



TWO MILLENNIA OF THE
JEWISH COMMUNITY OF OPORTO
CHRONOLOGY 1923-2023



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The arrival of the Jews.

The Jews have been present in Oporto for at least two millennia, preceding any memories or existing monuments in this city.

Natalia Procopovich Bagur / 2021
acrylic on canvas



The "People of the Book" did not ignore their origins and religiosity.

All members of the community were religious, without exception. Prayers were held in private homes and discreet buildings.

Helen DOC / 2022
oil on canvas

Jews praying by the city wall of Oporto.

The Oporto Jewish families were proud to belong to the tribe of Judah and never forgot their spiritual home in Jerusalem.



Natalia Procopovich Bagur / 2022
acrylic on canvas



Learned Jews studying at a beit midrash.

Following the foundation of Portugal in 1143, the Jewish community of Oporto became very scholarly, and was strong in economic terms.

Analice Campos / 2022
acrylic on canvas



*A boat filled with people
leaves Oporto.*

The Edict of King
D. Manuel and the
Inquisition led tens of
thousands of Jews to flee
Oporto and from all
over the country.

Jorge Marinho / 2022
oil on canvas



*Forced baptism of an
adult Jew.*

The Jews were forcibly
dragged by their hair to
baptismal fonts, and Jewish
symbols were eradicated.

Jorge Marinho / 2021
oil on canvas



*Inquisitorial auto-de-fé
in Oporto.*

The Tribunal of the Holy Office held two *autos-de-fé* in the city, where approximately one hundred “new Christians” were punished.

Jorge Marinho / 2021
oil on canvas



*Map showing destinations
of the Portuguese Jewish
Diaspora.*

The persecutions in Portugal led the Jews, shedding tears of blood, to flee to all continents, impoverishing the country they left.

Analice Campos / 2022
mixed technique on canvas

The return of the Jews.

In the 19th century, Sephardic Jews from North Africa were the first to return to Oporto, but by the turn of the century the Jewish community was mostly made up of *Ashkenazi* Jews.



Helen DOC / 2021
mixed technique on canvas

Exterior image of the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue.

The construction in Oporto of the largest Synagogue on the Iberian Peninsula meant that one of the smallest communities in Europe had one of the largest Synagogues.



Analice Campos / 2021
acrylic on canvas



*Holocaust refugees
in Oporto.*

The Jewish Community of Oporto welcomed and took in thousands of refugees from Nazism, whose lives were broken.

Jorge Marinho / 2022
oil on canvas



*Jews wearing the tallit
praying at the Synagogue.*

In the 21st century, the Oporto community has gained in numbers and in religious and cultural terms, but soon it too was being persecuted by Portuguese elites who repeated the history.

Analice Campos / 2022
acrylic and oil on canvas

At the Beginning

In the three thousand years old Celtic settlement, formerly called Cale, where the Roman Empire built a port it called Portus Cale, Jewish tradition dates back to time immemorial. Future archaeological excavations may shed some light on this ancient presence. For now, the Douro River, in its undulating purity, is the only witness to the existence, for a long time, of traces of a people with an instinct for tribal brotherhood, a pronounced family spirit, hard-work, a predisposition for commerce, and vision beyond borders.

The list of the Jewish qualities listed above, mixed with the resistance to adversity typical of people who had experienced great persecution, was present from very early days in the lands of Sepharad.

Present in the Peninsula before the Romans, the Goths and the Muslims, the Jews looked to the distant times of the Bible for the origin of their settlement in the country. Some claimed that the first of their lineage had arrived, brought from Babylon, by Nebuchadnezzar, and others claimed that even earlier, in Solomon's time, Hispania had been a vassal and tributary of that great King.¹

The influence of the small people from Judah gave the city part of the tone that characterizes it. The Jewish spirit of Oporto is revealed in different aspects, such as the capital of work, the commercial and industrial vein of a globalist nature, the strong initiative to create new horizons, the habit of “balanced budgets”, the parochialism associated with cosmopolitanism, and the sense of independence and non-subordination. The citizen of Oporto is very similar to the Israeli Sephardi.

History is based not only on monuments, stones, documents and other material objects, but also on everything that, for three millennia, involved the history of a city like Oporto. That is the cultural and religious civilization examined in this text. In time, History will complete the missing documentation, but in the meantime, the known basic facts allow us to conclude that “a Jewish colony existed a long time ago in this ancient city, as in so many other places on the Iberian Peninsula, although the history of most of them is little and sometimes not at all known to us”².

Despite being lost in the dark clouds of time, the Jewish presence in Oporto predates any existing memories or monuments in the city and may date back to Phoenician commercial expeditions (given the similarity of the languages) or to periods after the destruction of the First Temple of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 BCE and the fall of Carthage in 146 BCE.

The conquest of Oporto by the Roman legions, like the conquest of all the major port cities of Sepharad, brought with it many Jews, whether authentic, as slaves or as those who deliberately went over to the side of the strongest, at a time when Jewish communities prospered throughout an entire Empire that roamed the regions bathed by the Mediterranean.

¹ José Lúcio de Azevedo, “História dos Cristãos-Novos Portugueses”, Livraria Clássica Editora, 1921, p. 1.

² David Gonzalo Maeso, “La Juderia (“Commune”) of Oporto”, Luso-Spanish Congress of Medieval Studies, Oporto, 1968, pp. 175-176.

These were the times of *Pax Romana*. During the pagan period of the Roman Empire, residents could be both Roman citizens and citizens with their own religious customs. Although in foreign lands, due to forced exile, the Jews believed that Jerusalem would once again be, in the words of the prophets, the moral centre of the world.

The “People of the Book” did not neglect their origins and their religiosity. All members of the community were religious. There were no exceptions. As everywhere where there were small Jewish settlements, Oporto would have seen, from very early on, places for Jewish prayer, meeting and study, located in private residences and discreet buildings, small family temples, without ostentation, if not hidden from the eyes of the non-Jewish majority.

The Jews were involved in the construction of old Oporto, which then saw the banks of the river joined by small barges, when the current allowed it. Proud of their belonging to the tribe of Judah, they had travelled thousands of kilometres on foot, in fragile wagons or poorly equipped boats.

Interconnecting houses, as in a small Jewish quarter, were part of the life of the small people everywhere, in the East and in the West, not so much because of the demands of the surrounding populations, but thanks to their own instinct for defence and an inescapable desire for independence.

The early marriages that were then customary throughout the Jewish world, combined with a sober life, allowed a remarkable fertility of a colony essentially composed of small traders, doctors, and men of law who always grew stronger through their own suffering and difficulties.

The Jewish community in Oporto was a distinct community that had its normative religion, its culture, its language, its poetry and its books, in addition to the most diverse international connections, which were not limited to Europe. The number of Jews who migrated to Africa has always been remarkable, since their arrival in Sepharad and in all subsequent times.

Indeed, the spreading presence of the Jewish people throughout the known world, with each Jewish community in contact with the others through ties of faith and family, gave each of its members an internationalist stamp – the international Jew – that no other individual, people, or network of traders could hold at that time.

The first millennium of the Common Era was marked in Oporto by changes in the dominant power, always accompanied by changes in the living conditions of the Jewish people, high city walls, uncertainties regarding the future, dreadful afflictions, depopulations and settlements: German tribes against Romans, German tribes against each other, Aryan Christians against Catholic Christians, both against Jews, Christians against Muslims, Muslims against Catholic Visigoths, classes against classes and the powerful against the weak.

After struggles and divisions between forces so opposed to each other, there would always be moments of calm to make agreements, national and religious unions. The different element, the Jew, however much he explained himself, would certainly not infrequently have taken the blame for all previous conflicts.

Jewish history is full of tribulations, but also of impressive cases of regeneration, even in the most unexpected latitudes and situations. The appeal of Jewish blood and soul always comes back, sometimes with more impetuosity.

It is possible that both the Jews and the other inhabitants made attempts at assimilation, but fate condemned them to an inescapable heterogeneity. Popular customs themselves, held in great esteem in those distant times, often even assimilated as civil or divine laws, could easily cast the eastern neighbour as sacrilegious.

Jewish history in Oporto brought with it different periods of Christianity, in the form of Catholicism or Arianism, always associated with the persecutory stain, more or less exacerbated, “The Jews killed Christ”, as if a possible judicial error of the former Sanhedrin, that never happened, could produce the eternal condemnation of an innocent people.

Christianity has always prohibited conversions through violence, but it did not consider violent, but rather sacred, dragging people to baptism or the attitude of terrified Jews who, to save themselves, said they wanted to be baptized. This was how infidels quickly became heretics.

In the fourth century, with the Christianization of the Roman Empire, anti-Jewish thinking spread, giving rise to the first forms of crypto-Judaism and the concealment of religious identity in Iberia. Unlike Marranism, a much later phenomenon, secret also by the very nature of the Marranos (who were neither Jews nor Christians), crypto-Judaism was known to the Jews since they confronted the powerful Hellenic, Assyrian and Babylonian empires and it had as its greatest protagonist the Biblical figure of Queen Esther of Persia.

When Iberia was invaded by Germanic tribes, who copied Roman culture and the Christian religion for themselves, the fierce struggle between Alans and Suebi pushed the latter to the right bank of the River Douro, and particularly to Oporto, where the Suebian King built a splendid castle, on the hill of Pena Ventosa, building many houses around it. This place took the name of Castelo Novo de Cale and certainly had a very lively history.

The Visigoths fought the Suebi in the next century, captured their King and proclaimed a new era. Soon Arianism replaced Catholicism throughout Iberia. If until then, with more or less difficulty, the Jewish colony had still been able to live according to fundamental religious precepts, then it was prevented from doing so and was brutally expropriated of its goods, its savings, its commercial plans and, at times, of their children.

The Jews had no reason to regret the defeat of the Visigoths by the Muslims at the beginning of the 8th century and may have contributed to this desideratum through their brothers of faith who had long populated Africa. Thus began the “Golden Age” of the Jewish community of Sepharad and a period of fierce struggles between Muslims and Christians, and of the latter among themselves, reflected in the city of Oporto, initially depopulated and transformed into a “strategic desert” to serve as a buffer zone between Moors and Christians, and then heavily repopulated by the latter of Visigoth origin, a century later.

By habit very sparing in their expenses, the Jews always understood that this was their greatest asset in a social context that lacked guarantees. In Oporto and around the world, they never lacked for friends” with unpaid debts, unfulfilled dreams and needs to revitalize their pockets.

An important, if not a decisive, part of the trade in essential goods, the Jews were also excellent helpers of the authorities of each era in collecting taxes from the population.

The indisputable importance that the Jewish colony of Oporto achieved allows us to assume a progressive and remarkable influence for six consecutive centuries, from the reoccupation of the city by the Christians (868) until the date of expulsion (1497).³

³ "La Juderia (“Commune”) of Oporto", p. 180.

In 1096, King Alfonso VI of León married his daughter Teresa to Henry of Burgundy. He granted them the “County of Portucale”, with its capital in Oporto. Their son, D. Afonso Henriques, would make Portugal an independent Kingdom in 1143. This separated Portuguese Jews from their brothers in the territory which would later be called Spain, though their origins, families, and histories were essentially the same.

There was no lack of Jewish help for D. Afonso Henriques. A descendant of the Royal House of David, Yahya Ben Yaish, who had already been recognized by the Emirate of Cordoba for his military skills, became an ally of the young King. He was fluent in several languages and knowledgeable in the art of war, and in mathematics and geography. Yaish collaborated with the King in the taking of Santarém and in the settlement of the Kingdom with Jewish populations fleeing the Almohads. D. Afonso Henriques granted him a coat of arms and made him the Royal Treasurer and Chief Rabbi of Portugal.

To organize an efficient administration, the Chief Rabbi elected an Ombudsman or magistrate who oversaw questions of justice in each of the seven provinces of the Kingdom. Each Ombudsman was located in the capital of the province. Oporto served as the capital city of the region between the Douro and Minho Rivers.

The first documentary references to a Jewish community in the city of Oporto, much after its actual presence, date from the century, as the Christian Reconquest of Portugal advanced towards the Algarve. There are records of small Jewish quarters in the city, that were developing and changing location.

Synagogues continued to function only in uncharacterized spaces and learning required the existence of a *Beit Midrash* (school) and probably also a *kolel* (academy) of professional students who studied the Torah and who were supported by the most affluent and philanthropists of the community.

Religiously, the Jewish minority of Oporto was a compact community following traditions dating back to Abraham, Moses and Mount Sinai. Politically, it was a working community, influential in the governance of the Kingdom, with favored status. Economically, it was involved in the administration of public income, and enjoyed the material comforts of the nobility and the prosperity of the city. Commercially, it had entrepreneurial skills and mastered the languages spoken all over the world. Jews spoke Portuguese, Castilian Spanish, Hebrew, Arabic, and other languages used in Europe and North Africa.

The laws applied to the Jews were compiled in the Afonsine Ordination (the 15th Century codification of Portuguese law), but they practically formed a nation apart, with a philosophy based on the Talmud and Tanach. The Babylonian Talmud and the recent Mishna Torah of Maimonides, which had compiled the norms of numerous Jewish codes of conduct, clarified all issues that the Jewish population needed for daily life.

Proof of the importance of the Jewish community of Oporto achieved in the second half of the thirteenth century, was an order of the Bishops in 1297 prohibiting damage to the property of the Jews and placing its members under the protection of the local bishop.

There was a relationship between the Catholic and Jewish populations, involving a minimum of influence of one on the other. Cases of violence occurred sporadically, on the pretext of practicing a different religion, and for this reason the Jews were immediately considered to be speculators, spies, and enemies.

Jacob Judeu (a physician at the time of D. Dinis), Jusaf Ben Abassis and Salomão Negro (philanthropists and wealthy dealers in the time of D. Fernando), Josef Ben Arie (Rabbi of Oporto at the end of the 14th century), and Judah Negro (a courtier whose father, David, saved King João de Castile from an attack perpetrated by D. Leonor Teles) are some of the most illustrious names of Oporto Jews of that time.

The disagreements between the King D. João I and his mother-in-law D. Leonor Teles arose due to the filling of the post of the Chief Rabbi of Castile. The rich D. Judah Aben Menir was the favourite of D. Leonor, but the son-in-law opted for D. David Negro. Angrily, the woman hired a Count to kill D. João, which came to the knowledge of D. David, who *“immediately transmitted the information to the King, who soon made the necessary steps to save himself. He ordered them to arrest, that same night, D. Judah, as well as one of his chambermaids who also knew about the plot. D. Leonor, taken prisoner, was also brought to the monarch and interrogated. With complaints against the King and outrage at the Jews, she sought to justify herself.”*⁴

In the 14th century, a Synagogue was built in Oporto, which was very different from the previous ones. The Synagogue of Monchique, a large building that was not inconspicuous in any way, was erected outside the city walls. From the text of the inscription in Hebrew it is clear that the Royal court was familiar with the Jewish community and that it felt protected. The inscription reads:

1. *Someone might say: why was such house of repute not saved inside a wall?*
2. *But he well knows I have an acquaintance who is recognized by the gentleness.*
3. *It is he who guards me, as he declares with no doubt whatsoever: I am a wall.*
4. *The greatest among the Jews, the strongest of the heroes, and as leaders stand up there he stands.*
5. *Benefactor of his people, the servant of God in his integrity, he has built a house to his name in carved stones. For the King he is second, at the head he is controlled by its grandeur and in the presence of Kings he rises.*
7. *He is Rabbi Don Yehudah ben Maner, light of Judah and in charge of authority.*
8. *By order of the Rabbi, he, Don Joseph ibn Arie, shall live in charge and as leader to the task.*⁵

The text of the inscription, found in the 19th century on the western wall of the chapel of the Convent of Madre Deus of Monchique, then in ruins, alludes to the Chief Rabbi of King Ferdinand, Don Yehudah ben Maner (or Don Yehudah ben Moise Navarro), and to the person responsible for the work, possibly the Rabbi of Oporto, Don Joseph ibn Arie (or Don Joseph ben Abasis).

