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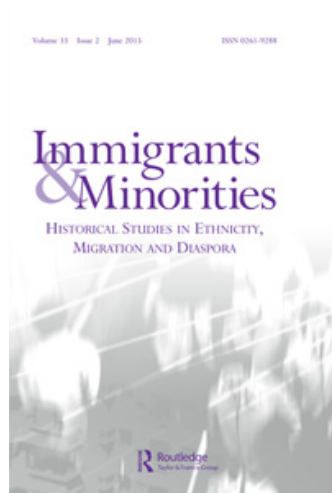
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Identity Imperative: Ottoman Jews in Wartime and Interwar Britain

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By the onset of World War I, thousands of Ottoman immigrants, including a significant proportion of Jews, were living and trading in Britain. During wartime and through much of the interwar period, these multi-ethnic Ottomans were automatically classified as enemy aliens, subject at times to internment and deportation, stripped of their freedom of movement, and uniformly barred from British citizenship. Drawing on nearly sixty recently declassified naturalization applications of Ottoman Jews, this article discusses the demographic profile of Middle Eastern newcomers, xenophobia, and the role of the state in shaping national and ethnic identities, focusing on the British government's invention of an 'Ottoman (Spanish Jew)' designation that legally Hispanified Ottoman Jewish applicants, allowing them to be considered for citizenship.

Keywords: Ottoman Empire; Jews; World War I; xenophobia; nationality; Sephardic

Maurice Mercado, a merchant of Persian, Turkish and Indian carpets and rugs, had been living in England without interruption for 12 years when a family inheritance issue back in Istanbul was finally resolved, leaving him free to file an application for naturalisation. Unfortunately for him, the Great War broke out and the Home Office, the department of the British government responsible for naturalisation since 1844, categorised him as an enemy alien and refused to consider his case. Having successfully evaded the closure of his business, internment, and deportation, Mercado's next

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strategy was to gesture towards the Iberian origins of his ancestors. 'I am a Spanish Jew', he lamented in 1914, who 'had the misfortune of being born in Constantinople'.¹ His tactic was not immediately successful but, beginning in 1918, proclaiming a Spanish Jewish identity became the linchpin to the successful citizenship applications of dozens of Ottoman Jews living in England, Scotland, and what would in 1922 become the Free State of Ireland.

This article is based on nearly 60 naturalisation files of Ottoman Jews, intended to be sealed off for a century, but recently declassified by The National Archives of the UK. Although the naturalisation petitions of various other Ottoman ethnic groups are also preserved, most are closed until 2030.² The Jewish files here under study were easily identifiable through their listing in the archival catalogue as pertaining to 'Ottoman (Spanish Jews)' and represent every known file designated under that rubric. As such, this assemblage of cases offers a comprehensive way to gauge the treatment of a particular sub-ethnic group and, by extension, allows us to consider a variety of immigration and minority themes particular to wartime and interwar Britain, including the demographic features of Middle Eastern newcomers, nativism and xenophobia, and the role of the state in shaping national and ethnic identities.

Ottoman Jewish immigrants seem to have been distinctive in the procession of identities they presented before the Home Office, which appear to be more varied than fellow Christian and Muslim subjects. Like other Ottoman immigrants, the ethno-national self-presentation of Jews fell into three sometimes overlapping categories: geographical nativity, government-issued nationality papers, and cultural orientation or folkloric understanding of their ancestral roots. Geographical nativity was the leading factor in determining how petitioners first approached the British government. The vast majority initially identified themselves as Ottomans, even after the emergence of the modern Republic of Turkey in 1923, or as citizens of one of the Empire's successor states, such as Greece, Syria, Egypt or Iraq. A sizeable minority of applicants (some 20% in the sample under discussion) carried documents from countries other than their birthplace, identifying them as 'protected people' of Britain, France, Spain, Portugal or Italy, which they presented to the Home Office in order to distance themselves from their Ottoman origins. This protégé designation refers to the system of capitulations, a political agreement between the Ottoman Empire and European states that granted subjects consular protection and privileges akin to diplomatic immunity and status as 'native foreigners'.³ Language knowledge and education were the major determinants in the last category. The vast majority of applicants, some 78%, spoke a Jewish

dialect of early modern Spanish and were native to the leading Ottoman cities that had harboured Jews after the Catholic King and Queen of Spain expelled all of its Jewish subjects in 1492, bringing Europe's largest medieval Jewish community to an end. The remaining applicants were natives of Arab lands who spoke various dialects of Arabic. Many of the petitioners had been schooled in European educational institutions, such as the Alliance Israelite Française, which sought to Westernise and economically rehabilitate Ottoman Jews. Ottoman Jews seeking naturalisation drew on some or all of these aspects of their identities, with varying degrees of success.

The naturalisation process of Ottoman Jews in wartime and interwar Britain is an example of what I call 'identity imperative' – the situational coercion or pragmatism that induced individuals to officially choose one term of self-classification over another. All of these Jewish petitioners, at some point in the naturalisation process, were cognizant of their real or imagined Iberian ancestry and hence identified themselves as 'Sephardic Jews'. These naturalisation cases demonstrate how the British government – and some applicants themselves – connived to legally Hispanify a Jewish subgroup whose birthplaces, occupations and language knowledge patently identified them as Eastern.⁴ As additional naturalisation files are declassified, historians may investigate whether a parallel nationalisation process was intrinsic to the successful citizenship petitions of other Ottoman minorities, such as Christian Armenians or Muslim Syrians.

Ottomans in British History

Middle Eastern immigration to Britain began in earnest in 1860 with the mass relocation of Ottoman subjects.⁵ While most of these migrants settled in the Americas, thousands, mostly Christians and Jews, arrived in England by the onset of World War I.⁶ This trickle preceded but did not presage the flood of mostly Muslim Turkish immigrants to Europe, which commenced in the 1960s when a number of European countries began to sign labour migration agreements with Turkey. These intensely studied newcomers and their native-born descendants, currently 4 million strong and scattered across many European countries, represent the largest immigrant group in Europe.⁷ Social and economic integration is their foremost challenge. Generally from low socio-economic backgrounds and traditionally Muslim, they are 'considered one of the toughest groups to integrate'.⁸

The wide attention given to Turkish immigrants and their descendants in Europe speaks to a tendency among scholars to focus on ethnic groups that are both highly visible and stigmatised, an example of how researchers

have allowed popular concerns to limit their subject matter.⁹ Neither studies of Turkish immigrants and their native-born descendants in Britain nor general overviews of immigration to the country show any awareness of preceding communities dating to the Ottoman era, except for fleeting references at best.¹⁰ Although the two waves of immigration differ vastly both demographically and in magnitude, there are compelling reasons not to ignore the earlier influx, which afforded British metropolitan society and its governing lawmakers direct experience with a local Middle Eastern presence. The experiences of these forerunners and those who interacted with them provide a previously unknown gauge of the reception of non-Europeans in Christian Europe at a time when the foreign-born population of metropolitan Britain hovered just below 0.75%.¹¹ The commonplace acknowledgment that the roots of contemporary Britain's multicultural society are grounded in the first decades of the twentieth century has failed to stimulate any intensive study on Ottomans.¹²

At the same time, this article speaks to a need to diversify scholarly understanding of Jewish immigrants in Britain. The rich literature that considers Jews in wartime and interwar Britain accounts for Germans, eastern Europeans and Austro-Hungarians, but is entirely unaware that among Jews designated as enemy aliens in that period were Ottomans with birthplaces as varied as Baghdad, Brussels, Damascus, Istanbul, Izmir, Jerusalem, Nice, Salonika and Shanghai.¹³ This oversight owes much to the general historiography of British Jews, which almost entirely omits the presence of Ottoman and South Asian Jews that emerged in metropolitan Britain in the 1860s.¹⁴ Just as in the case of Muslim and Christian Ottomans, the experiences of Jewish imperial subjects varies our understanding of how the British government and local institutions responded to ethno-national difference during a time when foreign-, naturalised- and native-born German civilians bore the brunt of hostility.¹⁵

Finally, this article contributes to emerging scholarship on Jewish individuals and families scattered across three major Empires, who shared a collective identity as Jews that intersected rather awkwardly with the various categories of belonging designed by Ottoman, British and French imperial powers. In her analysis of a contested will drawn up by a Jew living in Shanghai who claimed British protection, but whose origins stretched back to Iraq and India, Sarah Stein has shown how legal disputes of the fabulously wealthy often brought such contradictions to the fore.¹⁶ The present article, by contrast, focuses on ordinary immigrants in the British metropole and the ways in which the local government assessed and moulded their complicated national status.

