the Jews of Turkey, and their allegiance to Turkish society. Brudo was highly regarded as a caricaturist. A collection of her caricatures, *Diyojen* (Diogenes), was published in 2002.

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AKSEL ERBAHAR

Bucharest

Bucharest (Turk. Bükresh; Rom. Bucureşti) was founded sometime in the fourteenth cen-