Among the family names of Portuguese Jews living in Oporto at that time, mostly of Hebrew origin and the rest of Iberian origin are Abeatar, Aberrocas, Abibe, Aboav, Abulafia, Adida, Alcalay, Alfarim, Aragones, Azecri, Barchilan, Baruc, Barzilai, Beja, Ben Haim, Ben Hayun, Benatar, Ben Hassan, Ben Sasson, Calderon, Camhi, Caro, Cassute, Cohen, Dahan, Danam, Davila, Elmaleh, Fadida, Faray, Franco, Funes, Gabay, Garson, Habib, Hadida, Haim, Harari, Leon, Levy, Machorro, Maimon, Matalon, Medina, Naaman, Nahmias, Navarro, Negrin, Obadia, Saba, Safran, Saltiel, Sarfati, Sequera, Shalom, Sasson, Toledano, Torigo, Tuvi, Veniste, Verdugo, Vilhedigo, Zarco and others.

⁴ Meyer Kayserling, “A História dos Judeus em Portugal”, Editora Pioneira, 1971, p. 28-29.

⁵ CIP – Jewish Community of Oporto, “A Sinagoga do Porto, Da Judiaria Velha a Barros Basto”, Fronteira do Caos Editores, 2014, p. 23-25.

There were many professions within the small Jewish community. These included doctors, lawyers, goldsmiths, merchants, cloth sellers, tailors, silk makers, shoemakers and mule drivers. There were also shipowners and specialists in foreign trade who lived in Vila Nova de Gaia, on the south bank of the Douro River. Tax collection by Jews caused the common people to identify the community with Royal oppression.

There were so many Jewish doctors in the city that the name Rapaport, still common among Jews today, may have come from the Hebrew word *Rofé* (doctor) of Oporto. The large numbers of Jewish doctors may have been a cause of prejudice in Europe. The spread of epidemics may have been attributed to the strange neighbours from the East.

Persecutions of the Jews may have started from struggles and denunciations by members of the Jewish community itself. In Spain, Rabbi Shlomo-Ha Levi, who later converted to Catholicism under the name of Pablo de Santa Maria, was one of the architects of the future Inquisition of Castile.

The killings of Jews in Seville, Toledo, Barcelona and other cities led to a great migration to Portugal. Most Jewish homes did not have the space to absorb so many people. Oporto was one of the cities that welcomed the most refugees. This resulted in marriages between Iberian Jews from both sides of the border.

The members of the Jewish community married exclusively with each other. In exceptional cases, parents married their daughters to members of the nobility. This resulted in the birth of Jewish grandchildren and increased social influence. However, this failed to obtain tolerance and understanding within the Jewish community, which disliked mixed marriages.

D. Duarte forbade the Jews to enter the homes of single women, widows or virgins who lived alone or whose husbands were absent. If they wanted to do business with these women, they could do so only in Oporto, Lisbon, Santarém, Évora, and few more cities, always in public or in front of their homes. The Rabbis supported these measures to prevent intermarriage.

During the Middle Ages, Oporto became an important city internationally. The Ribeira (riverfront district) was a chaotic marina overloaded with small and large boats, many of them owned by Jews. The Jews dominated not only domestic trade but also maritime trade with several countries.

The economic and social development of Oporto in the 14th and 15th centuries is evident in the Bolsa de Mercadores (Merchants Market), one of the oldest in Europe. At the same time, Jews from Oporto associated with Jews from other countries making significant steps in world trade.

The historian Amador de Los Rios underlines the unstoppable growth of the “*rich and flourishing Jewish community in the city of Oporto*”, which engendered the envy of others.⁶

Some simple Jews protested against the rich, close to royal power and the city authorities, who lived outside the Jewish quarter and who did not always donate to charity, as was expected by the community. Some had noble titles and rode horses, wearing fine clothes and carrying golden swords.

The Jews were a minority and subject to mistrust. It is likely that the wealthy would find no better way to defend the Jewish population than to be distant from them and from their problems, but exercising their influence whenever they could.

⁶ Amador de Los Rios, “História Social Política e Religiosa de los Judios de España y Portugal”, Madrid, 1960, pp. 523-524.

The researcher Amílcar Paulo, a distinguished member of the Jewish Community of Oporto in the second half of the twentieth century, noted that the Jews *“lived apart in the Jewish quarter, constituting there a kind of municipalities, called communes, from which they could not leave at night, after the bell of prayer. The communes were ruled by councillors and afore-workers, private municipal judges and other Jewish officers. Above the local magistrates was The Arrabi-Mor, high crown official and supreme magistrate for Hebrew business. There was within the Jewish communities a strict hierarchy of officials who performed religious functions of jurisdiction and teaching.”*⁷

The prosperity of the Jewish community of Oporto and many of its members did not please everyone. Some were falsely accused of buying gold and silver to blend them, which was a serious offence receiving heavy punishment. This situation was reported to the King in 1421 by Judah Negro, son of David Negro who was referred to above.

The most famous Jewish Quarter in Oporto was the Olival. King John I, in order to protect *“his Jews,”* ordered the concentration of all Jews in one place. *“The reason, alleged by the sovereign, was to keep those apart and closed, due to the war with Castille, probably for fear of anti-Jewish uprisings or a maritime attack.”*⁸

The City gave the Jewish authorities an area of 1.8 hectares for the Jewish community, which continued to extend itself to the Olival, from nearby Vila Nova de Gaia. The modernity of the new buildings and streets of the newly opened Jewish Quarter contrasted with the gloomy alleys of the old city. It was demarcated by high walls, and only accessible through two massive iron doors adorned with Jewish images. The Jewish Quarter had its own officers and a certain degree of autonomy in relation to the city, containing numerous small houses of prayer and a larger Synagogue, whose location is unknown. There was also a court to settle Jewish issues. The Ombudsman of the Oporto region lived there as the officer in charge of the justice in the Jewish communities.

In 1487, D. João II expelled several Jews as heretics from Oporto. They had arrived from Spain, fleeing the fires of the *auto de fé*, appearing as Catholics. The alleged heretics were discovered by a small Inquisition that was formed with the permission of the Pope, and which included theologians and jurists.

Five years later, in 1492 Jews were expelled from Castile, with repercussions felt in Oporto and throughout the country. About 75,000 were part of the Portuguese Jewish community that lived and prospered in Lusitanian lands for many centuries⁹ and Abraham Zacuto wrote that about 120,000 Spanish Jews spoured into Portugal¹⁰. This was an extraordinary number, given that the population of Portugal at the time was approximately 800,000 people. Suddenly, the Jewish community formed one quarter of the Portuguese population.

The first thirty Castilian families who arrived in the city of Oporto, by royal order of King John II, were led by Rabbi Don Isaac Aboab, the highest religious authority in the Jewish world of the time. It was a great honour for the city, which also welcomed other families in flight. In a few months, more than a thousand souls were added to the local Jewish community. It is likely that the arrival of the Rabbi and his entourage had an emotional impact on the city.

⁷ Amílcar Paulo, “A Comuna Judaica do Porto - Apontamentos para a sua História”, Tripeiro, 1965, p. 2.

⁸ Maria José Ferro Tavares, “Os Judeus em Portugal no Século XV”, Lisbon, 1982, p. 62.

⁹ “História dos Cristãos-Novos Portugueses”, p. 43.

¹⁰ Abraham Zacuto, “Sefer Yohassin”, Zacuto Foundation, 2006, p. 227.

D. John II kindly received the venerable and almost blind elder, esteemed by the Spanish sovereigns, in response to his requests, and offering him relatively advantageous conditions. To the Jews accompanying Aboab [among them Rabbi Abraham Zacuto] he offered the pleasant city of Oporto for his establishment and ordered the magistrate to provide them with housing on the street of S. Miguel. (...) The gentle welcome and assurance the King offered old Aboab brought new hope to Spanish expatriates. All those who feared a long sea voyage – or who, for health reasons could not undertake it, those who had the hope of being able, from Oporto, to visit the old homeland more easily and review the abandoned tombs of their parents and brothers, or those who only considered a temporary stay for later, sooner or later, continue travel to Africa [which, for reasons of force-majorforce, Zacuto and others would do from December 1496], European or Asian countries – they felt happier to be welcomed in a country so close to their homeland and so similar in language and customs.¹¹

Things seemed to be heading for better times for the Jewish community of Oporto, but a succession of events changed everything. Even before the bubonic plague returned, and the guilt was attributed to the Jewish newcomers from Castile, the Chief Rabbi fell ill and died in March 1493. The funeral address fell to his disciple Abraham Zacuto:

Rabbi Isaac Aboab, my lord and my master, of blessed memory, died in Portugal in the year 5253 of Creation, seven months after the expulsion. He lived sixty years and I gave a sermon upon him, based on the verse ‘behold, I send you an angel’.¹²

At the same time, D. João II sent about 2000 Jewish children under the age of 14 to São Tomé. They were the sons and daughters of Castilian Jews who had arrived in Portugal and who were unable to pay the fee required of them. Many children left from Oporto. The drama in the community is unimaginable. Many desperate pleas were directed at the monarch by the cabalists of the time. It is said that when he died, the King suffered from hallucinations and shouted, “*Get these children away from me!*”.

Many Jews from Castile, not having the eight *cruzados* (gold coins) that they were required to pay, were reduced to the status of slaves. With all these misfortunes, the exodus abroad, from Oporto and from other cities, began, long before the Manueline Edict. It continued in successive waves.

The Expulsion of Judaism

In 1495, during the reign of D. Manuel, Castilian Jews were released from their status of slaves on the advice of Abraham Zacuto. He had provided help to the monarchical regime and to the King himself in the fields of medicine, science and astrology, and had predicted prosperity and the arrival of the Portuguese in India. However, breaking with the past and the healthy relationship between the Jewish and Catholic communities, particularly in the city of Oporto, D. Manuel signed the Edict of Expulsion on 5 December 1496 in Muge, in the District of Santarém. It read:

¹¹ “A História dos Judeus em Portugal”, pp. 95-96.

¹² “A História dos Judeus em Portugal”, p. 106.

That Jews and Moors leave these Kingdoms, and cannot live or stay in them. For every faithful Christian, above all things must perform those that are at the service of Our Lord, that enhance his Holy Catholic Faith, and for these shall not only all postpone gains and losses of this world, but also their very lives, which Kings should do much more fully and are obliged to because they are on behalf of Jesus Christ our Lord, and rule, and from him do they receive in this world the greatest mercy, much more than any other person, therefore and as We are very sure that the Jews and Moors are obstinate in their hatred of our Holy Catholic Faith of Christ our Lord, whom by his death has redeemed us, they have committed, and continuously against him committing great evils, and blasphemies in these Our Kingdoms, which blasphemies are not only to them who are children of evil whilst their hearts remain hard, they are cause for more conviction, but also to many Christians who make veer from the true path that is the Holy Catholic Faith; for these, and other very great and necessary reasons, that move us to this, that are notorious and manifest to all Christians, and following a mature resolution with those of Our Council and Scholars, we hereby determine and order that as from the date of publication of this Our Law and Determination and throughout the whole month of October of the Birth year of our Lord one thousand four hundred and ninety seven, all Jews and free Moors that exist in Our Kingdoms, must leave them, under penalty of natural death and of losing their estates to those who accuse them. And anyone whom after said period of time has hidden any Jew or free Moor, for this same fact We want them to lose all their estate and property to those who accuse them, and we Request and Commend and Order by our blessing, and under penalty of a curse on the Kings who succeed us, that they should never at any time allow Jews or free Moors to live or be in these our Kingdoms, and owners thereof, for whatever reason or thing whatsoever, said Jews and Moors we shall let leave freely with their assets, and Order shall them to be paid any outstanding debts to them in our Kingdoms, and so for their departure we will give them all guidance and orders outstanding. And as far as all rents and rights from Jewish quarters and Moorish quarters that We have awarded, we order the people who from us receive such rents to request them from us, for We shall be pleased to order them to receive as much again as said Jewish quarters and Moorish quarters generate for them.

After signing the Edict, the King began to show signs that, unlike the King of Castile, he did not wish to expel the Jews, but rather to eliminate religious and cultural Judaism. He wanted all members of the community to convert to Catholicism and to continue to serve the powerful Kingdom of Portugal as Catholics.

With the lack of free and integral Jews, Portugal, which had divided the world in two with Spain in the treaty of Tordesilhas, would soon enter into a decline. Oporto and Portugal as a whole were already strong on the world scene and had an opportunity to develop further. However, the Portuguese elites not only rejected such an opportunity but also expelled their most prominent doctors, businessmen, scientists, astronomers, and financiers.

On the eve of one *Shabbat* in March 1497, D. Manuel ordered that all Jewish children from 4 to 14 years of age be baptized the following Sunday. The King reached the hearts of parents through their children, through a plan drawn up by the apostate Levi Ben Shem-Tov.

Aware that danger loomed, many Jewish families fled across the border and travelled to Morocco, Tunisia, and other places of refuge. It is difficult to imagine, how it was possible

to travel so fast and so far at that time. In the words of Cecil Roth, *“This period probably belongs to the foundation of the Portuguese communities in Thessaloniki, Smyrna and elsewhere in the Levant”*¹³.

The month of October was set as the final date for the departure of Jews from the Kingdom. Three ports were promised for departure: Oporto, Lisbon, and Algarve but only the port in Lisbon remained. It was stripped of most boats so that few could travel. Rabbis, the rich, the poor, the learned and the indifferent were subjected to inhuman treatment.

Tens of thousands of people were dragged by force to the baptismal fonts. In Oporto, the walls of the Judiaria do Olival (Jewish Quarter) were torn down. Jewish symbols were erased, including the cemetery that had existed for centuries and where the last Gaon of Castile was buried. The area of Jewish Quarter in Oporto was renamed “Victoria”, an allusion to the victory of Catholicism over Judaism.

Inside the Monastery of S. Bento da Vitória, built on the ruins of demolished houses in the Jewish Quarter, is a Latin inscription representative of this idea. *“The seat of darkness is now the palace of the sun. When you cast out the darkness, the sun triumphs.”*

Today there are almost no historical records of the presence of the Jews in Oporto at that time due to the ferocity of the Edict of Expulsion. Oporto of that time, with about 15,000 residents, in addition to the population of Greater Oporto, with at least equal numbers, saw the destruction of everything Jewish. Synagogues, schools, inscriptions, books, documents, religious objects, the cemetery, and even the word *judeu* (Jew) disappeared.

The Jewish community that lived in Portugal in 1496 was one of the most educated and literate in the world. The Edict of “expulsion of Judaism” from Portugal was followed by the confiscation of all Jewish property, including books, under penalty of death of their owners.

There were times of immense sadness and fear. Rabbi Abraham Sabba was forced to deliver his collection of hundreds of books in Oporto, from where he left in tears. There were similar cases all over the country. Many of the Jewish books were burned and others were sold by the authorities to collectors around the world.