Ottoman Aliens and the Negotiation of British Citizenship

Unlike the immigrants who began to arrive in the 1960s, Ottoman newcomers caught in the grip of World War I and its aftermath struggled not to integrate, but rather to negotiate a national identity that would make them eligible candidates for naturalisation. Whether Armenians, Syrians, Jews or Greeks, Ottoman subjects during the Great War were automatically classified as enemy aliens according to British law, subject in some cases to internment and deportation, stripped of their freedom of movement and uniformly barred from becoming naturalised British subjects.¹⁷ The British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act, promulgated at the conclusion of the war, stated in section 3(2) that ex-enemy subjects were barred from naturalisation for a period of 10 years unless they: (a) had 'served in His Majesty's forces or in the forces of any of His Majesty's Allies or of any country acting in naval or military cooperation with His Majesty'; (b) were 'a member of a race or community known to be opposed to the enemy governments', or (c) were 'at birth a British subject'. The decade-long waiting period began not in 1918, but rather in 1921, the date of the termination of the war prescribed in the Order in Council.¹⁸ Hundreds of Ottomans who filed citizenship applications between 1918 and 1931 strove to demonstrate that they fell into exception (b) of section 3 (2) of the Aliens Act, and many of them were forced to reapply time and again after their petitions were successively rejected.

Despite his unlucky timing, Maurice Mercado was in other ways living in Britain at an opportune moment. Judaism had been legal in England since 1656.¹⁹ The last remaining disabilities Jews suffered were gradually removed in the last decades of the nineteenth century.²⁰ By the early 1900s, they had established dozens of congregations and hundreds of philanthropic institutions that both reflected and enhanced the cultural and organisational strength of the community.²¹ Although founded by Jews of Iberian origins, Britain's Jewish community by the nineteenth century was comprised mostly of central and eastern Europeans who founded social and religious institutions independent of their Portuguese and Spanish predecessors. Mass migration from the continent, beginning in the 1880s, was dominated by Jews and caused Britain's Jewish community to grow exponentially.²² The influx of eastern European Jews into the country surpassed that of both the Irish and the Germans, with over 100,000 arriving in Britain between 1880 and World War I.²³ Ottoman Jews may have followed the same pattern, as suggested by the small sample under study. The vast majority in this sample, 70%, arrived in Britain between 1890 and 1905, followed by another 7% in the years leading up to

the war. The first restrictive immigration law in Britain, the Aliens Act of 1905, which permitted authorities to bar the entrance of 'undesirable and destitute aliens', and implicitly targeted Jews, may have played a role in diminishing the influx of Ottoman Jews.²⁴ However, while the naturalisation appeals under consideration make clear that the Home Office was indeed interested in the economic viability of the applicants, the petitioners showed a wide range of economic attainment and government officials had other concerns as well, such as command of the English language and feelings of patriotism. That only 23% arrived after 1914 is in consonance with the fact that little immigration of any group occurred during the interwar period.²⁵

From 1800 through to 1868, 22% of those naturalised each year in Britain were Jews, a spectacular figure given that Jews represented under 1% of the general population.²⁶ Aside from a brief lull between 1880 and 1894, the result of a fee increase, the naturalisation rate of Jews rose steadily, reaching 51% by 1901 and 57% by 1911.²⁷ Most individuals naturalised in the period leading up to the Great War were Polish and Russian Jews who had settled in England since the 1870s. They bore ethno-religiously distinctive names such as Morris Bernstein, Hyman Reuben Caplan, Samuel Wolf Cohen, Schlomia Epstein, Lazarus Bloomberg, Mejer Samuel Elster and Israel Guiwisch.²⁸ The scholar who compiled the aforementioned naturalisation statistics in the 1970s identified 'obviously Jewish' names in a very narrow way that excluded a host of Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, Hebrew and Arabic names that are just as identifiably Jewish. Solely on a first and last name basis, Maurice Mercado would have likely recognised José Vidal Sasson, Maurice Moise Arditi, Jacques Moreno Pontremoli and Joseph Moses Shasha, all naturalised in the 1920s and 1930s, as fellow Jews.

Mercado's case and others like it raise a host of questions at the heart of ethnic and communal identity. First and foremost, what are Sephardic Jews? This may seem like an easily resolved question, but as scholars advance knowledge of medieval and modern Jewish history, the definition becomes both more complex and interesting.²⁹ Strictly speaking, Sephardim are Jews who trace their origins to the Iberian Peninsula. In Hebrew, this territory was called Sefarad; hence, these Jews are called 'Sefaradím' in Hebrew, and in English 'Sephardim'. Medieval Jews living in what are today Spain and Portugal were the first to identify the Iberian Peninsula with the 'Sefarad' of the Hebrew Bible.³⁰ After the Jews were exiled from the Iberian Peninsula between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, they self-identified according to their natal cities, but by the late sixteenth century, the trend was to call themselves Sefaradím, in part an

acknowledgment of the emergence of Spain as a politically unified state. Perhaps half of the Iberian Jewish exiles settled in the Ottoman Empire, where they developed a language commonly called Ladino, and in scholarly circles Judeo-Spanish. This Oriental Spanish was based on early modern Romance, but was lexically, morphologically and grammatically shaped by Hebrew, Arabic, Aramaic, Turkish, Greek, Italian and French. The Ottoman Empire was a multi-ethnic, multi-religious territory stretching from North Africa to the Balkans and the Anatolian Peninsula, and ruled by Muslim Turks from 1299 until its final disintegration during World War I (or, officially, in 1923). Beginning in 1860, expatriate Ottoman Jews transformed Ladino, which they wrote in Hebrew letters, into a transnational language and played a leading role in exporting so-called Oriental goods, by establishing new communities in western Europe, the Americas and sub-Saharan Africa.

By contrast, the western branch of modern Iberian Jewish civilisation, known as Western Sephardim, was comprised of former New Christians of Portuguese and Spanish ancestry who restored the Jewish presence to Europe's Atlantic coast after centuries of expulsions and forced conversions. These Jews never called themselves Sephardim, at least before the nineteenth century, but rather Portuguese and Spanish Jews. In the Anglophone world, their best known centre is that of London, where former *conversos* or forced converts to Christianity established in the mid-seventeenth century the first Jewish community in England since that country expelled its Jews in 1290. Under Oliver Cromwell, and due in part to the intervention of Menasseh Ben Israel, Jews were readmitted into England and established its first modern-day synagogue, the Spanish and Portuguese congregation of Bevis Marks, in 1657. Scholars refer to these Jews as Western Sephardim because they never left the western hemisphere. They traditionally spoke Portuguese and Spanish, which they wrote in the Latin alphabet.

The mass migration of Jews from the Ottoman Empire began in earnest around the turn of the twentieth century, peaking in the 'teens and resuming its influx in the 1920s. Hundreds of these Jews settled in Britain, where they encountered a Western Sephardi population that was rapidly dwindling, and a development paralleled in the early twentieth century USA and the Caribbean. These newcomers, most of them natives of Muslim lands, demographically transformed the Spanish and Portuguese synagogues of Britain, and saved these old congregations from total eclipse.³¹ Not only did they fill the synagogue pews, but they also took up the mantle of leadership. Shemtob Gaguine, for example, a native of Ottoman Palestine holding an Egyptian passport, arrived in England in

1919 and within a few years was serving as Rabbi and Adviser of London's Spanish and Portuguese synagogue. In the 1920s, a group of wealthy Ottoman immigrants, including Moise Abraham Alfandary, an Oriental carpet merchant and native of Istanbul who immigrated to Britain in 1891, established a new Sephardi synagogue in the fashionable Holland Park district of West London, affiliated with the mother congregation Bevis Marks.³² Other Ottoman newcomers established themselves in Leicester, Manchester, Southport, Essex, Leeds, Devon, Birmingham and Glasgow (Scotland).

