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Timeline of Jews in Egypt

VID D. KIRKPATRICK JUNE 23, 2015

Here is a timeline of the history of Jews in Egypt, based in part on information provided by Professor Joel Beinin of Stanford University, author of "The Dispersion of Egyptian Jewry."

Biblical Era: The Book of Exodus says that Moses led the Jews out of a period of captivity in Egypt, an event that forms the story of the founding of Israel.

Around 1168 A.D.: Rabbi Moses Maimonides settles in Cairo's Jewish community.

1882: The British occupy Egypt.

1922: King Fuad I establishes the British-backed Egyptian monarchy, now considered by some to have been a golden age of pluralism and cosmopolitanism.

1937: A census counts about 65,000 Egyptian Jews.

1947: A census counts about 75,000 Jews, and historians say that the number may have been closer to 85,000.

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1948: Creation of the modern state of Israel; Egypt and the Arab states declare war against it. Over the next four years, about 20,000 Egyptian Jews leave the country.

1952: Col. Gamal Abdel Nasser leads a military takeover, overthrowing the monarchy.

1954: A group of Egyptian Jews recruited by Israel as spies try to bomb a series of Egyptian, American and British civilian targets after closing hours.

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Their goal was to create an image of instability to persuade the British to maintain their military occupation of the Suez Canal zone, but the plan failed. The episode was code-named Operation Susannah and became known as the Lavon Affair, after the Israeli defense minister, Pinhas Lavon, who was forced to resign.

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1956: Britain, France and Israel attack Egypt, in what became known as the Suez Crisis, or, in Egypt, as the Tripartite Aggression. After the attack, Nasser's government arrests hundreds of Egyptian Jews on suspicion of spying for Israel and seizes hundreds of Jewish-owned businesses. Under government pressure, about 25,000 Jews leave Egypt, reducing their population to about 15,000.

1967: The war between Israel and the Arab states. About 12,000 Jews remain in Cairo. All Jewish men are arrested, then released, and the number of Jews continues to dwindle. At most, a few dozen Egyptian Jews remain today.

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