Many of the Jews of Oporto managed to leave the city for other countries and for remote locations in Portugal. The rural areas of the North and on the borders of the country were subject to less vigilance and Jews could maintain their traditions more easily there. Many remained, however, in Oporto, side by side with the Christian majority, and wearing the same clothing.

The Hebrew language, the teaching of the Bible, the work of rabbis, the ritual baths, the rituals of birth, life and death, were all erased in a few years by the force of circumstances. Not even the Hebrew calendar, which marks relevant dates to celebrate, existed anywhere.

Nevertheless, the Edict of D. Manuel was not felt in Oporto in the same way as in other places. Many fled, but there was no mass flight. Many Jews accepted conversion to Catholicism. Although they secretly maintained their faith in the God of Israel, they sought to find it in the Catholic *Old Testament* (corresponding to the *Tanach*) and no longer in Jewish books.

When Judaism was officially banned, the former residents of Olival established residences elsewhere in the city, especially in the Ribeira (riverfront) area.

Their abandoned Synagogues, wrote Arthur Carlos Barros Basto, were ruined with time and the prayers and psalms that were recited and sung there began to be

¹³ Cecil Roth, “A História dos Marranos”, Civilização Editora, 2001, p. 60.

*muttered in improvised oratories in the residences of false Christians, thus giving rise to the cryptojudaism practiced by those who could not escape or who for intense love were trapped in the beautiful Portuguese land, where their ancestors had been resting for centuries.*¹⁴

In 1536, the Tribunal do Santo Ofício (Inquisition) was established in Portugal, designed to try crimes against the faith and put an end to heresies and apostasies. Denial of the facts by the subject of the inquiry resulted in months or years in prison and torture until a new hearing was scheduled. The prisoner was forced to pay all the expenses of the imprisonment, the trial, and torture and, if convicted, all property was confiscated. Most of the acquitted were completely ruined when the chase finally ended.

The inquisitorial system, which permitted baseless complaints other than hatred and envy, lasted about three centuries, a seemingly endless time in a rural society. Cecil Roth points out:

*Since the beginning of history, there has probably been no point on Earth where such a systematic and long persecution has been perpetrated for so innocent a cause.*¹⁵

Tax collectors, nobles, knights of military orders, politicians, book sellers, teachers, lawyers, craftsmen, merchants, confectioners, priests, friars, nuns, students and even school children were persecuted, in depositions written by officials in conditions of the utmost secrecy. The names of the accusers were always concealed.

The great Jewish historian quoted above recounts the story of a Portuguese citizen who attempted to free his Catholic doctor, descended from a family with a long history of impeccable Catholic observance, from the Inquisition. He had been forced, under torture, to falsely confess his Judaism. The Inquisitor was captured and, by the same methods, an identical confession was obtained.

The Inquisition, in addition to persecution of Jews, often accused and convicted Christians of heresies, in order to confiscate their property. The only way for the accused to save their lives and put an end to torture was to confess to false Jewish practices. They then exposed their impeccably Catholic families as heretical. In this way, the number of “false Jews” grew.

In 1543, Oporto witnessed its first public inquisition. The establishment of a Court of Faith in the city was due to the Bishop, an angry Carmelite, of impetuous and inflexible character, to whom the New Christians of Oporto had pointed out some illegalities in the process of building a church in Rua de S. Miguel.

In the wise words of the Jewish historian, Meyer Kayserling:

*The worst criminals and most depraved women were used to falsely testify against the CryptoJews. All this was the work of a Bishop, of the same man who, a few years later, had the courage to brave the Vatican against the decay of customs in Rome.*¹⁶

When the Inquisition was established in Oporto, the City Council created such a high number of obstacles to the Inquisitor that he complained to the King. In the meantime, some mixed marriages between new and old Christians took place at the city.

¹⁴ Barros Basto, “Os Judeus do Velho Porto”, Separata of the Revista de Estudos Hebraicos, Lisbon, 1929, p. 106.

¹⁵ “A História dos Marranos”, p. 103.

¹⁶ “A História dos Judeus em Portugal”, pp. 204-205.

The Tribunal da Inquisition of Oporto was active between 1542 and 1544. There were two *autos-de-fé* (the rituals of public penance imposed by the Inquisition) next to the Porta do Olival, where about a hundred new Christians were punished for allegedly maintaining Jewish practices. It was proven that some of the accused did not eat pork, game, or fish without scales, had celebrated the *Sabbath*, Passover, and other Jewish feasts, and had fasted until nightfall on several days of the year.

It is said about both *autos-de-fé* that those who were burned sought death to put an end to their torture. There are doubts about that. However, it is likely that they were rich and that their assets were expropriated by the Court that judged them.

With the end of the Court of Faith in Oporto, and after a brief period under the control of the Court of Lisbon, it was up to the Court of the Inquisition of Coimbra to pursue cases from Oporto. Until the official end of the Inquisition in 1821, about 900 New Christians from the city of Oporto were persecuted, with the youngest 10 years of age and the oldest aged 110 years.

The first generations of New Christians, until the end of the 16th century, knew their family origin. They were still Jews, increasingly uneducated but undoubtedly part of the Jewish People. The little they practiced of religion in hiding could be considered Judaism. Later there emerged another type of religion and of being religious: marranism and marrano.

Many New Christians obtained royal permission to leave Portugal for a pilgrimage to Rome. As soon as they were able to take a different route, far from their homeland, they went to Africa, Flanders, or to the Ottoman Empire to get rid of the crucifix.

In the 17th century, Gabriel da Costa, destined for the study of law, exchanged obligatory Catholicism for Judaism, and convinced his mother and brothers to travel to Amsterdam. There they all rejoined the Jewish People. He took the Hebrew name of Uriel but soon called into question the authority of rabbis and the excessive rigors of the Rabbinate of Amsterdam. He was the target of a *chérem*, Jewish excommunication. This would be repeated with his countryman, also of Portuguese origin, Baruch Spinoza.

In Oporto, nothing had changed.

Inquisitorial zeal did not diminish. In 1618, the entire city of Oporto went into great uproar after the arrest of almost all the “New Christians” merchants who controlled trade with the colonies.¹⁷

In that year, a search led to the arrest of 128 suspected new Christians of high social standing. It had been over a century since the Manueline Edict. It was still known who was who. It is likely that most of the persecuted were still Jewish, due to the social positions they held.

There was a unique case of resistance to the Inquisition by the municipal, judicial and religious authorities of the city. The importance of the Oporto Jews over the centuries led the local authorities to face the Inquisitor in their defence, to the extent that the Court of Appeal had the ecclesiastical court surrounded to prevent some prisoners from being taken to Coimbra. The shocked Inquisitor, Sebastião Noronha, travelled to Madrid to complain to King D. Filipe.

That episode tore the city's social, economic, and financial system apart. The crushed businessmen started a great migratory wave of new Christians. They said goodbye to the land of their ancestors and left for the four corners of the world. It was a remarkable moment.

¹⁷ “A História dos Marranos”, p. 77.

In a 1623 document, the Municipality of Oporto lamented the loss of its successful entrepreneurial new Christian community which had been driven from the city by religious fanaticism: *“The business people, if any existed at some time in this city, ceased to be with the arrests that occurred by the Holy Office”*.¹⁸

At this time it was almost impossible to distinguish who was Jewish, who was Marrano and who was Catholic. There were those who, far from practicing clandestine Judaism remotely corresponding to the original, no longer knew their genealogy, and practiced rituals closer to Catholicism than Judaism. Generations had grown up immersed in a framework of strict Catholicism that rejected everything Jewish as a crime.

New Christians forced to attend church and who prayed the rosary loudly for neighbours to hear, believed that salvation was only possible in the Law of Moses. They respected the *Shabbat* in their thoughts, married within their community, arranged their children's marriages, and were buried with their families. However, they did not do much more than that. To assume that at some point there was a secret Synagogue where faithful gathered is absurd.

The romanticism of most historians regarding new Christians is unjustified. When asked what knowledge of Judaism the Portuguese who arrived in Amsterdam or London had at that time, Cecil Roth did not hesitate to answer: *“nothing”*.

Most new Christians were so assimilated for so long in the homeland that they were totally lost to Judaism, often embracing the diaspora as good Christians. Spinoza, in his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, also wrote about the Judaism of the new Christians, saying that *“nothing was left of it, not even memory”*.

After the Visitation of 1618, some New Christians remained in Oporto. The great majority fled and were integrated into other Jewish communities around the world, especially in Western Europe, North Africa and the former Ottoman Empire.

The Jewish families who, for two millennia, lived in Sefarad, would remain together.

*In line with the connections between Portuguese and Spanish Judaism, it is interesting to add that the fraternal association between one and the other continued after the expulsion: one and the other constituted the great Sephardic family.*¹⁹

The Inquisition, active until the beginning of the 19th century, would leave more than 40,000 court records for posterity to analyse. The end of the Inquisition poses the question: Who was really Jewish among the persecuted and condemned?

The majority of inquisitorial victims for three centuries were not Jewish in the light of *Halachá*, the only permissible criterion in determining that quality. During the first generations of converts, the New Christian community knew who was Jewish by remembering who was born of a Jewish mother. For the Holy Office, the classification of someone as a Jew (“new Christian”) was carried out in denial of Jewish law and was linked to pretense, supposition, and vague suspicion of Judaizing heresy.

The Inquisition had no Rabbis, neglected *Halachá*, and was a “factory of Jews,” not of true Jews, but of fictitious Jews.

18 Historical archive of the Municipality of Oporto, Book V, no. 44, fl. 34, cited by Elvira Mea in “Os Portuenses Perante o Santo Ofício - Século XVI”, 1st Congress on the Diocese of Oporto, Times and Places of Memory, Vol. III, Oporto/Arouca, 2002, p. 430.

19 “La Juderia (“Commune”) of Oporto”, p. 167.

*Jews were multiplied, as long as it was understood as a Jew every individual that the process of the Holy Office declared as such, more their descendants and relatives to a very distant degree. (...) The famous Friar Domingos de São Tomás, of the Order of Preachers and Deputy of the Inquisition, used to say that, just as in Calcutaria there was a house in which currency was made, so there was another in Rossio where Jews were made, or New Christians, because he knew how those who had the misfortune of being arrested were prosecuted.*²⁰

In the 17th and 18th centuries, descendants of New Christians from Oporto, converted to Judaism, occupied prominent positions in the Jewish communities of North Africa, the former Ottoman Empire, Italy, Holland, England, Asia. It is worth remembering the role of the relatives of the last Gaon of Castile, including his great-grandson, the scholar Emanuel Aboab.

19th Century

Due to the Manueline Edict and the activities of the Inquisition, that lasted 285 years, the Douro River could witness how painful and remarkable was the disappearance of the Jews, the primitive inhabitants of the city of Oporto. Only after the official abolition of the Inquisition did some Sephardic Jews, with ancient roots in Sefarad (Iberia), gradually began to return to Portugal. They settled in Faro, the Azores, Lisbon, and Oporto, the second largest city in the country and a major capital of industry.

These men and women came not only from Morocco and Gibraltar, but also from Venice, London, Marseille and other places. They bear the names Abudarham, Amzalak, Abohbot, Anahory, Azavey, Azulay, Benhanon, Benchimol, Bensabat, Cohen, Danino, Ezaguy, Ohayon, Serfaty and others.

Sir Moses Montefiore (1784-1885), a British philanthropist born in Livorno to a Sephardic Jewish family, drank Port wine for more than fifty years. It is said that in the hours before his death, he drank three glasses of Port wine. It is known that Montefiore was a religious Jew. It follows that the Port wine he consumed was *kosher*, i.e., supervised by Orthodox Jews from the harvest to the bottling. The most reasonable explanation is that the wine was produced by, or with the help of, Sephardic residents of Oporto.

The existence of a small Sephardic community in Oporto was confirmed in 1867 by the German Jewish Rabbi and historian Meyer Kayserling, mentioned above. After visiting Portugal, this scholar of the history and literature of Judaism of the Iberian Peninsula published “Geschichte Der Juden in Portugal”²¹. He wrote that after the abolition of the Inquisition, a Jewish community of hundreds of people settled in Lisbon and “a smaller community was founded in Oporto”.²²

There are very few objective records of Sephardic Jews in Oporto at that time. In addition to the existence of small businesses of the Buzaglo, Aflalo, Anahory and other families, the most notable case of a Sephardic Jew from Oporto, is that of Jacob Bensabat (1823-1898). He was a polyglot, born in Gibraltar to a Sephardic family. He taught English in the Liceu Central of Oporto and was the author of a vast work that is still a reference in teaching in Portugal. A grandson of Morocco’s highest rabbinical authority,

²⁰ António José Saraiva, “Inquisição e Cristãos-Novos”, 1969, pp. 175, 183, 184.

²¹ “A História dos Judeus em Portugal”.

²² “A História dos Judeus em Portugal”, p. 292.

Bensabat taught that English was the language of business and that French was the language of diplomatic relations²³.

Small private Synagogues, which were prayer rooms in family residences, were used by Sepharadi Jews in Oporto probably for short periods of time. The Anahory family, today spread across Portugal in multiple branches, retains in the memory that some of its members lived in Oporto in the 19th century and that there was a Synagogue in a very narrow street at the city²⁴. In addition, on March 7, 1905, an Azorean newspaper, the “Persuasão”, published a news story about Sephardic Jews with links to the archipelago, who would open a Synagogue in Oporto, just as they had opened one in Lisbon.

It is certain that the Sephardic community of Oporto existed in the 19th century, but it did not develop lasting religious and cultural institutions because these Jewish families had ties mainly to the communities and institutions previously established in Lisbon, Faro and the Azores. Without a Jewish cemetery in the city, the deceased were buried in the non-Catholic plots of municipal cemeteries, in the British cemeteries of Oporto, Lisbon and Figueira da Foz and in the Jewish cemeteries of other communities.

By the end of the 19th century, the Jewish community of the city was essentially *Ashkenazi*, especially of German origin. The first record of a Jewish birth refers to the birth of Carlos Cudell Goetz, on May 13, 1897. He was the son of the German Jew António Goetz, an industrialist who lived in the parish of Cedofeita in the 19th century.

20th Century

Before, during and immediately after World War I, with the arrival in Oporto of Jews from Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania, the *Ashkenazi* community grew rapidly. Families included the names Cohen, Goldschmidt, Reisman, Goetz, Kimpel, Rosenthal, Kieper, Feldmann, Gotscher, Kolitzus, Naughton, Hitzmann, Rothgang, Feist, Zoller, Karlheinz, Wigder, Neumann, Friedman, Yanovsky, Sorin, Stern, Halpern, Roskin, Knikinsky (often written Kniszinsky), Schuman, Bronstein, Levy, Goold, Levithin, Lieberman and others.

By 1920, the Jewish community of Oporto consisted of about thirty families of merchants from Eastern Europe, who were looking for a better life. They used to gather in private homes. Closely related to each other by marriage, the families of that Jewish colony divided their lives between Oporto, its business base, and Lisbon, the capital of the country, where there was a well-developed Jewish infrastructure linked to the local Sephardic community.