These previously unknown details of immigrant lives provide an ideal opportunity for a prosopographical inquiry of Great Britain's Ottoman Jewish community. Prosopography is a method of studying groups of people whose detailed biographical details are generally not available. The information each naturalisation file discloses represents the kind of basic demographic data only bureaucratic governments persistently demand, compile and preserve, particularly in times of war. Beyond bare-bones information, such as name and alias, birth date and natal city, language knowledge, age at immigration, occupation, citizenship and legal status, and whether or not the applicant was interned during the war, we are also privy to more descriptive elements, such as identities of relatives, the names and backgrounds of referees with whom the applicant maintained intense business or personal relations, educational attainments, and synagogue affiliation. As such, these files collectively provide a snapshot, albeit heavily male-oriented, of the Ottoman Jewish community in Britain during its first era of mass immigration. Of the 58 cases so far examined, the largest cohort (36%) was born in Istanbul or its environs, and almost all petitioners were merchants or shippers of 'Oriental' carpets, fancy goods and antiques. Professionally representative is Joseph Souhami, a native of Izmir whose import business of Oriental carpets, brocades and antique embroideries is prominently featured on his 1925 letterhead. The robed, turbaned man smoking a hookah dismisses any ambiguities about the provenance of his products, or his own nationality (Figure 1). Another example is Istanbul native Jacob Mizrahi, co-owner of The Oriental House, importer of Turkish, Persian and Indian carpets, whose letterhead features an illustration of a dome-topped building and what appears to be a minaret in the background (Figure 2). Jews such as Souhami and Mizrahi, along with their Muslim and Christian Ottoman cohorts, played a critical role in the growing commerce between England and the Levant and India, after the eclipse of the East India Company in 1857, an endeavour which helped to secure Britain's economic preeminence in the world.³³

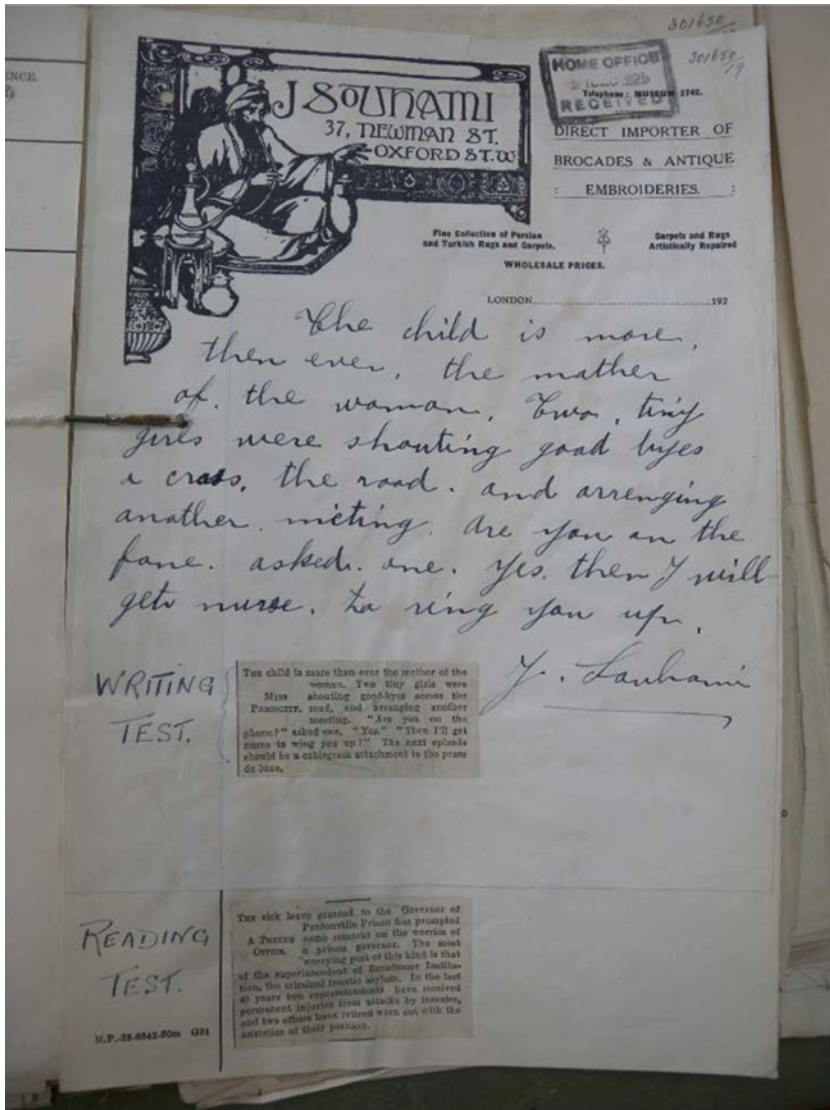


Figure 1 TNA, HO HO 144/11658, Joseph Souhami naturalisation case, "J Souhami" company letterhead, 21 December 1925.

Although all of these Jews were technically Ottoman by virtue of their own or their father's birth, they identified themselves in a variety of ways in their applications. Some, like Istanbul-native Maurice Mercado, immediately presented themselves as 'Spanish Jews', the survival of his Ottoman identification document notwithstanding (Figure 3). Others

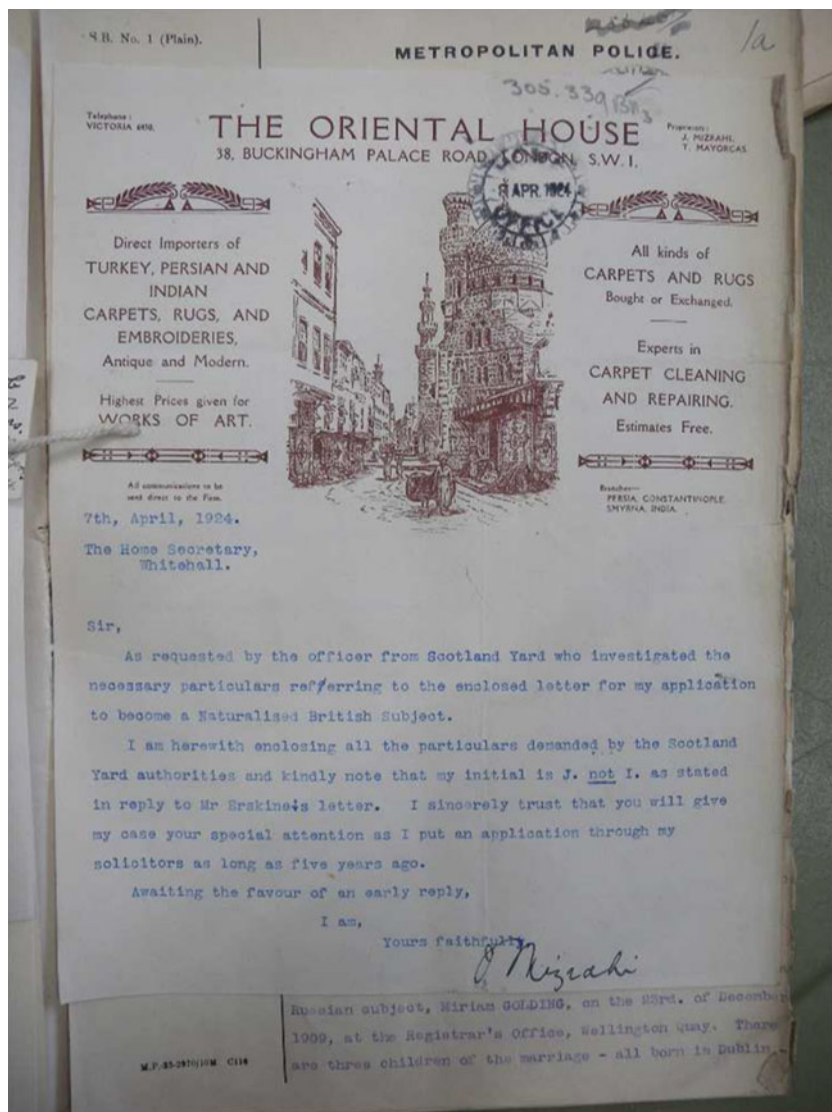


Figure 2 TNA, HO 144/8768, Jacob Mizrahi naturalisation case, Jacob Mizrahi to Home Office, 7 April 1924.

portrayed themselves as Turks of Spanish origin or lineage, or as Portuguese. Others self-described as 'Israélites de Levant', 'protégés' of France, Spain, Portugal or Italy, as subjects of Iraq or Egypt, as Ottoman (Palestinians), or as of no nationality at all. As a way of simplifying the panoply of these identities, the British government at the conclusion of the

Great War invented a category by which it was prepared to consider all Ottoman Jewish applicants for naturalisation: 'Ottoman (Spanish Jew)'. This was often the only category Ottoman Jews could use in interwar Britain to prove that they were within exception (b) of section 3(2) of the aforementioned British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act of 1918. In many cases, the Home Office not only encouraged, but often flat-out directed these applicants to file as 'Ottoman (Spanish Jews)'. What is more, these British officials instructed Ottoman Jewish applicants to obtain a statutory declaration or certificate from a local Sephardi rabbi to attest to their identity as 'Spanish Jews'.