Ashkenazi heads of families were Chaim Sorin, Leon Sorin, Yitchok Yanovsky, Shepsl Yanovsky, Herschel Yanovsky, Tobias Stern, Armand Halpern, David Halpern, Hoshea Roskin, Menasseh Knikinsky, Meir Knikinsky, Abicin Schuman, Haim Bronstein, Ezra Bronstein, Ber Levithin, Abraham Lieberman, Giuseppe Levy and Gregoy Goold. Some of these families are described below, based on the research in the archives of the Jewish Community of Oporto by Miriam Assor, daughter of the legendary Rabbi of the Jewish Community of Lisbon, Abraham Assor.

Yitchok Yanovski, married to Nusia Terlo, both from Lunna, Belarus, set up a lucrative jewelry business in Oporto. His brother, Shepsl Yanovsky, married to Rachel Kaplan, helped

²³ Archives of the Jewish Community of Oporto and the researcher and journalist Miriam Assor.

²⁴ Testimony by Rui Anahory.

him in his activities for four years and later returned to Lunna. He left there for Palestine, taking with him a letter from Yitchok to present himself as a “capitalist” at the British consulate.

Ber Levithin and Herschel Yanovsky, also from Lunna, were part of the Jewish community of the city of Oporto. The latter was married to Leah Sorin, a cousin of the aforementioned Yitchok and Shepsl. On their advice, he travelled to Portugal and placed advertisements in the Jewish newspapers of Warsaw “Der Moment” and “Heint”, encouraging other coreligionists to do the same. The first to follow such counsel were Leah’s sister and brothers: Chaim, Leon, and Rivka.

Rivka Sorin, married to Tobias Stern, and Leon Sorin, married to Helen Klain, settled in Rua do Bonjardim no. 120. Chaim Sorin, who had been ordained as a Rabbi and considered by his coreligionists a specialist in diamonds, was married to Hanna Halpern. She was accompanied by her relatives, David and Armand Halpern, who had business in Oporto with Abicin Schuman. Abraham Schuman was married to Régine Reisman (born in Oporto on 12 December 1897), who was the daughter of the German industrialist, Nachman Reisman.

Abraham was an industrial chemist from Smolensk, Russia. He was born in Warsaw, as were other Poles in the community, including Abraham Lieberman, Nathan Beigel who arriving in Oporto during the 1920s, along with Haim Bronstein (of Russian and Romanian descent) and brothers Meir and Menasseh Knikinsky (Bendov) from Lithuania.

Branca Roskin, was Meir’s niece by marriage. Menasseh’s new fiancée brought her father, Hoshea with her from Lithuania. The family business was centred around two fur stores at Rua de Santa Catarina, no. 355, and Rua Brito Capelo, no. 226, in Matosinhos.

Ashkenazi Jews continued to arrive to Oporto. Ezra Bronstein, his wife Manye and their daughter Hanna were born in Odessa, a site of brutal persecution in the early 1900s and with the advent of communism in 1917. All fled to Portugal. On the journey, the couple’s son, and Hanna’s brother, lost his life.

Even so, that family did not give up on the idea of coming to Portugal, since Ezra’s sister, Regina Bronstein, and her brother-in-law, Moises Liberman, had already settled in the country a few years earlier, in 1913. There was comfort in a family support network.

After arriving in Oporto, the suffering, Ezra became the owner of a small factory of knitwear and fabrics, and his family settled in Travessa das Condominhas, in an old two-storey building. The couple’s daughter, Hanna Sabina Bronstein, eventually became godmother to Samuel Yanovsky, who is still a distinguished member of the Jewish Community of Oporto.

Those *Ashkenazi* Jews were too cautious to engage in organizational activities that involved bureaucracy and contributions and obligations to the State, so they never gave official or legal status to the community to which in fact they composed.

A lack of leadership, a lack of religious observance by most of the members of the community, and the fear by those who once victims of persecution in their countries of origin, explain the lack of records of religious and cultural activities. The small Jewish community of Oporto lived largely unnoticed.

In 1921, the Jewish community of Oporto received a new family, headed by a soldier of great vigour and intellectuality. His name was Arthur Carlos de Barros Basto. He had converted to Judaism in 1920 in Tangier. His wife, Lea Azancot, the daughter of a Moroccan

Jewish father and a Catholic mother, had also converted to Judaism in Lisbon, with the help of a Rabbi from Palestine.²⁵

In 1923, Captain Barros Basto convinced 17 members of the community (Yitchok Yanovsky, Shepsl Yanovsky, Herschel Yanovsky, Leon Sorin, Haim Sorin, Tobias Stern, Armand Halpern, David Halpern, Hoshea Roskin, Menasseh Knikinsky, Meir Knikinsky, Abicin Schuman, Haim Bronstein, Ezra Bronstein, Ber Levithin, Abraham Lieberman and Gregoy Goold) to set up an association called the Jewish Community of Oporto (CIP) similar to the Jewish Community of Lisbon (CIL), established two decades earlier.

The Oporto Jewish community organization (CIP) was established and run by the only person who was really able to do so, the Portuguese army officer. Five sections of the new association were created: “Red Sign” to help hospitals, “Jewish Instruction” for the creation of schools, “Jewish Observance” for religious education, “Patronage of Workers” for work assistance and “Eternal Rest” for burial services.

The Captain was an idealist with broad horizons who had led many lives. He had been a freemason, a revolutionary, and a soldier in World War I. He thought of reconnecting the Jews of Portugal with the Sephardic communities of the world and restoring the former Chief Rabbinate of Portugal. For this he needed financial support.

To obtain support, the Captain devised a plan to return to Judaism the ‘Marrano’ populations living in the remote areas of Trás-os-Montes and Beiras in Portugal. The Marranos, were descendants of New Christians who still practiced some modified Jewish rituals. The plan was designed to have sentimental impact on the Sephardic community of Portuguese origin in other countries.²⁶

In 1926, the Captain received a visit from three Marranos of unknown matrilineal genealogy, who ate pork and who practiced Christian customs mixed with Jewish prayers, spoken in Portuguese. He began headed a personal project, with the help of the Sephardic community of London, to try to convert thousands of Marranos across the country to Judaism.

Barros Basto’s challenging project resulted in the creation of a Theological Institute, functioning as a school for Marrano youth, a newspaper called “Ha-Lapid” (The Torch), a network of permanent contacts with international Jewish organizations, and the beginning of the construction of the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue in 1929. The Jewish Community of Oporto became the centre of operations for the attempt to rescue Portuguese Marranos.

The Captain was an educated man, knowledgeable of military and Jewish history, with numerous publications on these subjects. The name chosen for the Synagogue, Mekor Haim, meaning Source of Life, was inspired by the title of a book by the century Spanish Jewish philosopher and poet, Shlomo Ibn Gabirol (known as “The Jewish Plato”).

Regardless of the beauty of the Synagogue that was being built in Oporto, and whose inauguration took place in 1938, *“The Marranos wanted to remain apart from the Jewish mainstream, as a group ‘mudeu’ [mixture of marrano with Jew], of old beliefs already strongly tempered by 500 years of Christianity and without links to traditional Judaism, however liberal it was. Judaism could not accept something like that.”*²⁷

The “Work of Rescue” was a huge project that had never been attempted elsewhere. It was performed by one man alone, sometimes mounted on horseback, over mountains

²⁵ “Ben-Rosh – Biografia do Capitão Barros Basto, O Apóstolo dos Marranos”, Inácio Steinhardt, Elvira Mea, Afrontamento, 1997, p. 35.

²⁶ CIP/CJP files and archives of Isabel Lopes, the granddaughter of Barros Bastos.

²⁷ Arnold Diesendruck, “Os Marranos, 1920-1950”, 2000, p. 52.

and hills, without the accompaniment of Rabbis or other support to perform mass Jewish education and even conversions to Judaism. The result was predictable. The Marranos did not abandon their particular religion and the Captain found himself struck down by the greatest injustices that a good, hardworking, and generous man can face.

After more than a decade of work for the Jewish Community of Oporto, and almost eight years of “the Work of Rescue”, Barros Basto was the subject of slanderous, anonymous denunciations that falsely accused him of crimes a sexual nature, specifically child abuse and homosexuality. Inspired and instigated by two families from Hamburg and Odessa who intended to manage donations from abroad for the rescue of the Marranos, the complaints came from four young Marranos who were students of the Captain at the Jewish Theological Institute of Oporto and who had rivalries with other peers.

Although the Public Security Police, after a brief investigation, concluded that these complaints were slanderous and related to internal rivalries within the CIP (jealousies and false accusations of violent behaviour and embezzlement of donations from abroad), the Portuguese State took the opportunity to destroy the good name of the accused, the balances he maintained among the members of the Community and his role as leader of the organization and its departments.

The anonymous denunciations resulted in criminal and disciplinary proceedings that aimed to drag the accused into the courts for years, destroy his life and damage an active Jewish community. Thus, was born the “Portuguese Dreyfus” case.

In 1937, the Portuguese court acknowledged that the complaints against the Captain were false. However, the State, which had investigated his life in detail, proved that he had participated in circumcision operations of his students. They considered this behaviour immoral and instigated his dismissal from the Army, damaging the then thriving Jewish Community of Oporto. It only recovered in the 21st century, specifically in 2012.

During and after its construction, control of the Synagogue building was given to the *Ashkenazi* families of the city (Yanovsky, Knikinsky, Roskin, Beigel, Rabinovich, Finkelstein, Cymerman, Pressman, Oppenheim and others). It played an important role in welcoming refugees during World War II. This was followed by decades of emptiness, even though there were always more than enough Jews in the city to constitute a *minyan*, the ritual quorum of ten men required for prayer.

For many years, the CIP/CJP did not fulfil the function of a Jewish organization legally recognized by a State. Similarly, the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue did not fulfil its mission as a regional Jewish centre.

21st Century

At the turn of the millennium, there was a widespread feeling within the Community that its history was filled with emptiness, just like the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue, an immense building always practically empty. Everything suggested a century to come far worse than the preceding one. The palm trees in the garden had died, the white building of the Synagogue was covered with moss and from the inside the sounds of terrible quarrels could be heard, owing to the involvement of an Israeli proselytizing organization, which was eager to take over the building, to drive Jews by birth away from the Community and undertake mass conversions of individuals who falsely claimed to be Marranos.

However, from 2012 the Oporto Jewish Community was successfully brought back to order, in line with its statutes. It was able to bring about rehabilitation on several fronts – of Captain Barros Basto, the Synagogue, the Congregation and the organization itself – as a result of which the Community was at last reconnected with the entire Jewish world and with international Judaism. All of this made CIP/CJP (CIP's new designation) one of the strongest single Jewish organizations in the world in terms of religion, culture, education and social utility.

In a few years there was a numerical growth of 1000% of the community and an intense work took place: the incredible rehabilitation of Jewish life at the Kadoorie Synagogue, building centres for young Jews, *kosher* establishments, the Jewish cemetery of the city (which had been destroyed in 1497), the Holocaust Museum, the Jewish and Holocaust Museums of Oporto, the Jewish Cinema of the city, the production of three feature films about its centuries-old history, the handling of inquisitorial proceedings in danger of rotting at Torre do Tombo, the elaboration of the largest Jewish library of Portugal and Spain, the fight against antisemitism and the many donations to the poor, the sick, the elderly, to hospitals and to kolelin and Synagogues all over the world, for *Shabbat* meals for Jewish communities in 14 countries, for the biggest Chabad Center in Europe (in Cascais), for mikvaot centres, schools and cemeteries in Jerusalem, Ashdod, Moscow and Bangkok, food banks in a number of countries, aid to catastrophes in Africa and Asia, for all Keren Hayesod projects in Israel, for social actions of the Oporto Diocese and the world initiative Mukhayriq, whose aim is once again to join together the Jews and Muslims who have grown apart owing to mutual misunderstandings.

A Jewish traveller who has visited Jewish communities in 55 countries in 2021 attended *Yom Kippur* in the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue and wrote this about her experience:

I would like to thank you for letting me attend Yom Kippur services. I have written to several friends and family to tell how moved I was emotionally moved. Never before had I heard such passionate prayer sung in a Synagogue. It was not just the power of the voices praying in unison that moved me so deeply, it was also the symbolism of so many Jews gathered in a Synagogue in a country that was heavily shaken by the Inquisition.²⁸

In the year 2022, with a membership of about 1000, counting resident families and foreign students, the Community was proud to have three Synagogues, the Holocaust Museum (which was the most visited museum in Portugal in 2021), the Jewish Museum, restaurants, shops, a *kosher* hotel, an online school, two newspapers, a cemetery, a male choir, a painting gallery and even films about its history, namely “Sefarad”, with the last century-long history of the Jewish Community of Oporto, and “1618”, with the story of the last Inquisitorial Visitation to the city of Oporto. This latter feature film, the Portuguese cinematographic production with the most awards ever, was seen around the world and its rights were even sold to airlines from Arab and Muslim countries. The Community showed its desire to hasten the advent of a better, more tolerant, more just, godlier world, a true “Malchut Shaddai” (Kingdom of God).

The astonishing and meteoric development of the Jewish Community of Oporto was due, in good measure, to a great *mazal* in the sense of a favourable alignment of the planets, consistent religious and secular leaders, a lot of teamwork, high professionalism, demotion of vanity, gossip and envy, rehabilitation of the Synagogue building (2012), a tourism

²⁸ Archives of the Jewish Community of Oporto.

department (2013) and creation of a *kosher* hotel (2014). In addition, from 2015, Portuguese legislation which restored nationality to Jews of Sephardic origin, reconnected Portugal with its Jewish diaspora, greatly swelled the number of Oporto Jews and, with the revenues from fees charged to applicants for Sephardic certification, enabled the achievement of great projects that otherwise would not have been possible, including museums, establishments for the acquisition and manufacture of *kosher* products, a holy burial site for the dead, schools and *mikvaot* abroad and even the Chabad Centre in Cascais, owned by Chabad Portugal, with Rabbis in Lisbon and Oporto, in the latter case in one of the CIP/CJP Synagogues: the Kadoorie Mekor Simcha.

The so-called “Sephardic law” (in fact two complementary diplomas: Organic Law n.º 1/2013, of July 29, and Executive Act n.º 30-A/2015, of February 27, 2015) the law was a factor in the development of integral Judaism and Jewish culture in Oporto and throughout the country on a Portuguese sentimental basis. That was the spirit with which, in 2019, the President of the Republic of Portugal, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, visited the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue, talking to Jews of multiple nationalities and saying that he was counting on them to row in favour of the country. The experienced statesman was not mistaken on this point, because the will of all those present was identical, but Sousa was unaware that, in the years immediately following, a handful of political agents mixed, consciously or not, with loudmouths and delinquents, would scandalously destroy all these achievements, with serious damage to the reputation of the Portuguese State that is still far from being accounted for.

In fact, what began as, in the words of the President of the Republic, a “*Palestinian cause of the Minister of Foreign Affairs*”²⁹, probably with too many interests behind, gave rise, over time, to an unthinkable association of different forces (some linked to high crime and others to political, economic, media and judiciary elites) that converged to the total and implacable persecution of all significant Jewish realities connected with Portugal: the strongest national Jewish community, the most capable leaders, the wealthiest Jews, B’nai B’rith International Portugal and, of course, the “law of the Sephardim”, which was a great missed opportunity (and never recoverable) for the country founded by D. Afonso Henriques, which sinks, year after year.

Let us return, however, to 2015, in order to examine how the new legislation was felt and interpreted by the Portuguese Jewish communities, by the Jewish world in general and by the political class. There was something on which they all agreed. No living Jew had a genealogy or any other document that went back to Portugal centuries ago, nor did the law require it, requiring instead the “*tradition of belonging to Sephardic communities of Portuguese origin*”.

The legislators in 2013/2015 decided on two techniques:

- One: they did not emphasize the word Portugal, but rather the “*Sephardic communities of Portuguese origin*”, exemplifying the latitudes where they settled: “*in some regions of the Mediterranean (Gibraltar, Morocco, Southern France, Italy, Croatia, Greece, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Algiers), northern Europe (London, Nantes, Paris, Antwerp, Brussels, Rotterdam and Amsterdam), Brazil, Antilles and the US, among others*”.
- Two: they provided examples of some of the objective criteria of the tradition of belonging to Portugal, such as family surnames, languages spoken throughout history and family memory attested to by reliable means.

²⁹ Minutes No. 86 of the CIP/CJP, 22 September 2020.

The Jewish Community of Oporto suggested to the PSD/CDS Government of Portugal that it should set up an international commission to assess the Sephardism of the candidates seeking Portuguese nationality. The Government ignored the idea and in 2015 decided to have the Portuguese Jewish communities certify the Sephardism of the candidates, so as to reconnect Portugal with the Sephardic diaspora of Portuguese origin while also promoting Jewish religion and Jewish culture in this country.

It should be added that when the aforementioned legislation was published, its authors publicly and genuinely declared that their objective was to reconnect Portugal with Jews of Portuguese origin spread across all continents (even if they lived abroad and did not speak Portuguese); to promote the growth of the national Jewish community (one of the smallest and most powerless in Europe) and to send a signal against antisemitism through the described act of historical reparation.

Within the Jewish world, many have always argued that, as a matter of fact, the actual number of Jews descended from Portuguese Jews corresponded to practically all the 14 million Jews existing on Earth³⁰ because looking back over the past 18 or 19 generations, and considering a people who have always intermarried and whose families have always migrated for reasons of security, trade and marriage, every Jew alive in the year 2015, has up to 1 million ancestors over the last five hundred years: 2 parents, a mother and a father, 4 grandmothers, two grandmothers and two grandfathers, 8 great-grandparents, 4 great-grandmothers and 4 great-grandfathers, 16 great-great-grandparents, 4 great-great-grandmothers and 4 great-great-grandfathers, 32 third great-grandparents, 16 third great-grandmothers and 16 third great-grandfathers, 64 fourth great-grandparents, 32 fourth great-grandmothers and 32 fourth great-grandfathers, 128 fifth great-grandparents, 64 fifth great-grandmothers and 64 fifth great-grandfathers, 256 sixth great-grandparents, 128 sixth great-grandmothers and 128 sixth great-grandfathers, 512 seventh great-grandparents, 256 seventh great-grandmothers and 256 seventh great-grandfathers, 1024 eighth great-grandparents, 512 eighth great-grandmothers and 512 eighth great-grandfathers, 2048 ninth great-grandparents, 1024 ninth great-grandmothers and 1024 ninth great-grandfathers, 4096 tenth great-grandparents, 2048 tenth great-grandmothers and 2048 tenth great-grandfathers, 8192 eleventh great-grandparents, 4096 eleventh great-grandmothers and 4096 eleventh great-grandfathers, 16 384 twelfth great-grandparents, 8192 twelfth great-grandmothers and 8192 twelfth great-grandfathers, 32 768 thirteenth great-grandparents, 16 384 thirteenth great-grandmothers and 16 384 thirteenth great-grandfathers, 65 536 fourteenth great-grandparents, 32 768 fourteenth great-grandmothers and 32 768 fourteenth great-grandfathers, 131 072 fifteenth great-grandparents, 65 536 fifteenth great-grandmothers and 65 536 fifteenth great-grandfathers, 262 144 sixteenth great-grandparents, 131 072 sixteenth great-grandmothers and 131 072 sixteenth great-grandfathers, 524 288 seventeenth great-grandparents, 262 144 seventeenth great-grandmothers and 262 144 seventeenth great-grandfathers. The calculations for 19 generations show that each individual has up to 1 048 574 ancestors, numbers that reinforce the conclusion that every Jew alive today almost certainly has Portuguese and Castilian origins (mixed with many others), especially since, at the end of the 15th century, there would be just over 1 million Jews worldwide³¹.

The Portuguese Jewish communities had different understandings about the “Sephardic law”, based on the expression “tradition of belonging” to Sephardic communities of Portuguese origin. The Jewish Community of Lisbon interpreted the law as meaning that it

³⁰ Joshua Weitz, “Let My People Go (Home) to Spain: A Genealogical Model of Jewish Identities since 1492”, JW 2014.

³¹ Joseph Jacobs, <https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/13992-statistics>.

allowed any mere “descendant” of Portuguese Jews to be certified (which included practically all of Latin America, 300 million non-Jewish people) and hired two non-Jewish ladies to carry out this work. CIP/CJP, however, restricted the number of candidates that could receive certification to the descendants of traditional families from the strong Sephardic communities of North Africa, the Ottoman Empire and some European cities (limited to about one million people) and handed this work over to Rabbinat of Oporto, whose Chief Rabbi was recognized by the Grand Rabbinat of Israel and graduated in Jewish studies and Jewish history.

The different criteria were formally accepted by the Conservatória dos Registos Centrais de Portugal (Central Registry Office of Portugal) and validated by the Ministry of Justice over the years, despite the fact that the CIP/CJP has always argued, contrary to the interpretation of the Lisbon Jewish Community (CIL), that a rule already existed for mere descendants of Portuguese (article 6[6] of the Nationality Law) and that the Portuguese State would not have needed the Portuguese Jewish communities if the objective had been to certify non-Jews. Jewish tradition only reveals who is a Jew and from what families and latitudes, it does not reveal whether a non-Jew had a Jewish relative many generations ago.

On the other hand, given such different criteria, the large number of daily certifications would tend to be issued by CIP/CJP. The traditional Sephardic Jewish families, such as the Biton and the Habib, from Morocco and Turkey, could immediately obtain a certificate of Sephardism or even become members of the organisation, while a single case like the Christian Nilton Coelho, from Brazil, involved in a falsifiable genealogical diagram, showing fifteen generations (until a supposedly Jewish victim of the Inquisition, while offering no evidence of the alleged Jewishness), had to wait for days, weeks or months before being assessed by CIL and, not being Jewish, could never become a member of this organisation.

As set out in the minutes of the Board of Directors of CIP/CJP, once shared with the Lisbon Jewish Community and the Israeli Embassy:

CIL ended with a fragile Committee, operating only in working hours, consisting of two non-Jews (aided by unpaid CIL “volunteers” which, while romantic, is hardly fitting in a large organisation), they did not act under the guidance of an orthodox rabbi, spoke no Hebrew, received no cases in Hebrew, did not require proof of Judaism (which they were not even in a position to evaluate), but merely requested proof of Sephardic ancestry, becoming involved in extremely complicated cases of non-Jews and Ashkenazim and easily forged family trees with all the associated risks, all of which led to major delays in proceedings, the negative reputation resulting therefrom and the subsequent race to Oporto by applicants, their friends and family, where they were given a reply the very same day.³²

In March 2022, seven years after publication of the regulation, the CIP/CJP had certified around 100,000 Jews of Sephardic origin, actually less than a tenth of the possible candidates. However, before *Shabbat*, the Chief Rabbi of Oporto was arrested and the largest Synagogue in Sepharad was invaded by armed police, because the Oporto Community certified more than the Lisbon Community and because, in the opinion of the authorities who presided over such steps, being Jewish was a “religious belief” and not a matrilineal genealogy known to Jewish tradition. To these aberrations were added many others that history will record.

³² Minutes nº 57, CIP/CJP of 25 October 2018.

We will list some below.

The criminal process that led to the arrest of the Rabbi (who was released shortly after being heard by a judge) was set up by different social structures, already mentioned above, from the outset some State agents, few by the way, but powerful at the time they acted, who only wanted, since 2015, a “law of convenience” to garner international praise for Portugal and its politicians, not to bring a full Jewish life to the country. Thousands and thousands more Jews in Portugal, in their majority Israelis, was something they would not contemplate. In the opinion of such individuals, Jewish life meant only “Jewish heritage”, which, naturally, had long existed in Portugal, with Synagogues almost empty, often for the exclusive use of tourists, memorials about persecution by the Inquisition, ceremonies in homage to Aristides de Sousa Mendes and celebrations of special dates with the attending photo opportunities and declarations.

In fact, among the ruling elites in politics and also in the Portuguese media, lamentable individuals feared the supposed strength of the Jews in world affairs and rejected the traditional Jewish philosophy of life based on loyalty to Israel and a religious and normative culture that they considered obscurantist. They wanted the country to welcome many migrants, but not Jews of Portuguese blood, Jews attending Synagogues, Jewish businessmen, Israeli Jews, in short, Jews, a “minority” that, in their opinion, did not have the right to vigorous defence like other minorities, because they were rich white people and plutocrats with their own terrorist State in Israel. They praised religious freedom, yes, but they hated Judaism, which they saw as a reactionary religion, a secret worldwide brotherhood in the hands of Zionist preachers (i.e. the orthodox Rabbis) that urges the Jews to be faithful to a spiritual homeland in Jerusalem. They insisted on the need to teach about the Holocaust, yes, to be bigwigs of the “free world” and point the finger in the face of all their political enemies, but they could not bear the fact that the most visited museum in Portugal was the Oporto Holocaust Museum, run by an organized Jewish community, CIP/CJP, which practically monopolized education on the subject in Portugal, with tens of thousands of school students every year.

It was in this antisemitic scenario, not exaggerated, but, if anything, understated, that in 2020, just as in the circuses of ancient Rome, a relentless persecution by the Portuguese State and some journalists of the “Sephardic law” was decreed, through a campaign of defamation, directed from Parliament, which ignored all positive effects of the law and characterised it as a fiefdom of material interests, business deals, money, passports of convenience and bad publicity for Portugal.

The parliamentary debate on “Sephardic Jews” lasted four months and was led by a socialist deputy with a mediocre political curriculum who, at the behest of the Foreign Minister and the Justice Minister, intended to make the law unusable from January 2022, obliging applicants to previously reside in Portugal for two years. To assure the deputies of the other political parties that her proposal was not antisemitic, said deputy told them that the Jewish Community of Lisbon(?) had told her that the Jewish Community of Oporto(?) issued certificates to anyone regardless of their Sephardic roots(?) and that therefore the law could only remain active for another two years(?). What a disgusting falsehood! What unintelligible reasoning!

The passage of the millennia has taught that one of the favourite strategies deployed by Jew-baiters was to divide the Jewish community into good Jews and bad Jews. In Portugal, something very interesting happened. The good Jews lived in Lisbon, they had an empty

Synagogue, for thirty years they had been talking about setting up a Jewish museum and had made use of the “law of the Sephardim” to essentially certify non-Jews. The bad Jews resided in Oporto, obeyed Jewish law, only certified Jews, filled Synagogues and created museums, history films, books, newspapers and restaurants in a few months.

Critics of the “Sephardic law” shouted that it had to be changed because it was too comprehensive and granted the right to nationality to “tens of millions of people”, but paradoxically excluded from this number the thousands of Jews of Sephardic origin who had been certified and who continued to be certified by the CIP/CJP. These were considered illegal.

In this context, an extremely convenient anonymous denunciation reached Parliament, addressed to all parties, accusing the Jewish Community of Oporto of *“having drafted the 2013 law and the 2015 regulation to collect and launder millions of euros”*. Who talked to whom?, who asked whom for what?, and in return for what?

The denunciation was immediately shared with mainstream journalists and the Justice Minister. The dice were cast. People from the executive, legislative, judiciary and media branches, all hand in hand, began to prepare themselves for an unbelievable persecution against the leaders of the country’s strongest Jewish community.

Seeing that history repeats itself, and that today you might find many Jews where there will be none tomorrow, the Jewish Community of Oporto has taken legal measures to ensure that should the Jews ever abandon Portugal, their assets will be given to the Jewish Agency for Israel.

There was no “Jewish question” in Portugal for State agents, while there were no Jews, the Synagogues were dormant and cultural achievements were nothing more than sporadic lectures given by septuagenarians to small audiences. The problem arose when the Portuguese Jewish scene was completely transformed, and the Jewish presence became more visible. *“The Jewish question exists wherever there are Jews in noticeable numbers. Once there, their presence provokes persecution.”*³³

At the end of 2021, there were signs that the Russian Federation intended to invade Ukraine, which it did after a few months, and the “oligarchs” considered to be close to Putin soon fell out of favour all over the world. In Portugal, such events constituted a golden opportunity for opponents of the law to launch their dirty game. They knew the world-renowned Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich had obtained Portuguese nationality, after an application for certification that was approved by CIP/CJP’s certification committee. It should be noted that the Jewish Community of Oporto always had dealt with this case transparently with the Portuguese State and immediately brought it to the attention of the Government and the Central Registry Office, who were asked to deal with the case urgently for reasons of national interest, which the member of the Government for Justice immediately did.

It was with this case that the antisemites played their devastating game from 18 December, when a young sports journalist from a leading newspaper, well-armed by political agents with official information, together with his Editor, the latter already having a resume of tirades against the national Jewish communities, reported that the famous “oligarch” was a Portuguese citizen, falsely claiming that he had obtained Portuguese nationality with the manipulation of Wikipedia, donations granted to the CIP/CJP and the intervention of a Jewish Freemasonry, the name used to describe B’nai B’rith International.

³³ Theodor Herzl, “O Estado Judeu”, Consulate General of Israel in São Paulo, 1998, p. 4.

The debate about the need for immediate changes to the “Sephardic law” (or rather, its effective destruction) was launched over a “toxic” personality from a “toxic” country. The ghastly news, step n.º 1 of the conspiracy, published without the Jewish Community of Oporto being given any chance to comment, spread throughout the world the idea of a case of corruption and created considerable social alarm in Portugal, where it could be read in the newspapers daily, that, without any shadow of doubt, CIP/CJP had “prostituted the Sephardic law”.

Mixed with new and very convenient denunciations under the cover of anonymity (to ensure the impunity of their authors), intense political games followed, with exchanges of favours between friends in all sectors of the State, collusion between powers that ought to be separated, meetings between “anonymous” whistle-blowers and professional slanderers associated with working for “transparency” and even nocturnal robberies at law firms and private homes.

It is unbelievable that there has been a criminal association of professional thieves associated with the game of the elites in a European country, in the 21st century. Thieves of high calibre and professionalism began their activity in January 2022, with the realization, in a law firm in Oporto that dealt with the nationality law and CIP/CJP, of a crime of aggravated theft punishable by up to 8 years of imprisonment. The crime aimed to seek “information” to open a criminal investigation. Why? The anonymous denunciation sent to MPs two years earlier had been rejected outright, in an investigation concluded on 6 October 2021, by the Oporto Judiciary Police, on the grounds that it did not contain information that could form the basis of a “criminal report”, without which there could be no inquiry.

Nothing useful resulted from the criminal act of thievery by which the server was stolen from the office, other than the “discovery” that an external professional (who certified translations relating to administrative processes involving Chinese and Arab citizens) had the same surname as a member of the CIP/CJP Board. That collaborator did not even know what a Sephardic Jew was, but the conspirators celebrated the good news, immediately shared it with the young journalist (who straight away contacted the Community to ask for a “comment”), produced new anonymous denunciations in cooperation with mentally ill and convicted people and, in this way, on 16 January 2022, managed to get the Public Prosecutor’s Office to open the desired investigation, in an unbelievable, unprecedented union between individuals from the four major powers of the State, who all together set in motion, with unwavering faith, hand in hand with criminals, a conspiratorial plan to destroy all relevant Jewish realities connected with the country, as well the religious leadership (orthodox and rigid) and the secular leadership (intellectualised and energetic) of the Jewish Community of Oporto.