The precedent for this bureaucratic practice emerged as the Home Office considered the case of Max Solomon Haim, who was born in 1889 and had resided in England since 1911. Haim's application reveals the behind-the-scenes experimentation process in which candidates, their legal representatives, and the Home Office engaged as they negotiated a term of self-classification all parties could agree to. Haim, an unmarried native of Izmir and import/export merchant, had registered as required with the British police during World War I as an 'Ottoman subject'.³⁴ In the summer of 1915, he applied for and was granted exemption from repatriation and successfully avoided detention in an alien enemy camp.³⁵ Haim first filed for naturalisation in 1919, but the Home Office characteristically delayed its consideration of his application. On his Memorial for naturalisation, Haim self-identified as a 'Spanish Jew of a separate Jewish Community in formerly Turkish Asia Minor.' The Metropolitan Police Report commented that the term 'Spanish Jew' was 'a misnomer, for although [the] Memorialist is descended from Jews originally established in Spain and can speak Spanish, he is a subject of the Ottoman Empire as it is about 400 years ago when his ancestors were in Spain.'³⁶ Evidently, the Home Office was of the same mind, for they repeatedly put Haim off with 'new postponing letters'.³⁷

Fortunately for him, Haim had hired an aggressive law firm, C.F. Mathews, to represent his case. Its solicitors badgered the Home Office with a barrage of 'impertinent' letters from 1919 through to 1921, complaining of the Home Office's neglect of the application and calling the Home Office's bluff when it claimed to be overwhelmed with applications.³⁸ In the end, the Home Office decided to hint that it would consider evidence that Haim fell into a category excluded by 3(b), but gave no indication what that evidence ought to consist of, nor who should present it. Haim's solicitors decided that '[p]ossibly the best evidence that we can furnish you [the Home Office] therefore would be a letter from the Chief Rabbi.' Such a letter would attest to Haim's



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Portuguese Jewish congregations, to submit a statutory declaration to that effect.⁴⁰ The Home Office accepted this letter as evidence, but specifically instructed Haim to amend his Memorial by self-identifying as an 'Ottoman (Spanish Jew)'.⁴¹ The Home Office finally approved Haim's application by virtue of Gaster's declaration, Haim's membership in London's Spanish and Portuguese Congregation, and his presence in the country before the commencement of the Great War.⁴² But Haim's solicitors were relentless. In response to the Home Office's begrudging letter informing them that their client would be naturalised – and which would have been sooner had the solicitors not pestered the Home Office so much – they retorted, 'We do not appreciate how the letters we have written to you can have done anything to delay this decision.'⁴³

The case of Max Solomon Haim set a precedent, and the credit goes to the aggressive negotiating methods and resourcefulness of his solicitors.⁴⁴ By the late 1920s, the request of Ottoman Jews for naturalisation had become so mundane that the Home Office expressly directed applicants who filed under one of various nationalities to replace it with 'Ottoman (Spanish Jew)'. By 1930, the Home Office declared the rabbinical voucher for an applicant's 'Ottoman (Spanish Jewish)' identity as 'the usual certificate'.⁴⁵ The recognition of Ottoman Jews as Spanish was thus legally ratified. The Spanish identity marker helped to open the door of British citizenship to dozens of Ottoman Jews.

The Haim case and those that unfolded during the interwar period reveal the newly endowed role of Sephardi synagogues as embassies effectively empowered to issue Spanish Jewish identity papers to their constituents. Through the pressure of the Home Office, Sephardi clergymen were informally (and probably illegally, from the point of the Spanish government) transformed into embassy officials authorised to confer Spanish citizenship, albeit one inflected by an ethno-religious identity. In fact, the chaos produced during the Great War and its aftermath – the disintegration of empires and concomitant population displacements and exchanges – temporarily bestowed upon Jewish institutions all over the world a status as informal embassies with the authority of issuing identity papers on behalf of their members. Although most applicants here under study turned to the spiritual leaders of local Spanish and Portuguese congregations, the Home Office in certain circumstances accepted declarations from the Grand Rabbi of Salonica or the rabbinical authority of Baghdad. These practices were similar to those applied in the naturalisation cases of Christian and Muslim Ottomans. By 1924, the Home Office had naturalised several Syrian applicants who had presented a certificate from 'the Syrian Muslim committee' which

stated that the petitioner was of the 'Syrian race', or one from a Syrian Christian congregation in Manchester stating that the petitioner was a Syrian Christian.⁴⁶

Moreover, clerical authorities and Jewish nationalist organisations were pivotal in sparing Ottoman Jews from detention in internment camps by affirming their constituents' friendly alien status, which in the case of wartime detention was synonymous with being a Jew. Jacques Ascher Salem, a native of Salonica who arrived in London in 1912 to train as a merchant and shipper, was released from Camp Douglas on the Isle of Man after three and a half years when both 'the Very Reverend' Moses Gaster and 'His Eminence' Jacob Meir, the Grand Rabbi of Salonika certified him as a 'Jew of Spanish origin'.⁴⁷ Haim Poyastro was luckier: he was exempted from internment as an alien enemy by reason of belonging to Britain's 'Zionist Organisation', which supported Britain in the war.⁴⁸ Jewish clerics and secular organisations cooperated with the British authorities to collectively transform Jewish aliens into trans-national sympathisers with the Allied cause.

Xenophobia and Anti-Jewish Sentiment

Historians have noted that treatment as enemy aliens did not generate an outcry among ethnic groups targeted during wartime and its aftermath. Expressions of protest could imply a lack of loyalty, further hindering a group's integration or social rehabilitation.⁴⁹ Among Ottoman Jews, the bitter wartime experiences do not seem to have unhinged their determination to remain in Britain. Overwhelmingly, the motives Ottoman Jews articulated for filing for naturalisation were pragmatic. Statelessness, enemy alien status, or bearing a neutral foreign nationality put a man at a great disadvantage in business, particularly Ottoman Jewish merchants who travelled frequently in the British Isles, on the Continent, and in the Middle East. Their first-person narratives offer us rare insight into the xenophobic atmosphere of interwar Britain as experienced by those on the receiving end.

Maurice Mercado begged the Home Office to deal with his petition expeditiously, 'as I feel very uncomfortable without a nationality. During my business journeys I stay at various towns in Britain & I really do not know whether I am doing right when filling registration forms at Hotels, to sign myself of Turkish nationality, when I do not possess same'.⁵⁰ Similarly, Jacques Salem wished to undertake business in Turkey and Greece and his movement would have been impeded without British citizenship.⁵¹ Nissim Levy carried on 'a substantial export business from Leeds' and was 'very

desirous of travelling in the near future on the Continent'.⁵² Selemia Elnecavé, a dealer in carpets, antiques and Oriental goods, had 'an aversion to being regarded as an alien'.⁵³ Elie Raphael Afoumado, an importer and dealer in Eastern Carpets, Rugs, and Embroideries, explained that his 'customers in his business are all English people (many very prominent in Society) and your Memorialist is often asked by them whether he is naturalised'.⁵⁴ Jacques Moreno Pontremoli stated that he was prevented from leasing a business premise in Paddington because its owners, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, refused to grant to him a lease unless he obtained British naturalisation.⁵⁵ These testimonies speak to the professional obstacles that contributed to the disappearance of many Middle Eastern import companies during and directly after the Great War, and to the homogenisation of Britain's ethnic landscape, a process that also largely erased the country's visible German and Italian presence.⁵⁶

An unintended consequence of anti-foreigner harassment was that a man's native-born family was directly implicated. His wife was immediately stripped of her British citizenship upon marriage.⁵⁷ A few applicants specifically mention their desire to have their wives' citizenship reinstated. The careers of an applicant's children were jeopardised through their father's Ottoman status. Haim Leon Hassid, who had lived in England continuously since 1902, testified that his status as an alien was 'prejudicial to the advancement of [his native-born] son', then a student at Bristol University.⁵⁸ The aforementioned merchant Joseph Souhami wished for his son, then aged 17, to enter Cambridge University and 'earnestly desired that his progress should in no way be hindered owing to his parent's alien nationality'.⁵⁹ The enrolment of these children in universities indicates that many of the Ottoman Jewish immigrants had taken the first step in the direction of occupational integration into Anglo-British society. Their offspring would not be continuing in the family business, but would rather forge their own paths, presumably in white-collar professions. Robert David Penso, a native of Nice who had automatically acquired Ottoman citizenship through his Constantinopolitan father, could not even start a family because his British-born fiancée of six years refused to marry him until he was naturalised.⁶⁰ If his situation is at all representative, the Home Office's anti-alien policies may have played a role in momentarily curbing the population growth of Britain's Eastern Sephardi community.

As we read these first-person testimonies of anti-alienism on the receiving end, we must remember that wartime and interwar prejudice was most severe against German enemy aliens. The naturalisation cases of Germans have not been systematically analysed, but we do know that

individuals classified as native, naturalised or foreign-born Germans comprised the bulk of the 30,000 aliens detained.⁶¹ In fact, the most numerous Jewish enemy aliens were German nationals, outnumbering all other Jewish enemy aliens by more than five to one. By contrast, the number of Ottomans detained in internment camps was very small. Only 10% of the Ottoman population was imprisoned; the percentage of Jews among them is unknown.⁶² The Minutes of the Home Office and the way its officials generally processed the naturalisation cases of Ottoman Jews do not betray any explicit expression of Ottoman- or Jew-hatred. On the contrary, there is much evidence that the Home Office and the police agencies reporting to them viewed applicants as individuals rather than as members of a homogenously sinister collectivity. One example is Albert Azouz, a draper and furnisher from Istanbul who first applied for naturalisation in 1926. The status of his brothers as 'shady customers' who did not submit payment for goods received on credit did slow down his case, but ultimately, since 'nothing detrimental' to the petitioner's character had come to the knowledge of the local police, he was naturalised in 1931.⁶³ Nor do we anywhere witness the deprecation pertaining to skin colour or 'Oriental' traits that was expressed so candidly in immigration records produced during the postwar 'White Australia' era.⁶⁴ In the British metropolitan documents, individuals are referred to interchangeably as 'aliens' and according to their ethnic, religious or national groups. If racism is understood as the attribution of heritable, negative attributes to an entire group, then the phenomenon is nowhere readily apparent in these naturalisation files of wartime and interwar Britain.⁶⁵

More compelling is what appears to be the deeply rooted social integration of Ottoman Jewish immigrants within the Anglo-Christian population. Applicants called upon innumerable natural-born business colleagues, landlords and landladies, neighbours, and schoolmates with whom they were on 'intimate' terms to vouch for their national loyalty and respectability. Florence Beatrice Wright, a widowed householder, had been acquainted with her tenant, Baghdadi-born Joseph Isaac Sassoon, for nine years, during which time he became 'like a son to me'.⁶⁶ Wilfred Archibald Gosling, a salesman in Antique Works of Art, first met carpet dealer Aaron Cohen Benardout in business, and 14 years later counted him as a dear friend with whom he frequently exchanged social visits.⁶⁷ David Salem, a native of Izmir and Manufacturer's Agent and Hosiery Importer who arrived in Britain in 1911, was unusual in declaring that 'most of his friends who have intimate personal knowledge of his private life are people of Spanish and Jewish origin, who are either unnaturalised or naturalised British subjects.'⁶⁸ The apparent absence of Ottoman- or Jew-hatred in

these dozens of files seems to surpass the cheerful assessment of W.D. Rubinstein that the half decade beginning in 1917 constitutes 'perhaps the only time in modern British history when a significant portion of the British Establishment appeared to adopt anti-semitic rhetoric', and that anti-Jewish sentiment virtually disappeared thereafter.⁶⁹

One caveat to these observations is that the Home Office apparently preserved only successful cases. Only a tiny minority of cases succeeded.⁷⁰ Apart from the readmission to citizenship of British-born widows of enemy aliens, only 146 Germans and 44 Austrians were naturalised between mid-1914 and November 1916, and thereafter during the war no German or Austrian nationals, save British-born women, received citizenship.⁷¹ Marco Menahem Behar's application hints at an untold number of Ottoman memorialists who were ultimately refused naturalisation. Behar, an art dealer in partnership with a native-born British subject and a naturalised Jew from Istanbul, was refused a certificate and became a bankrupt in 1922. His file number is noted in the records, but has disappeared along with any additional traces of his British sojourn.⁷² Furthermore, the Home Office at some point systematically destroyed individual files of almost every naturalisation case, and it is quite possible that the government anti-foreigner and anti-Jew rhetoric and reasoning that led to the internment of some Jews as Ottoman subjects and the postponement or even refusal of their naturalisation cases may have been stricken from the record.⁷³

The xenophobia the applicants had patently experienced from the British government and native British, documented in their own testimonies and in the anti-alien legislation to which they were subjected, coexisted with what appears to be a deep sense of social and national belonging. Several applicants expressed patriotic sentiment as a motive for seeking naturalisation, and their wording makes it challenging to regard these expressions as simply strategic. A number expressed admiration for British laws and institutions; another testified that he felt British in both sentiment and outlook; still others attributed their patriotism to their British education – sometimes acquired in Ottoman territory – or long duration in England. These sentiments overrode any implicit or expressed identification as Spaniards. Maurice Mercado stated that his desire to be British like his British-born wife and her brother stemmed from his 'feelings & sympathies' which 'have always been British, whether before, during or after the war'. Mercado was careful to point out that his business was thriving. 'I beg to assure you, Sir, that I am asking this, not on business interests, but merely & simply because I feel a stranger in my this adopted

country & wish with all my heart to become a British subject of the King. God save the King!⁷⁴

Sephardic Imperative and Protected Identities

Most men in the current sample tended to identify as 'Sephardic', a term that is neither clear-cut nor simple. Although it originally referred to Jews of the Iberian Peninsula, and evolved to include their exiled descendants elsewhere in western Europe, in the Anatolian Peninsula, and in the Balkans, the definition of Sephardic starting around the early twentieth century became much looser. Among the applicants under study are six native to Baghdad, one born in Shanghai of a Baghdadi father and one born in Damascus. All eight of these Ottomans were Arabic-speaking Jews originating in communities that prided themselves on their uninterrupted residence in the land stretching back to antiquity. And yet, all eight either identified as 'Ottoman (Spanish Jews)' of their own accord or were directed to do so by the Home Office.

Of these cases, the most suggestive is that of Walter Ellis, who had been born as Joshua Elias Judah in 1869 in Baghdad. In his series of applications (there were three in all), Ellis set before the Home Office a procession of national identities. In his earliest application of 1914, he identified himself as a Turkish Jew from Baghdad.⁷⁵ Before immigrating to Britain in 1906, Ellis had lived most of his life in Bombay and Shanghai, both under British rule. He claimed in 1922 that the only reason he did not sooner apply for a Certificate of Naturalisation was that 'I was under the mistaken impression that, having lived under the British Flag since early infancy, I was entitled to all the rights and subject to the responsibilities of a British subject.'⁷⁶ During his third attempt to secure naturalisation, Ellis tried to argue that he fell outside the prohibition of section 3(2) by referencing his voluntary military service in the Shanghai Light Horse in the 1890s, his Jewish parentage, his membership in a Jewish congregation in London since 1906 and the fact that both his native Baghdadi and local London Jewish communities had been opposed to His Majesty's enemies. When none of these arguments worked, he reapplied claiming statelessness, since Baghdad had ceased to be part of Turkey and Iraq refused to recognise him. This tactic also failed. Finally, in 1929, Ellis's son, Sidney Raymond Ellis, who had been born in Shanghai in 1904, telephoned the Home Office and 'in the course of conversation' mentioned that he was a 'Sephardic Jew'. Suddenly, the floodgates opened. Father and son submitted the usual certificate indicating that they were 'Spanish Jews', and both were swiftly naturalised in 1930.⁷⁷

The case of Walter Ellis provides some evidence that Jews who had been born in Arab lands before the turn of the twentieth century did not initially identify as Sephardic.⁷⁸ It is hard to imagine that Ellis senior had been unaware that the 'Ottoman (Spanish Jew)' label was the key to a successful Memorial. By 1914, he had for eight years been a member of the West London Synagogue for British Jews, a congregation that had broken away from Bevis Marks in 1840 and was founded by both Ashkenazi and Iberian-origin Jews and was the first Reform Synagogue in Britain.⁷⁹ If my hunch is correct, Ellis did not initially apply as an 'Ottoman (Spanish Jew)' because he did not think he was one. His son, on the other hand, might have taken his own Sephardi identity for granted, a suggestion that the understanding of Spanish Jewishness in the Baghdadi diaspora had by this point broadened to encompass Jews who were indigenous to Arab lands and possessed no Iberian ancestry.