On 10 March, when he was preparing to travel to Israel, which he did habitually at least once every two months, the Chief Rabbi of CIP/CJP, Daniel Litvak, was detained at the airport, as if he were Osama Bin Laden, by a dozen fierce and well-armed police. Informed of the operation in real time, a newspaper found out that the religious leader was supposedly going to *“flee the country with 3 million Euros in his suitcases”*. This turned out to be false, his suitcase merely containing clothes, books, and some *kosher* food. The religious leader was dragged off to the police building, then treated like a rapist, illegally photographed and illegally fingerprinted. They took away his siddur, tallit and tefillin necessary for worship, put him in a cell with a murderer, allowed him no access to *kosher* food, kept him without food for 36 hours and, not satisfied, forced him to violate *Shabbat* in a despicable way. After being detained for almost two full days and having been displayed like a trophy for the

world to appreciate and trample on, the authorities released the Rabbi on a cold *Shabbat* night, in the streets of Lisbon, with the obligation to remain in Portugal and walk several kilometres, three times a week, to humiliatingly present himself at a police station to prove that he had not run away, since he was suspected of corruption and many other crimes of the criminal code.

All these indictments were taken very seriously by society, to the point that the “suspect” was soon attacked and spat on in a supermarket in the city of Oporto by enraged patriots. Until one day, half a year later, the Lisbon Court of Appeal declared that the case was “*based on nothing*”. No one apologised to the Rabbi, nor to the Synagogue, nor to the Community. The “investigations” continued smoothly, as in the past in the homeland of socialism, the Soviet Union, where Rabbi Litvak’s grandparents were from. “*To make it easier to identify the Jews all one has to do is to put them on the spot every now and then, as speculators, parasites and corrupt Rabbis.*”³⁴

The Rabbi was not the only victim. There are no words strong enough to describe the shrewdness with which young police inspectors, as enraged as they were uneducated, searched for suitcases of money and fake invoices in the house of the Vice President of the CIP/CJP, Isabel Lopes, granddaughter of Captain Barros Basto, without even knowing who the latter was, and destroying the peace and reputation of the distinguished economist, a sick septuagenarian, of indisputable honesty, as well as her husband, whose civil construction company was indicted – according to the search warrant – for issuing Sephardic certificates on behalf of the Jewish Community of Oporto. The last police action of this kind, which took place at the home of Lopes in the distant year of 1960, this time because of her grandfather, had been carried out by the PIDE (the dictatorial regime’s political police), but then only three police officers participated in the operation, not fifteen as this time in the context of a regime that is said to be democratic.

The main target of the operation called “Open Door” was, however, the CIP/CJP Board member, lawyer and writer, David Garrett, who had in his hands, for more than a decade, in the first line, the rehabilitation processes of the Captain, the Synagogue and the congregation, as well as being guarantor of the regulatory legality of the organization, the equilibrium between its members and the lifeblood in all departments. Seen as the bearer of the vision and capacity to regenerate Jewish life where, a few years before, it had been in ruins, he was indicted for having set up a “criminal association”, in partnership with other community leaders, the Chief Rabbi and officials of the Registry Offices to “sell” Sephardic certificates for large amounts of money that were diverted from the Community and hidden from the Public Treasury. These totally crazy and surreal accusations were not invented by the police or the prosecutors, but by those who ordered them to act promptly.

The main Jewish families in Oporto – associated in the public mind with the corruption with Registry Offices and smiling billionaires with a super-valuable Portuguese passport in their hand – experienced real agony, having been exposed in the media, with the photographs of their faces, their phone numbers and addresses, which not only led to public derision, but also put their physical safety at risk. The social outcry that arose against the Jewish Community of Oporto was such that the ordinary members of the institution and all its collaborators and employees, even the cleaning lady, were asked, in the most different contexts and places, when would they be arrested.

³⁴ Ari Benami, “Entre a Foice e o Martelo”, Bloch Publishing, 1968, p. 268.

Even the CIP/CJP doorman and museologist were not spared in the corrupted news, becoming public figures, the latter being visited, one morning, at 7:00 am, by the police (a total of five inspectors, the good and the bad, the old technique), who were frantically looking for an implausible “secret pen drive”. The museologist ended up stripped of the savings he kept in his safe and indicted for all the crimes imputed to the Chief Rabbi, without further ado, which served to definitively convince all members of the Community that a case of State corruption was underway and that those involved had to be denounced before the world, year after year, now and after death.

These were times of hidden pain and bitter tears for hundreds of Oporto Jews whose pride in bearing a Portuguese citizen card was suddenly transformed into paralysing fear. It was not an equal fight. On one side, an organised religious community consisting of 0,01% of the Portuguese population, on the other the State with all its powers and bringing all its might to bear as it deliberately intoxicated the national and international press with the brutal situation of the war waged by the Russian Federation on Ukraine.

In addition to the involvement of personalities from the Government, Parliament, the Public Prosecutor’s Office, the Police, burglars who broke in at the dead of night, clients from Magalhães Lemos psychiatric hospital, convicted libellers, professional slanderers, and an extortionist who wanted to be famous, the wilful journalists who were entrusted with the wretched task of denigrating the Jewish community in Oporto expended all their energies on spitting in the face of the CIP/CJP leaders, adding up the amount of the €250.00 fees that were charged to applicants for Sephardic certification and speculating about alleged “lawyers’ deals”, conveniently forgetting the investment of around 1 billion Euros made by members of CIP/CJP in the city of Oporto and the creation, by the community, of a splendid religious, cultural and social infrastructure. These billion Euros came out of the pocket of the Jews and the infrastructure was financed with income from the Jewish world for the Jewish world. None of this mattered to puppets who had been ordered to report the quantities of gold improperly entering Hebrew coffers, which they did, using anonymous denunciations and anonymous sources from the world of marginality and from the most diverse sectors of the State. Journalistic corruption was added to State corruption.

In the year in which, in just a few months, the Jewish Community of Lisbon obtained higher revenues than the Jewish Community of Oporto in seven years of overwhelming work, the “speaking classes” incessantly preached that the law was a business for the last, which gave more impetus to the judiciary authorities to freeze the bank account that the Chief Rabbi held in Portugal, where the organization had transferred its fees and expenses for more than a decade, at the behest of successive respectable Directorates. Here is the “world map” with the names and origins of community leaders during such a long period: Dale Jeffries (American Jew), Michael Rothwell (British Jew), Sam Elijah (Indian Jew), Isabel Lopes (Portuguese Jew), Gabriel Senderowicz (Brazilian Jew), Dara Flitterman (Spanish Jew), Eliezer Beigel (Polish Jew), Yigal Benzion (Uzbek Jew), Deborah Walfrid (British Jew), Eliran Graedge (Israeli Jew), Alain Piccioto (Egyptian Jew), Vivian Groisman (Swedish Jew), David Garrett (Portuguese Jew) and Rose Tacuchian (Brazilian Jew).

The Chief Rabbi, associated with dollar signs, was accused of having issued certificates of Sephardism, conscious that he could not do so, to the two biggest Portuguese philanthropists, who various bankrupt information organs in Portugal characterized, moreover correctly, as the country’s richest men: Patrick Drahi and Roman Abramovich.

Drahi is a Moroccan, French and Israeli Jew (who had been certified, and rightly so, by the Lisbon Jewish Community and not by the Oporto Jewish Community) whose Portuguese origins are attested by family surnames such as Adrehi and Sicsu and by his family memory attested by Jewish tradition, namely, a descendant of Megorashim (those expelled), such as Jorge Sampaio, former President of the Portuguese Republic, both of families who, after the Inquisition, returned to Portugal (and who are therefore referred to as “returnees” in the preamble of the legal regulation), lacking any material need, given that the person had French nationality.

Roman Abramovich is a Russian, Lithuanian and Israeli Jew (who had been certified, and rightly so, by the Rabbinat of Moscow, recognized by the Chief Rabbinat of Israel) whose Portuguese origins are attested by family surnames, namely Leibo/Leão (mentioned in the preamble of the legal regulation), for the support he gave over a period of 20 years to a Jewish organization of Portuguese origin (Chabad Lubavitch, founded by Schneur Zalmane, descended from Rabbi Baruch Portugali), family memory in Poznan and Hamburg attested by that Rabbinat, also lacking any material need, given that the person in question, having Lithuanian grandparents, was entitled to Lithuanian citizenship, which his children have. He paid a fee of 250 euros.

“Open Door Operation”, an order, did not stop there. Suspicion spread to other wealthy men, such as Sir Michael Kadoorie of Hong Kong (descended from the philanthropist Laura Mocatta) and Andrey Rapaport from Ukraine (whose family nickname means doctor from Oporto), who also have Portuguese nationality. Thus, the four richest and most self-sacrificing benefactors of Portuguese nationality were betrayed by a poor and ungrateful country to safeguard the material interests of parasitic elites who tend to see the Jews as very dangerous rivals, particularly in the fields of economy and culture, like an octopus that weaves its international intrigues in Brooklyn, Paris, Moscow and Jerusalem.

The complete project to attempt to eliminate all Jewish forces from Portugal put a large number of civil servants at their service (more than fifty police men and women participated in the first “searches”) and sought to destroy the Jewish Community of Oporto not only in its credibility socially but also internally, as it was told to the world, through the televisions and the police, that the leaders were withdrawing and diverting large sums of money. Such falsehoods, technically impossible in the organization targeted by the prevaricators, showed the face of a nation greatly influenced by elites who only think about money and who are totally detached from high culture, good feelings, the transcendental and any immaterial reality. “*Corruption!*” shouted those elites in a case of State corruption that Europe had not seen since the 1940s.

On 16 March, authorities got the response they deserved. More than five hundred people gathered inside the Synagogue to celebrate Purim and promises were heard that, like Haman, the antisemites would hang from the ropes they had prepared for others. The images of the feast of Purim and of the large crowd present were immediately sent to be attached to the chilling proceedings which qualified magistrates had been forced to carry out in anger by their superiors.

On 18 May, the Jewish Community of Oporto celebrated the traditional feast of *Lag BaOmer*, which recalls the Romans’ attempt to exterminate the Jewish people, as well as the efforts of the Israeli leaders to fight against a gigantic army of men possessed of vanity, pride, bad language and envy. That day, in the conversations of the members of the Synagogue, the name of Portugal was equated with that of Rome. It has been said that the Jews will continue to see the ruin of persecuting countries and empires, one after another.

On 22 June, Parliament sent an e-mail to the Oporto Jewish Community requesting them to issue an opinion regarding new draft amendments to the “Sephardic Law”. In practice, that law had already been killed by a government regulation, but the Communist Party also wanted it killed in theory, doing justice to its flag (that of the Soviet Union) and the fact that, for more than a decade, it had kept in its official newspaper online “Avante!” articles that guarantee the veracity of the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion”. The request for the Community to issue this opinion was merely to comply with formalities. All political parties were quite convinced that the Community would never reply, after many months of political, media and criminal persecution. However, 50 minutes later, the CIP/CJP President, Gabriel Senderowicz, from a Polish family with a long history of persecution and humiliation, sent a response for Parliament, from which we can enunciate here a few sentences.

The Community no longer has any interest in cooperating with the State. By order of its General Meeting, it has opened a new room in the Jewish Museum of Oporto. Hundreds of school students and tourists were the first to visit this new room, presenting the chronology of antisemitism in Portugal between 2015 and 2022 and explaining the origin of the current criminal case. Soon, there will also be a brightly lit display case containing all the denunciations that led to this lawsuit, including photographs of the people who made, spread and used such denunciations for evil purposes.

The police invaded the Kadoorie Synagogue as if it were a house of ill repute and rushed to the house of the Vice-President, granddaughter of Captain Barros Basto, founder of the Jewish Community of Oporto, seeking bags filled with cash. The board member responsible for legal affairs was a reviled target, his name mentioned over and over again in the denunciations, because of the fact that for over a decade he had conducted the rehabilitation processes of Captain Barros Basto, the Kadoorie Synagogue and the very Community, without ever holding office in the institution, receiving an eminent personality, giving an interview, or indeed addressing the congregation. As written by the oldest female member of CIP/CJP, at the age of 94, “Nothing changed very much for the Synagogue for the next thirty to forty years — until one day someone came along to breathe new life into the old, empty Synagogue. The congregation grew, and grew, and now it makes me happy to see that the Synagogue has finally more than fulfilled its destiny.”

The Court released the Chief Rabbi and has not prevented him from continuing to issue certificates of Sephardism. However, the Board of Directors of the Jewish Community of Oporto has decided to suspend this activity completely, as it refuses to cooperate with a State that brings an antisemitic and terrorist lawsuit against an organised Jewish community, based on inconceivable anonymous denunciations made by the scum of society.

The indecently embracing persecutory action against the Jewish colony of Oporto led to a complaint, filed by the CIP/CJP, in August, at the European Public Prosecutor’s Office. The procedural piece carried out, with 200 points, was printed in a book entitled “The First Great Antisemitic Conspiracy of the 21st Century”, which was offered to renowned libraries in civilized countries, to the most relevant international institutions (UN, EU, UNESCO and others) and to the governments of the countries such as Israel, the United States of America, the Russian Federation, China, India, the United Kingdom, France, Canada, Germany, Italy and Sweden.

History will keep a record of this grave corruption of the State, leading to the persecution of international Jewry and the only strong Jewish Community in Portugal, the unlawful detention of a Chief Rabbi, the unlawful trampling of a Synagogue, the unlawful invasion of the Jewish Museum, unlawful searches in the homes of community leaders and the unlawful constitution of defendants in the absence of any evidence to allow such measures, that is to say, all “*based on nothing*” in the words of the Lisbon Court of Appeal on 29 September.

In November 2022, the Portuguese Assembly of the Republic challenged the young of this country to come up with interesting ideas to commemorate the 50th anniversary of democracy. In Oporto, 44 French Jewish students wrote to Parliament suggesting an exhibition on “Operation Open Door”, urging the State never again to commit such serious atrocities as to arrest and abuse a rabbi and invade a Synagogue, involving the forging of anonymous denunciations and the use of thieves, lunatics, slanderers and more. They also asked for the “Portuguese Dreyfus” to be reintegrated in the Army.

The Jewish News Syndicate published an item about this petition on 29 November. That same evening, outsider a *kosher* restaurant in Oporto, the car belonging to the first signatory of this petition, Ilan Cohen, had its tyre slashed and in danger of bursting. After dinner, the young man took the motorway (where the top speed is 120 km/h) and “*miraculously the tyre did not burst*”, he told the Portuguese Jewish News. “*As I got onto the VCI, I had problems with the steering, which was lucky, because I stopped the car and saw the tyre*”.

Cohen recalled that he had been studying in Oporto for the last five years and that this was the first time something of the sort had happened. He then submitted a complaint to the police and mentioned that “*this occurrence is highly suspicious*” and could be the work of “*a criminal network to silence me or even kill me in an accident, for in 2022 an antisemitic conspiracy against the Oporto Community used people convicted of a number of crimes and professional burglars to break into law offices and private homes*”.

The Jewish Museum of Oporto now exhibits a car tire with an explanation of what occurred.

On April 25, 2024, the date that marks the fiftieth anniversary of democracy in Portugal, the Community will demand some answers from the Portuguese State:

- Who ordered the March police operation, “based on nothing” according to the Court?
- Who tried to eliminate a young French Jew and why?
- Who robbed the residence of the former President of SIRESP to steal two computers?
- Who robbed the office of a lawyer from Oporto to steal the server?
- Who robbed the residence of a lawyer with a “suspicious” surname and why?
- Who orchestrated and used allegations of convicted slanderers?
- Who orchestrated and used individuals with stints in psychiatric hospitals?
- Who led the “communication strategy” against the strongest Jewish community in Portugal and the “Sephardic law”?
- What are the names of the characters that “distributed the game” through the media?
- What does a “Palestine cause” mean?

“Operation Open Door”: an old story

The objectives of the great conspiracy are explained in the complaint that the Community made to the European Public Prosecutor’s Office and that will be investigated internationally sooner or later. Here is a summary of the objectives:

- To destroy the Jewish Community of Oporto (as in 1497), to seize its assets (as in 1497), to expel its members (as in 1497), to invade the Synagogue (as in 1497), to humiliate community leadership (as in 1497), to make false accusations and take advantage of night robbers and convicts to frame people (as in 1542), to throw suspects into the fire of public opinion (as in 1618), to permit anonymous denunciations (as happened with the inquisition and in 1936 with the “Portuguese Dreyfus case”) and much more.
- To gain improper access to the correspondence of the Jewish Community of Oporto with the international Jewish community, including rabbinical authorities, B’nai B’rith International, the Anti-Defamation League, the European Jewish Association, CEJI, and the embassies of Israel, USA, UK, France, Sweden and other countries.
- To destroy the “Sephardi Law of Return” in the midst of a scenario of terror, so that no one in the international Jewish community or Portuguese society could come forward in its defence.
- To reject the influx of Israeli citizens interested in Portuguese citizenship (as more than 40,000 citizens of Israel have benefited from the law and this number was expected to grow) and to promote distance from that country, which comprises only 0.1% of the world’s population and is the most hated State. In the words of the President of the Portuguese Republic, the attack on the legislation “*was a Palestinian cause of the Minister of Foreign Affairs*”.
- To eliminate Portuguese Jewish elites so that they could not harass national elites that have long parasitized the country and, for this purpose, revoke the citizenship of the holders of the greatest fortunes and other absurd names contained in a “black list” (again, “lists of Jews” and “Expelled Jews”).³⁵

6000 kilometers away, the President of Israel, Isaac Herzog, read the book, “The First Major Antisemitic Conspiracy of the 21st Century”, understood the power games hidden behind such an uproar and wrote to the Community on 30 November:

The authoring and sharing of this book illustrate how meaningful is the attachment to Jewish heritage for members of the community as well as how painful the sense of isolation, difference, and vulnerability can be for Jewish communities around the world. There is no question that antisemitism, in any form, is a phenomenon that no just society can come to terms with and we in the State of Israel are roundly committed to the safety and wellbeing of our Jewish brethren around the world as well as to a global reality in which hatred and prejudice are afforded no place. I look forward to the ongoing dialogue between the Jewish Community of Oporto and my office, as a reflection of the deep bonds that connect the Jewish people around the globe with Israel.

³⁵ Comunidade Israelita do Porto/Comunidade Judaica do Porto, “The First Major Antisemitic Conspiracy of the 21st Century”, Oporto, 2022.

Anyone who knows the history of the Jews in different parts of the world knows that a Jewish community, collectively or individually, is always accused of ‘danger to the homeland’, the ‘exploitation of national assets’ and the ‘undue exploitation of the trust placed in them’. They consequently suffer from persecution by public authorities, national embarrassment, and disdain and hate on the part of the masses. There are few words to describe what was achieved by two handfuls of antisemites in Portugal, a country that for centuries had no Jews and therefore it had been dormant on the Jewish question.

Many historical elements came together. There was the union of the power of the State and its associates against officials of the Jewish community, persecution of the benefactors of the people of Israel, mass dissemination of ancient antisemitic myths, association of Jews with money and tricks, inquisitorial tactics of a new “clergy” with means to make great hunts, a long campaign of defamation, mobilization of public opinion, utilization of malefactors for the incrimination of their targets, and silencing of the positive activities of the Jewish community, such as one of the largest observances of *Yom Kippur* in Europe, one of the most visited museum in Portugal, and the most internationally awarded film in the history of Portuguese cinema.

Despite the fact that only 5% of the applicants were able to obtain Portuguese citizenship through “The Sephardi Law of Return”, the name “Operation Open Door” suggests a Jewish avalanche in the country. This fact characterizes those who declared war on the Jewish community and recalls an antisemitic Portuguese text called “A Invasão de Judeus” (The Invasion of the Jews) published in 1924.

There was no danger to the Portuguese homeland. The Jewish Community of Oporto grew religiously and culturally according to the spirit of the law of 2013/2015. The richest families symbolically intended to invest in a country of which they had emotional memories. The majority of applicants who applied for citizenship (Jews from families of the former Ottoman Empire and North Africa) did not intend to live in Portugal, but only to exercise a right. The law had been presented by the Minister of Justice as “the return of a right” and did not require interested parties to speak Portuguese or to live in the country. The conversation in the political, judiciary and media circles around “convenience passports” says a lot about their authors.

The names and faces of the perpetrators of “Operation Open Door” were never exposed by the Oporto Jewish Community because some of the civil servants used for this purpose were victims as well. In the midst of the terror of the “Operation”, the legislation that in the expectation of its founders intended to strengthen the national Jewish community and recover its strength and prestige around the Earth was assassinated. In fact, the Law of Return was revoked by a government decree of March 18. It stipulated that, from the following September, applicants would have to possess a certificate proving “*the ownership, transmitted mortis causa, of rights over real estate located in Portugal, of other personal rights of benefit or of shareholdings in commercial companies or cooperatives based in Portugal*”, or “*regular trips throughout the life of the applicant to Portugal*”, provided “*that such facts demonstrate an effective and lasting connection to Portugal*”.

Here is a personified “translation” of the new regulation, in its most shocking and most unfeeling part:

Show us the five-century-old will that one of your up to 524,288 seventeenth great-grandparents left for posterity before dying of grief at having seen the building where

they resided, the Jewish quarter as a whole and the sacred Jewish cemetery where their ancestors rested all destroyed.

The Government published the decree well-aware that the Jews who were once forced to leave Portugal had their assets destroyed or confiscated. No Jew of Sephardic origin can have certificates that he or she inherited such assets or shares in companies, or travelled to Portugal throughout their life, except for those who settled in the country and obtained citizenship for reasons other than their Sephardic ancestry.

The 2013/2015 legislation could have remained untouched if the problem were the Jewish Community of Oporto, given that, on March, it had already ceased to certify origin of applicants. It refused to cooperate with a State that had acted against the Jewish community and the Synagogue based on anonymous denunciations. However, this had been decided quite some time before. As we saw above, in April 2020, a socialist deputy carrying out government orders had presented a proposal in Parliament to invalidate the law in practical terms in 2022.

In summary, “Operation Open Door” was presented to the world with pomp, supposedly to stop the alleged sale of passports by a Rabbinate that acted in exchange for money and which belonged to a criminal gang involving officials of the Registry Office and was engaged in forgery, corruption, embezzlement, tax fraud and money laundering. It was actually no more than a scandalous “Palestine cause”, organised by decadent elites. Driven by unconfessable interests and having gone so far as to compare the procreation of the Sephardim to the Coronavirus, these elites wanted to put an end to the law granting Portuguese nationality to Jews of Sephardic origin (in which they were successful), to target the strongest Jewish community in Portugal and harm the Jews, the Israelis, the rich and all relevant Jewish realities connected to this country.

There is degrading evidence that the judiciary apparatus was used for political ends, exchanges of favours between mediocre elites, astounding conspiracy theories, attempted elimination of a young French Jew, at least three break-ins by thieves who entered law offices and private homes during the night (the first being to try to question the conclusion of the Judiciary Police of Oporto, in an investigation process, that there was no matter to give rise to a criminal inquiry; the second involving a lawyer who had bad luck with her surname; and the last covering the international public tender for SIRESP), false accusations of drug trafficking and schemes with Russia, the use of anonymous denunciations concocted by people who had spent time in psychiatric hospitals, agents of the State, public figures whose only known résumé is slander, convicted of crimes against people’s honour, bodily harm and corruption, an individual convicted for alleging that non-Jews are “shit” and “dirty people”, all in articulation with a murderous media campaign carried out by half a dozen journalists (from Público, Expresso, SIC and RTP) and influencers, who for long months joined efforts to destroy the credibility of a law and the respectable image of community leaders and Jews whose Sephardic origin had been certified in compliance with legal criteria, after which it was the Government who had to decide whether or not they should be granted Portuguese nationality.

Probably the main authors of the conspiracy are unknown, but in the future, they will be identified. In the meantime, the Community knows very well some names of State agents and media agents who played an important role in that plan, even if possibly used by third parties to carry out the objectionable acts that each practised and that are amply proved.

The magnitude of the offence produced against the Oporto Jewish Community and its religious and secular leaders cannot be measured in words. There was even concern that an alleged assassination attempt was made on a young French student who headed a student petition to urge the Assembly of the Republic to make a presentation on “Operation Open Door” in the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of Portuguese Democracy.

Throughout the entire year of 2022, spared from the demolishing attack, in an unbelievably ostensive way, and without at any moment expressing solidarity with her persecuted sister, on the contrary, the Lisbon Jewish Community, which essentially certified non-Jews (alleged descendants of the allegedly Jewish victims of the Inquisition, of which Father Jesus from Colombia, with CIL certificate no. 1060/2016, was merely an example) continued, as in 2014, practically dead, immobilized, with aged and apathetic leaders, an empty Synagogue, a community devoid of *kosher* restaurants, of achdut centres or even museum and cultural facilities to work with the large numbers of youngsters in Portuguese schools. Nothing would justify the persecution of this honourable Community, but the way it was used and presented to the public – the symbol of purity in contrast to the darkness of Oporto – was burlesque, a kind of satire between that angelic Father and the terrible Sephardim.

In order to understand the method that was used against the Jewish Community of Oporto, it is important to remember that the Soviet Union, despite its State atheism and rejection of the Jewish cosmopolitan element, avoided destroying all Synagogues and Jewish communities, lest it be accused of acting against the Jews and attracting bad international publicity. It maintained more than twenty Synagogues as partners of the regime, such as the great Synagogues of Moscow, Leningrado and Odessa, while destroying others. In Lvov, Jarkov, Tshernovitz, Bobruisk, Smolensk and hundreds of other cities, the Synagogue-communities with some strength were closed, one by one, always in the same way. It used the press and slanderers to associate the Synagogues with business deals. It described such business deals as immoral or illegal. It evoked negative reactions from a part of public opinion and some Jews and it sought the destruction of the respectability of these Jewish organizations as promoters of Jewish life.³⁶

Ari Benami, deeply knowledgeable about Soviet Judaism, noted a curious point about the communist regime’s treacherous use of conflict at the heart of the different Jewish communities, with disputes in their midst, or even internal conflict at the heart of each community, as is the case in all human societies and in particular in the Jewish world, for thousands of years populated with individual and collective disagreements:

*As usual in Synagogues, rivalries and disputes arose around positions and honours, which the authorities encouraged, sometimes inviting individuals or groups to ‘tell all’ about rivals. In the Soviet press, the ‘note’ is a sharp and cruel weapon in the hands of the local or central authority. It is often used to disqualify or destroy people or groups that, in the opinion of the authority, deserve to be excised. The ‘note’ publishes the authentic names of the persons concerned. Woe to the individual or institution if the author has an aversion to them.*³⁷

³⁶ Ari Benami, “Entre a Foice e o Martelo”, Bloch Editions, 1968, pp. 66-70.

³⁷ “Entre a Foice e o Martelo”, pp. 67-68.

The author continues:

Aroused by the series of articles about the Synagogue, letters addressed to the newspaper editor began to appear. Suddenly, young and old Jews were being led by these articles to express their negative opinions aloud. (...) Sometimes, the Synagogue, with its “illegal” activity, is incorporated by authority into spectacular trials, in particular since trials on economic crimes began.³⁸

To return to Portugal and to the persecution carried out against the Jewish Community of Oporto and everything that it represented in terms of Jewish strength. It is worth underlining that the “notes” in the main newspapers and television channels, promoted by Parliament and the Ministry of Justice agents, revolved always, totally irresponsibly and unscrupulously, around the alleged gossip by alleged members of the Jewish Community of Lisbon, and three “anonymous” Portuguese who had long ago been expelled from CIP/CJP (all of them “converted” to Judaism, including one man convicted of defamation and for alleging that non-Jews are “shit”, an individual who had spent time in psychiatric hospitals, and an instrument of an Israeli proselytizing organization linked to fake conversions and journalistic corruption), who repeated the vile feat of the Marranos who had falsely denounced Captain Barros Basto. History is full of despicable slanderers that States use when it suits them. The Inquisition also did so to the letter.

There is another aspect that deeply touched the hearts of Oporto Jews. It was very sad that Portuguese society impassively watched the successive *autos-de-fé* perpetrated by teams of State agents, media professionals and delinquents on the members of the Jewish Community of Oporto and the Jews of Sephardic origin it had certified. Nobody stood up in protest. The Community painfully witnessed the flight of many Portuguese partners who had cooperated with it for many years, people and organisations, believed to be faithful, but who did not want to be associated with the “crimes” of which the media spoke and in the public communications from the authorities.

Antisemitism is not always an active process, but rather, increasingly across Europe, a deliberate failure to protect Jews when they, or some of them, most need it. Among the minorities to be protected are gays, transgenders, blacks, gypsies, migrants, residents of social housing, prisoners, the disabled, women, and minors, but never Jews, who are seen as tyrannical bosses. Jews don't count.

In the words of David Baddiel,

If you believe even a little bit that Jews are rich, privileged, powerful and secretly in control of the world... well, then you can't include them in the sacred circle of the oppressed. There are even those who can say that they belong to the accursed circle of oppressors. (...) The reason why activists on the extreme right and the progressive left can unite around this idea of resisting secret, mythical and sacrosanct rulers is that both like to see themselves as rebels, fighting against power. And Jews, uniquely among minorities in the West, are associated with power.³⁹

The persecution against the Jewish Community of Oporto, especially in the first six months of 2022, based on a toxic discourse associated with oligarchies in Russia in the midst of war, benefited from the almost total paralysis of the Jewish world, unfortunately

³⁸ “Entre a Foice e o Martelo”, pp. 70-71.

³⁹ David Baddiel, “Os Judeus Não Contam”, Vogais, Lisbon, 2022, pp. 25-28.

populated by ineffective organizations, frozen in time, pursuing realities that were extinct in 1945. They are hand in hand with the agents of modern antisemitism rooted in realities such as traditional anti-Judaism, anti-Jewish success and anti-Israelism.