The most peculiar case among these recently declassified applications is that of Samuel Neviesky, a native of Jerusalem. Neviesky, who claimed to have been born in 1894, possessed no birth certificate, passport or any foreign document attesting to his national status. The absence of identity papers due to intentional or unintentional destruction or loss was not so unusual. But in every other respect, Neviesky was an outlier. His most obvious distinction is his blatantly Ashkenazi family name. But his occupation also gives him away. While almost every other Ottoman Jewish applicant in the cohort was a merchant, typically specialising in Oriental products, Neviesky was a watchmaker and optician who also dealt in gramophones. When the Home Office advised him to 'describe himself as Ottoman (Spanish Jew)', he did not immediately do so, for unstated reasons. Eventually, however, this applicant offered that '[h]is parents regarded themselves as Portuguese Jews because their parents came from Portugal, though the father had Russian connections.'⁸⁰ Once he filled out a Memorial, Neviesky identified as a Turkish Jew, but this label was crossed out and replaced by 'Ottoman (Spanish Jew)', and his naturalisation certificate reads 'Ottoman (Spanish Jew)'. It is impossible to know whether Neviesky did indeed descend from Portuguese Jews who had relocated to the Russian Empire and slavified their family name, had invented a Portuguese origin myth as a strategy to qualify for British naturalisation or had Ashkenazi grandparents who had sought out European consular protection in Palestine, as did many local Ashkenazim seeking to enhance their social or political status.⁸¹ Whatever the case, Neviesky's identification as Portuguese complicates Matthias Lehmann's recent observation of a process commenced in post-Ottoman Palestine whereby Jews increasingly cast off Ottoman imperial categories of Jewish sub-ethnic

identity and replaced them with a myth of origin that transformed Ottoman Jews into Spanish Jews.⁸² In both the Ellis and Neviesky cases, the initial identities of the applicants were rejected by the Home Office and replaced by 'Ottoman (Spanish Jew)'. This process, manifested in slightly different ways in most of the naturalisation cases under study, underscores the British government's role in cultivating within certain applicants a Spanish Jewish fantasy heritage.⁸³

As noted earlier, just over 20% of the Ottoman men in this sample were labelled in their legal papers as protectorates of various European nations, including France, Spain, Portugal and Italy, or as 'Israelites du Levant'. The concept of protégé in this context refers to European states extending their sphere of influence to the Middle East through treaties known as capitulations. These treaties, first introduced before the Middle East became economically underdeveloped, initially served to reward friendly European states, build alliances and stimulate essential imports. These treaties afforded native Christians and Jews opportunities to conduct business within networks that included sizable numbers of westerners. Jews, as well as Christian Greeks and Armenians thus acquired privileges akin to diplomatic immunity, paying low taxes on imports (lower than what was generally required of dhimmis or non-Muslims), and the right to be tried in European consular courts. These individuals became a class of 'native foreigners', locally born and thoroughly integrated into domestic life, fluent in local languages, yet holding the same legal status as foreign non-Muslims. As a result, in the ports, Greek, Italian and French became the dominant languages of communication, and the vast majority of Ottoman immigrants in Europe were minorities, that is, Christians and Jews.⁸⁴ In the current sample, the majority of protected applicants carried French papers, in part a reflection of the successful influence of the Alliance Israélite Française, a trans-national educational organisation founded by French Jews in 1860 to bring economic and perceived cultural advancement to Jews outside Europe.⁸⁵ For some, such papers may have reflected a deep-seated identification with the French Republic and French culture. But for most, French protected status was probably pragmatic, as suggested by the fact that a number of applicants with status as French protégés had acquired it during the tail end of the Great War.⁸⁶

For all their claims to Spanish or Portuguese Jewish lineage, very few applicants had taken advantage of Iberian capitulations. The best explanation for this is that Spain itself had taken little advantage of its capitulation treaties with Turkey, unlike other European powers. For various reasons, including anti-Jewish sentiment and the residual complications of the Edict of Expulsion of 1492, the metropolitan

government was hostile to the idea of extending its protection to Jews abroad. Spain and Portugal were the only early modern European states to have achieved rule through consensus by expelling or forcibly converting to Catholicism their entire Jewish and Muslim populations. Spain's successive governments in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, whether monarchical or republican, did not encourage the return of Jews to its realms and this policy seems also to have curbed its inclination to distribute protected status.⁸⁷ The case of Abraham Beraha is so far the only example in this sample of someone who legally secured documentation from a Spanish government authority. While on a visit to Salonika in 1920, Beraha was advised to obtain a Spanish *laissez-passer*, a kind of temporary travel pass, to facilitate his return journey to London. The document described him as an Ottoman subject.⁸⁸

Aside from the Palestinian Nevies, Sylvain Elie Covo is the only memorialist who espoused a Portuguese identity. In fact, he first filed for naturalisation as 'a Portuguese' and his agents presented him as 'a Jew of Portuguese origin, whose family undoubtedly went to the Levant at the time of the Inquisition, but who appear to have retained their Portuguese Nationality by means of the Capitulation Laws.'⁸⁹ Covo claimed that at the time of his birth, his father was Portuguese, and that Covo *filis* had made the requisite declaration in favour of Portuguese nationality under Act 18 (3) of the Portuguese Civil Code of 1867 while in Salonika, obtaining a certificate issued by the Portuguese Consul in 1919. However, the Home Office realised that Covo's documentation was identical to that of several other Jewish claimants who presented certificates issued by the Portuguese consul in Salonika. These were not certificates of nationality, but rather certificates of entry in the consular register, and the Portuguese consulate in Britain therefore denied that Covo was a Portuguese citizen.⁹⁰ Covo – and all his Ottoman cohorts who presented various European protected statuses to the Home Office authorities – had not acquired the nationality of any European state, but rather a quasi, ephemeral protected status under the Laws of Capitulation. In Covo's case, this meant that he was regarded as a Portuguese subject only in Salonika. This of course meant that Covo could very well have been Ottoman, the Home Office concluded, and thus barred from naturalisation.

In response, Covo asked permission to be regarded as 'a man of No or Uncertain Nationality'. The Home Office had a simpler solution, one that exposes the 'Ottoman (Spanish Jew)' category as a pure legal fiction, only vaguely hinging on verifiable ancestral origins. His Portuguese protected status or purported ancestry became irrelevant and the Home Office instructed him to apply as an Ottoman (Spanish Jew) and obtain the

requisite letter from the spiritual leader of London's Spanish and Portuguese synagogue. Covo had to submit an amended memorial where, in the rubric for nationality, Portuguese is crossed out and replaced with 'Ottoman (Spanish Jew)'. Ironically, then, the Spanish identity papers issued by Britain's Spanish and Portuguese synagogues – without the authority of the Spanish government – had more legal standing than the documents dispensed by Iberian consulates in the Ottoman Empire and its successor states. Covo's case demonstrates how perfunctory the ascription of Spanish Jewish identity had become by the late 1920s.

The Home Office assumed that Covo's family had 'retained' its ancestral Portuguese nationality by obtaining certificates generation after generation from European consulates stationed in the Ottoman Empire. In a Spanish context, many descendants of Ottoman Jews have offered a similar narrative in their memoirs or oral interviews, often claiming that their ancestors' love for Spain never diminished despite persecution and expulsion. The author of a recent popular history of Caribbean Jews claims that his ancestors 'reluctantly left Spain in 1492, finally settling in the Ottoman Empire, in the city of Salonica. For more than 400 years, each male born into the family was duly registered with the Spanish consul of that city. The practice stopped when [my father] moved to America, but he always took great care to instruct me in my Jewish and Sephardic heritage.'⁹¹ This folklore can be dismissed in light of the history of capitulations, which were instituted long after Iberian-origin Jews had settled in the Ottoman Empire. According to Pablo Martín Asuero, Spanish consulates in the Ottoman Empire did not begin to issue Spanish passports and patents of protection to Ottoman Sephardim until the early nineteenth century.⁹²

Why, then, did the Home Office settle on the 'Spanish Jew' category as a loophole for hopeful Ottoman Jewish applicants? One reason is that within the context of the Great War, Spanish national identity did not carry with it any geopolitical charge. Both Spain and Portugal were neutral powers and the possibility of dual citizenship did not concern the Home Office. In the case of Iraqi nationals, by contrast, the spectre of dual citizenship was an explicit worry, perhaps because of Iraq's unstable status as one of the Ottoman Empire's successor states.⁹³ But why was the Home Office not satisfied with a simple 'Jewish' designation, parallel to the Syrian, Greek and Armenian categories? One obvious reason is that the 'Spanish' marker instantly linked Ottoman Jews with the British Spanish and Portuguese congregations established in Britain in the seventeenth century. Ascribing immigrant Jews a Spanish identity was tantamount to applying to them a native English identity. Moreover, the term 'Jew' in wartime and interwar

Britain may have been synonymous with 'German'. The British press regularly used 'German' and 'Jew' interchangeably, while Jewish financiers of Germany were singled out for their rejoicing at the sinking of the Lusitania.⁹⁴ The 'Spanish' marker served to remove that association.

Conclusion

The present sample of naturalisation cases allows us to revise our understanding of Britain's Portuguese and Spanish community and its intersection with British government policy. First, the foregoing findings help to qualify Eugene Black's arguments that the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in England 'played a diminished role in communal matters, ... caring principally for their own in their own way'.⁹⁵ In fact, the congregation's leaders' role in sparing Ottoman Jews from internment during the Great War or at least in curtailing their sentences represents involvement in 'communal matters' no less than do the institutes that catered to predominantly Yiddish-speaking newcomers. These synagogue officials also ensured that a sector of the Jewish immigrant community – and their native-born wives and children – became legally British.

The naturalisation cases heretofore examined demonstrate that the Ottoman Empire, which collapsed in 1923, outlived itself in interwar Britain, and remained an enemy country. For Ottoman Jews, as for other enemy aliens, the legal ramifications of the Great War did not end in 1918, but in 1931. This year was the last time the 'Ottoman (Spanish Jewish)' category is attested to in the naturalisation files. Collectively, the petitioners classified as 'Ottoman (Spanish Jews)' tell a fascinating story of how political exigencies guided the expression and composition of ethno-national identity. These naturalisation cases may have accelerated the merging of the so-called 'Western Sephardim' in Britain with Oriental Jewish newcomers, many of whom had no Iberian ancestry but came to regard themselves on some level as Spanish Jews. These cases also resolutely demonstrate that British authorities systematically rejected the validity of protected status as binding within Britain.⁹⁶ Ironically, the invented 'Ottoman (Spanish Jew)' category, in effect for nearly 15 years, carried more weight than capitulations, a multi-national legal tradition several hundred years old.

Ottomans in wartime and interwar Britain, and *a fortiori* the Jews among them, were statistically insignificant, comprising a fraction of the 0.75% of foreign-born residents of metropolitan Britain. But there are compelling reasons to bring their entirely overlooked experiences to the fore. The British government systematically responded to a sector of its

Jewish ‘Oriental’ immigrants by officially Hispanifying them through the invented ethno-national designation of ‘Ottoman (Spanish Jew)’. Paradoxically, it was these very individuals who – through storefronts, languages spoken, and products sold – imparted an Oriental aspect to Britain’s multi-ethnic landscape.⁹⁷ The nearly 60 cases heretofore examined were preserved because they were successful. Occasionally, they make reference to a larger segment of the Ottoman population who applied but never received British citizenship. Whether they died during internment, went bankrupt through the government confiscation of their businesses, were deported or simply left of their own accord, these unfortunates – no less than the Ottoman Jews who prevailed – highlight the power of the British government to shape ethno-national identity.

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Notes

- [1] TNA, Home Office (henceforth HO) 144/7181, ‘Maurice (or Michon) Mercado’ naturalisation case, Maurice Mercado to HO, 27 August 1919, page 1 of 3.
- [2] Numerous files of Christian and Muslim Ottoman subjects are now under consideration for declassification following my requests initiated in 2013.
- [3] Kuran, “Role of Islamic Legal Pluralism,” 501. Based on a computer catalogue search, it seems that fewer Ottoman Christians and Muslims were so naturalised, but a close examination of actual files may reveal many more such protégés.
- [4] Most applicants natively spoke Ladino, a Jewish form of early modern Spanish that developed in the Ottoman Empire; a number also indicated their knowledge of Turkish and, more rarely, Arabic. For an incisive study on selective self-Orientalising among Ottoman Jews as an expression of Ottoman identity, see Cohen, “Oriental by Design.” For an in-depth analysis of wartime protégé status among Ottomans see Sarah Abrevaya Stein, “Citizens of a Fictional Nation: Ottoman-born Jews in France during the First World War,” in *Past and Present*, forthcoming.
- [5] Karpas, “Ottoman Immigration to America” and Hayes, *Reminiscences of Manchester*, 205 (‘some forty years ago’). A small influx dates to the first half of the nineteenth century. İnalçık and Quataert, *Economic and Social History*, 791 and Raphael, “Manchester Connection.”
- [6] Karpas, “Ottoman Immigration to America,” 180; Lipman, *Social History of the Jews*, 67 and General Register Office, *Census of England and Wales 1911*, 370, 377.

- By 1911, there were 3981 persons born in 'Turkey (including Asiatic Turkey)' living in England and Wales, including 2548 men and 1433 women.
- [7] Crul, "How Do Educational Systems Integrate," 271.
 - [8] Ibid., 272.
 - [9] On this tendency among social scientists, see Amit-Talai, "Circumscription of Ethnicity," 212.
 - [10] Kershen, "Immigrants, Sojourners and Refugees"; Baxter, "From Migrants to Citizens," 165 (reference to Punjabi and Yemeni Muslims); Farah, *Survey of the Armenian Community*, and for a passing reference Talai, *Armenians in London*, 14. Focused studies that rely mostly on secondary sources for the early period are Ansari, *The Infidel Within* and Cherti, *Paradoxes of Social Capital*.
 - [11] Mainland Britain's population on the eve of the Great War totaled 40,838,867, of which 0.75% constituted 'foreigners' or 'not British-born.' Kershen, "Immigrants, Sojourners and Refugees," 143.
 - [12] Kershen, "Immigrants, Sojourners and Refugees," 149 and Hackett, *Foreigners, Minorities and Integration*, 1.
 - [13] See, for example, Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society*, 121ff, and the following articles, all published in *Immigrants & Minorities*: Kushner and Cesarani, "Alien Internment in Britain"; Cesarani, "Embattled Minority"; Cesarani, "Anti-Alienism in England"; Cesarani, "Alien Concept"; Gatrell, "Refugees and Forced Migrants" and Saunders, "Aliens in Britain and the Empire." For book-length studies, see Panayi, *Enemy in Our Midst*; Panayi, *Prisoners of Britain* and Dove, *Totally un-English?*
 - [14] Black, *Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry*; Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society*; Gartner, *Jewish Immigrant in England* and Roth, *History of the Jews in England*; for fleeting references, Hyamson, *Sephardim of England*, 358–60 and passim; Endelman, *Broadening Jewish History*, 247; Williams, "Heritage and Community," 144 and Lipman, *Social History of the Jews*, 67.
 - [15] The disproportionate persecution of German ethnics and nationals in wartime and interwar Britain is emphatically demonstrated in Panayi, *Enemy in Our Midst*.
 - [16] Stein, "Protected Persons?"
 - [17] TNA, HO 144/10287, Vitali Elnecavé naturalisation case, Messrs. Ward & Mole to HO, 24 February 1925, and TNA HO naturalisation cases, passim.
 - [18] The Order in Council decreed 31 August 1921 as the date of the termination of the war. TNA, HO 144/11664, Khaim Hiamie [sic] Poyastro naturalisation case, HO to J.P. Law, Esq., 20 February 1929; HO 144/8768, Jacob Mizrahi naturalisation case, W.C. Bridgeman to James M. Erskine, Esq., 22 January 1924.
 - [19] Rubinstein, *History of the Jews in the English-Speaking World*, 46.
 - [20] Rubinstein, *History of the Jews in the English-Speaking World*, 78 and Endelman, *Broadening Jewish History*, 79–80; Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews*.
 - [21] Lipman, *Social History of the Jews*, 119–21 and Endelman, *Jews of Modern Britain*, chapter 4.
 - [22] Ibid., passim.
 - [23] Panayi, *Immigration, Ethnicity and Racism*, 23.
 - [24] Kershen, *Strangers, Aliens and Asians*, 208.
 - [25] See Footnote 23.
 - [26] Ross, "Naturalisation of Jews in England," 66 and Lipman, *Social History of the Jews*, 166.

- [27] Ross, "Naturalisation of Jews in England," 66n20.
- [28] Ross, "Naturalisation of Jews in England," 66n20.
- [29] For an overview of the complex post-exilic identities that emerged in Christian Europe, North Africa and the Ottoman Empire, see [Ray](#), *After Expulsion*.
- [30] Most scholars recognise that the biblical Sefarad did not refer to the Iberian Peninsula, but rather Carthage in what is today Tunisia.
- [31] Hyamson, *Sephardim of England*, 358–60; Lipman, *Social History of the Jews*, 67–69; 159n4 and Black, *Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry*, 32 (noting that in the teens the community was shrinking in number, but overlooking the fact that Ottoman Jews were founding new synagogues under the auspices of Bevis Marks).
- [32] TNA, HO 144/7223, Moise Abraham Alfandary naturalisation case, Mole & Ward to HO, 1 December 1925.
- [33] [Webster](#), *Twilight of the East India Company* and [Kasaba](#), *Ottoman Empire and the World Economy*, 48. The role of Jews in this untold chapter of Britain's economic history is briefly alluded to in Hyamson, *Sephardim of England*, 358–60 and in [Laskier and Simon](#), "Economic Life", 37ff.
- [34] TNA, HO 144/1729, Max Solomon Haim naturalisation case, Metropolitan Police Report, 6 December 1921, 3 pages; p. 1.
- [35] TNA, HO 144/1729, Max Solomon Haim naturalisation case, Minutes, 13 July 1921.
- [36] TNA, HO 144/1729, Max Solomon Haim naturalisation case, Metropolitan Police Report, 6 December 1921, 3 pages; p. 2.
- [37] TNA, HO 144/1729, Max Solomon Haim naturalisation case, Minutes, 12 June 1920.
- [38] TNA, HO 144/1729, Max Solomon Haim naturalisation case, Minutes, 24 March 1920 ('an impertinent letter'); Minutes, 10 October 1921; Home office to Messrs. F.C. Mathews & Co., 9 November 1921 (annoyed reference to 'repeated receipt at short intervals of further letters from you').
- [39] TNA, HO 144/1729, Max Solomon Haim naturalisation case, Messrs. F.C. Mathews & Co., to HO, 4 August 1921.
- [40] While internally, Ashkenazi and Sephardi communities referred to the rabbinical head of their respective communities as Chief Rabbi and Hakham, archival records produced by or directed toward outsiders use the former term for both leaders.
- [41] TNA, HO 144/1729, Max Solomon Haim naturalisation case, Minutes, 16 December 1921.
- [42] TNA, HO 144/1729, Max Solomon Haim naturalisation case, Minutes, 10 October 1921, p. 3.
- [43] TNA, HO 144/1729, Max Solomon Haim naturalisation case, F.C. Mathews to HO, 15 November 1921.
- [44] Haim's case is mentioned as a precedent in the following naturalisation cases: TNA, HO 144/3393, Moise Anticoni, 31 March 1924 and TNA, HO 144/11685, Jose Vidal Sasson, HO to Messrs. Pierron & Morley, 9 April 1929.
- [45] TNA, HO 144/13286, Aaron Cohen Benardout naturalisation case, Minutes, 16 December 1930.
- [46] TNA, HO 144/8768, Jacob Mizrahi naturalisation case, Minutes, 29 January 1924.
- [47] TNA, HO 144/3420, Jacques Ascher Salem naturalisation case, Norton & Howe to HO, 21 November 1918.

- [48] TNA, HO 144/11664, Khaim Poyastro naturalisation case, Metropolitan Police Report, 13 December 1929, 5 pages; p. 3.
- [49] Kushner and Cesarani, "Alien Internment in Britain" and Gatrell, "Refugees and Forced Migrants," 105.
- [50] TNA, HO 144/7181, Maurice or Michon Mercado naturalisation case, Maurice Mercado to Under Secretary of State, 10 October 1924.
- [51] TNA, HO 144/3420, Jacques Ascher Salem naturalisation case, Field, Cunningham & Co. to Under Secretary of State, Home Office, 20 August 1923.
- [52] TNA, HO 144/10303, Nissim Levy naturalisation case, Louis Godlove, Solicitor, to Home Office, 31 May 1929.
- [53] TNA, HO 144/10288, Selemia Elnecavé, naturalisation case, Metropolitan Police Report, 17 July 1926, 9 pages, p. 4.
- [54] TNA, HO 144/11584, Elie Raphael Afoumado naturalisation case, Memorial, 19 April 1929, 2 pages; p. 2.
- [55] TNA, HO 144/11663, Jacques Moreno Pontremoli naturalisation case, Memorial, 10 February 1929, 2 pages; p. 2.
- [56] Kushner and Cesarani, "Alien Internment in Britain," 2–3 (on the German and Italian ethnic landscape).
- [57] Panayi, *Enemy in Our Midst*, 61.
- [58] TNA, HO 144/10188, Haim Leon Hassid naturalisation case, Howe, Watts & Wood, Solicitors, to HO, 23 November 1927.
- [59] TNA, HO HO 144/11658, Joseph Souhami naturalisation case, Memorial, 16 July 1925, 13 pages; p. 2.
- [60] TNA, HO 144/11954, Robert David Penso naturalisation case, Minutes, 28 June 1928.
- [61] Kushner and Cesarani, "Alien Internment in Britain," 3 and Panayi, *Enemy in Our Midst*, 70–98.
- [62] Black, *Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry*, 323.
- [63] TNA, HO 144/13811, Albert Azouz naturalisation case, Report by the Procurator Fiscal, Glasgow, 16 July 1930.
- [64] Gouttman, "Jew, and Coloured Too."
- [65] Isaac, *Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*, 22–23.
- [66] TNA, HO 144/7339, Joseph Isaac Sassoon naturalisation case, Statutory Declaration of Florence Beatrice Wight, 21 June 1927, 2 pages; p. 1.
- [67] TNA, HO 144/14286, Aaron Cohen Benardout naturalisation case, Police Report, 18 May 1931, p. 4.
- [68] TNA, HO 144/11656, David Salem naturalisation case, J.N. Nabarro, Solicitor, to HO, 23 December 1929.
- [69] Rubinstein, *History of the Jews in the English-Speaking World*, 201.
- [70] *Ibid.*, 235.
- [71] *Ibid.*, 236.
- [72] TNA, HO 144/15699, Raphael Treves naturalisation case, Metropolitan Police Report, 17 February 1931, 6 pages; p. 3.
- [73] These include subsections 1–3 and 5 of Raphael Treves, an art dealer from Yenimale, a suburb of Istanbul, and subsections 1–7 and 9–11 of aforementioned David Salem.
- [74] TNA, HO 144/7181, 'Maurice (or Michon) Mercado' naturalisation case, Mercado to HO, 27 August 1919, pp. 2–3.

- [75] TNA, HO 144/11508, Walter Ellis or Joshua Elias Judah naturalisation case, Minutes, June 1922.
- [76] TNA, HO 144/11508, Walter Ellis or Joshua Elias Judah naturalisation case, Walter Ellis to HO 23 November 1922.
- [77] TNA, HO 144/11508, Walter Ellis or Joshua Elias Judah naturalisation case, Minutes, 15 July 1929.
- [78] In Palestine, however, the continuum between Iberian-origin Jews and Jews indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa traces back to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Ottoman Palestine. [Lehmann](#), "Jews and Other Jews in Ottoman Palestine," 97.
- [79] [Kershner and Romain](#), *Tradition and Change*.
- [80] TNA, HO 144/13282, Samuel Nevies or Navisky [sic] naturalisation case, Leeds City Police Report, 21 January 1931.
- [81] Karpas, "Ottoman Immigration to America," 182; [Lehmann](#), "Jews and Other Jews in Ottoman Palestine," 92–95; [Baron](#), *Social and Religious History*, 16; 374n49 and [Brook](#), *Jews of Khazaria*, 207.
- [82] [Lehmann](#), "Jews and Other Jews in Ottoman Palestine," 103.
- [83] The term 'Spanish fantasy heritage,' coined in the context of the denial of mestizo heritage, is from [McWilliams](#), *North from Mexico*.
- [84] Kuran, "Role of Islamic Legal Pluralism."
- [85] [Rodrigue](#), *French Jews, Turkish Jews*.
- [86] French-protected subjects include Moise Anticoni; Isaac Jack Barkey; Dario Albagli; Vitali Elnecavé; Selemia Elnecavé; Joseph Souhami; Raphael Souhami; Maurice Mercado; Isaac Churba and Robert David Penso.
- [87] Haim Avni, 26ff.
- [88] TNA, HO 144/13378, Abraham Beraha naturalisation case, Metropolitan Police Report, 8 December 1929.
- [89] TNA, HO 144/10829, Sylvain Elie Covo naturalisation case, Mole & Ward to HO, 31 January 1928 and September 17, 1928.
- [90] TNA, HO 144/10829, Sylvain Elie Covo naturalisation case, HO to Mole & Ward, 16 November 1928.
- [91] [Ezratty](#), *500 Years in the Jewish Caribbean*, dedication page.
- [92] [Asuero](#), "Spanish Consulate in Istanbul and the Protection," 169.
- [93] Dual citizenship 'created a prima facie case for examining the status of a naturalised British subject,' but such persons were not necessarily disloyal. [Bird](#), *Control of Enemy Alien Civilians*, 240.
- [94] [Aronsfield](#), "Jewish Enemy Aliens in England," 277.
- [95] [Black](#), *Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry*, 50.
- [96] The pattern that emerges from these naturalisation cases confirms the tentative finding of Sarah Abrevaya Stein that British protected status was consistently ephemeral unless a large taxable estate was in question. Stein, "Protected Persons?"
- [97] Collectively, the Ottoman population was two and a half times larger than immigrants born in other Asian countries, and slightly larger than those native to China and Japan. Presumably, most of those born in 'Asia (other Countries)', a total of 930 individuals, were from what are today India and Pakistan. Ottomans outnumbered natives of China and Japan (1319 and 811, respectively; 2130 total). [General Register Office](#), *Census of England and Wales, 1911*, 377.

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