The State of Israel witnessed the public humiliation of some of its most prominent citizens in the fields of innovation, entrepreneurship, entertainment, security, sports, service to the public cause and social philanthropy in the Portuguese media, based on slander and strategic leaks from the police investigation. Honest Israeli families from Europe, Eurasia, Asia and America were treated daily, for months, with serious insinuations of fraud in obtaining Portuguese citizenship, in speech riddled with terms such as serious criminality, ill-explained fortunes, bribes, Mossad, cannabis, law firms, tricks using Wikipedia and other similar offences. There was no reaction from Israel, which has a moral duty to defend its fellow Jews around the world. Total impunity hovered and still hovers over the authors of the commissioned news stories and over those responsible for the devastating action of the police, who acted without any incriminating evidence, without any technical knowledge of the Jewish civilization under scrutiny and without any prior investigation of the Jewish Community of Oporto, highly organized and with members from thirty nations, a true spiritual and cultural powerhouse. The end result can only be a disaster for Portugal.

Throughout the year, the Israeli Embassy in Lisbon maintained diplomatic relations and friendly meetings with Portuguese public figures who, in reality, were involved in the conspiracy and who saw in so much institutional esteem a green light to continue the attack, which they and their friends did, heatedly, while at the same time promising that the Portuguese Prime Minister would visit Israel soon. That visit did not take place. At the end of 2022, there were two votes by Portugal at the UN against Israel. One was for a motion to force the State to destroy its nuclear deterrent weapons and another for the court in The Hague to issue a legal opinion regarding *“law, discriminatory measures and the prolonged occupation, colonization and annexation of Palestinian territory by Israel”*, including the Temple Mount.

The Jewish News Syndicate (the fastest growing news agency covering Israel and the Jewish world), the European Jewish Association (an organization representing communities from Portugal to Ukraine), B'tsalmo (a Jewish human rights organization) and individuals like the courageous journalists Miriam Assor and Gabriela Cantergi were honourable exceptions in their uncompromising defence of the Jewish Community of Oporto and its members from dozens of nations and the Jewish people in general.

How was all this possible in Portugal, which was considered Europe's best example in terms of the absence of antisemitism? The answer is simple. There was no antisemitism as long as there were no Jews in considerable numbers and little visibility.

In 2014, around 300 Jews lived in Lisbon, 100 in Oporto and perhaps 200 in the rest of the country. Most Jews were assimilated and disinterested. It was an invisible community. There were no manifestations of antisemitism in the form of anti-Judaism, anti-Israelism and anti-Jewish success, but there was no lack of a pronounced anti-Jewish spirit among the population. In an opinion poll carried out by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in Portugal, it was estimated that there were at least 1.8 million Portuguese with the following antisemitic sentiments: Jews only care about themselves (26%), Jews consider themselves better than others (21%), Jews are hated due to their behaviour (25%), Jews are very powerful (43%), Jews are influential in financial markets (43%), Jews control world affairs (21%), Jews control

the US Government (23%), Jews control the media (17%), Jews are responsible for most wars (15%), Jews are more loyal to Israel than Portugal (56%), Jews talk too much about the Holocaust (49%), Jews exaggerate the death toll (10%) and the Holocaust is a myth (1%).

The legislation that, between 2013 and 2015, was published by romantic, well-meaning politicians and, it should be said, statesmen with a true sense of State, from various parties, had very positive effects, namely the growth of the Portuguese Jewish community in general, and of the Oporto community in particular, in diverse religious, cultural and educational areas. The immediate result, of course, was an impressive increase, in the online world, of negative posts, comments and malicious shares against “the Jews” as a religious and social group, of vandalism, of stoning the windows of the Oporto Synagogue, the throwing of red paint onto the mezuzah of a family from Oporto, physical coercion of entire Jewish families and, when offenses to the physical integrity of members of the community were expected, Soviet antisemitism perpetrated by State agents took place.

“Operation Open Door” (by break-in in at least three cases) repeated everything that history records with regard to the persecution of the Jewish community and, deliberately or not, is associated with a real criminal association that tried to eliminate a young Jew with a serious car accident and made use of expert thieves, individuals with psychoses, sentenced for defamation, specialists in the civic murder of fellow citizens, an extortionist posing as a genealogist (whose services the CIP/CJP had rejected as useless), professional slanderers that Judaism equates with leprosy, and other extras who will be recorded in history through appropriate means.

As for the other “criminal association”, the famous one, the one that was talked about on television, the one that was pursued by all the powers of the State in league with each other, that supposedly corrupted Register Offices and trafficked passports in exchange for monetary values, this one died before being born. The Community officially decrees the end of the regrettable process that was only possible with great State corruption. New inventions are expected, new indictments, which will come late, very late, as happened in the case of the “Portuguese Dreyfus”, the founder of the Jewish Community of Oporto, a target of shameful last-minute improvisations, after the State tried to use the rabble of society and the crimes that were in fashion to destroy him and the Community he presided over.

There are few religious, cultural and philanthropic organisations whose story is recorded in book form. This chapter represents the timeline of the last 100 years of the Jews in the city of Oporto, based on the history of the CIP/CJP association.

The Jewish community in Oporto has the Jewish world as a whole at its core: Sephardim and *Ashkenazim*. In the words of Kadmi-Kohen, “*from an ethnic point of view, two kinds of Jews are usually identified: those of the Portuguese branch and those of the German branch*”.⁴⁰

The research now presented, while limited by lack of time and resources, is merely a starting point for future investigations and should serve as a guideline for all those who conduct the destinies of this Community in the future.

1923

At this time the Oporto Jewish community consisted of Rabbi Chaim Sorin, together with Leon Sorin, Menasseh Knikinsky Bendov, Meir Knikinsky, Tobias Stern, Armand Halpern, David Halpern, Hoshea Roskin, Abicin Schuman, Haim Bronstein, Yitchok Yanovsky, Shepsl Yanovsky, Herschel Yanovsky, Ezra Bronstein, Ber Levithin, Abraham Lieberman and Gregoy Goold, many of them heads of family. They had all been born in central and eastern Europe and now engaged in small-time commercial activities in the city of Oporto.

The acceptance of a Portuguese Jewish family headed by a vigorous and intelligent army officer within the *Ashkenazi* families altered the way the extremely discreet way of life of the Jewish community in Oporto, traumatised as they were by the persecutions against the Jews they had experienced in their home countries.

Captain Barros Basto was an army officer who, following a difficult process lasting thirteen years, had converted to Judaism, a conversion approved by the *Beit Din* of Tangiers, Morocco, with the positive recommendations of the Jewish Community of Lisbon (through its president, Moses Amzalak). He married a Jewish woman from the Lisbon community, with whom he had two children.

Barros Basto was a brave man who feared very little. He had been decorated many times for acts of bravery during World War I, where he risked his life at the battle front, and survived, although with after effects, a poison gas attack.

Rising above the introverted nature of his brothers in the faith of Central and Eastern Europe, Barros Basto convinced them to set up an association similar to the Lisbon “Community” and was successful. The association was registered with the Civil Government on 1 August. The headquarters of the new official Community of Oporto and the small Synagogue were on Rua Elias Garcia. Statutory aims of the organisation: the practice of Judaism, the spread of Jewish culture and aid to its brothers in the faith.

Therefore, the Jewish Community of Oporto (CIP) was born in the shadow of the foreign community of Jews in this city and it was led by the Portuguese army officer, who had the qualities and knowledge required to ensure its regulatory legality and sustained development.

⁴⁰ Kadmi-Cohen, “Nomades - Essai Sur l'Ame Juive”, Paris, 1929, p. 129.

The Rabbi, Chaim Sorin, and Menasseh Knikinsky Bendov would be responsible for the community's religious supervision, while the Portuguese army officer would "captain" organisational matters and the spread of Hebrew culture.

1924

Captain Barros Basto worked very hard on the project of the Jewish Community of Oporto. With the agreement of his peers, he affixed the Community motto to the Board of Directors' official documents ("Adonai li, velo irá", ie God is with me and I shall not fear), started a collection to acquire a Sefer Torah, stated the need to investigate whether there were other foreign Jews in the city, created a school for children and, finally, set up a Portuguese language course for adults who spoke only Yiddish, German and Russian.

To carry out the statutory aims of the Jewish Community of Oporto, five sections were created: "Red Shield", to help hospitals, "Jewish Teaching" to create schools, "Jewish Religion", to teach religion, "Workers' Patronage", to provide assistance through labour, and "Eternal Rest", to care for the dead. The intentions could not have been better, however, there were not enough people or even any individual interest on their part, in such great accomplishments.

Although the Jewish community of Oporto, except for Barros Basto, his wife and children, was *Ashkenazi*, a directive of the board established the Sephardic rite as the "official rite", better suited to the history of a city where a dynamic, powerful and numerous Jewish community had once lived.

The *Ashkenazi* Jews in the community – Belarusian, Russian, Polish, Lithuanian, German and others - may in principle, i.e., on paper, have accepted this new "rite", convinced that the Portuguese State might look kindly on the inclusion of the Portuguese tradition in the religious rites of that organised Jewish community, but it is the way of the world that they never intended or indeed even attempted to reconfigure their religious and family tradition as a bloc. It would have been quite unheard of for those familiar with the Jewish reality.

The rigid *Ashkenazi* tradition prevented any change of rite from being possible, just as a community of Sephardic Jews would be unable or unwilling to start using the East European rite, from one moment to the next.

1925

The community left the Synagogue in Rua Elias Garcia. The new premises were now on Rua do Bonjardim, having moved a few months later to Rua Fernandes Tomás. It was here, on 15 Av, the happiest day of the Jewish calendar, that the first Jewish marriage known took place in Oporto after the Edict of King D. Manuel. Given the presence of Jews in this city since the official abolition of the Inquisition, there may well have been, and no doubt were, many earlier marriages. However, there is no historical memory, or indeed any record, of them.

On this day, Menasseh Bendov married his niece Branca Roskin. We can only imagine the explosion of joy and the emotional moments surrounding such a marked event, considering also Menasseh's religious role in CIP.

A young Portuguese called Eduardo d'Almeida appeared before the Captain. He was a baptised Christian who wished to convert to Judaism without even claiming any alleged Jewish origins but merely his individual desire. He was a common citizen whom neither the Oporto nor the Lisbon community could help, as there was no Rabbinical tribunal with Halachic credibility to do so.

It is hard to know what went through Barros Basto's mind. Thinking with his heart and taking advantage of the lack of opposition from his peers, he decided to "convert" the young man at one stroke (immediately accepting his registration at CIP, "milah being performed on the applicant with the respective ceremonial", according to the respective minutes of the Board), with no Rabbinical tribunal, no preparation on the part of the candidate, no *kosher mikvah*, nothing. We do not know what Rabbi Chaim Sorin thought and said about this extremely delicate subject, in which he appears not to have been involved. The brit milah was performed on Eduardo and he was given a Jewish name. That was all.

It was in this context that the Captain became aware of the existence in Oporto of descendants of the Jews who had fallen victim to D. Manuel's Edict of Expulsion. They originated from Trás-os-Montes and the Beira provinces and practiced neither Judaism nor Catholicism but Marranism, a mix of the two religions. The Marranos stated that they were Jewish, but the Jewish law denied them Judaism. There were no guarantees that they were descended on their matrilineal side from the 1497 "conversos", for there were no documentary records of centuries of marriages. Indeed, it would be impossible to reliably obtain such records. It is also true that forced or voluntary links with the gentiles have always been part of Jewish history and it would be impossible to show that these had not occurred in the Marrano communities.

The Marranos, whose matrilineal genealogy was unknown, thus at one stroke closing the door to their acceptance as Jews, had formed their own thinking on the rigours of the Inquisition and its aftermath. They had a dual aspect. On the one hand, they prayed to Adonai, honoured Moses, chose their spouses from within their own family, claimed that the Inquisition was still in existence, lit their lamps before the *Sabbath* and fulfilled obligations inspired on Yom Kippur and the Jewish Passover. On the other, however, the men were not circumcised, they ate pork, were immersed in Christian practices, went to church, knew the litany, took Communion, baptised their children, had their family members buried by Catholic priests under Christian crosses and were unaware of the existence of Rabbis, the rituals of animal slaughter or of *mikvah*. Given the above, the religious status and the religion of the Marranos was but one: Marranism.

It was necessary to formally convert the Marranos to Judaism to dispel the terrible doubts about their individual genealogies and at the same time to rectify their link to Catholicism. According to the Shulchan Aruch, if not undergoing conversion pure and simple, the Marranos should at least undergo some form of simplified conversion, to include among others, brit milah for the men, basic teachings, the requisite immersion in the *mikvah* and acceptance of the *mitzvot* before a qualified *Beit Din*⁴¹.

⁴¹ "Shulchan Arush", Anotações de Rama, Yore Dea, Ch. 268, 12.

Chaim Sorin, the first known Rabbi of the modern Jewish community in Oporto, departed for Lisbon and during the Second World War left for the United States of America. He may have decided to leave for commercial reasons, although it is also possible that issues relating to Jewish life may have played a part in his decision.

To understand the imposition of the official Sephardic rite at CIP, mainly made up of *Ashkenazi* Jews, it is important to quote from a letter written ten years later by Barros Basto to the military tribunal:

I thought one day about carrying out the following plan: to once again link Portugal to the Portuguese rite communities throughout the world (which would be useful for Portugal) and achieve that by establishing the old Chief Rabbinate of Portugal, which would be no less important internationally than the Catholic Patriarchy of the Indias. I made several contacts to this end of creating a Chief Rabbinate of Portugal, discussed the matter with [the then President of the Jewish Community of Lisbon] Dr. Amzalak, who was himself able to achieve the following: The important Jewish community of Gibraltar would accept the spiritual guidance of that Chief Rabbi and contribute in material terms to the worthy upkeep of the Rabbinate. Lisbon would also contribute and so should Oporto. The Oporto community was also poor, but a second plan would provide financial means and help towards the great objective envisaged. Since the forced conversion of Jews in the time of D. Manuel, during the Inquisition persecutions and to this day there were and continue to be New Christians who secretly practice Jewish rites. There are many thousands of these crypto-Jews or Marranos in Trás-os-Montes and the Beira provinces, who traditionally practice a bastardised version of Judaism, filled with superstition, in the secrecy of their families. Revealing the existence of such individuals, descended from the martyrs of the Inquisition, to the Jewish world of Portuguese origin which, despite centuries-old persecution, had remained faithful to the religious traditions of their forefathers would naturally cause surprise in such Jewish places linked by ties of blood and faith to these crypto-Jews. The first community to answer this call was the Portuguese community of London...

The subject of the Marranos became famous and aroused heated debate within the Jewish world. Both abroad and in the heart of the Jewish communities of Lisbon and Oporto many upheld that the Marranos had forever been lost to the Jewish people. Others said that they could and should be saved by converting to Judaism.

The famous Jewish historian, journalist and lawyer, Lucien Wolf, was sent by the Anglo-Jewish Association, the Alliance Israélite Universelle and by the Spanish & Portuguese Jews' Congregation of London to visit Portugal and examine this question of the Marranos, about which the Jewish world was deeply divided.

Lucien Wolf wrote a report advocating the international Jewish community's intervention in and support for the Marrano cause. In exchange, the "Jewish Chronicle" of London voiced the opposition of those in the Jewish world who were against this project of rescuing the Portuguese Marranos while at the same time neglecting the progressive assimilation of thousands of English Jews. "In this case [of the assimilated English Jews], *Marranism is evident, indubitably evident*".⁴²

⁴² "Jewish Chronicle", 30 April 1926.

Following Wolf's visit to Portugal, a Portuguese Marranos Committee was set up in London with the aim of supporting the Rescue Work, which the Captain was willing to achieve under the aegis of the Jewish Community of Oporto, the Portuguese Jewish organisation that was geographically closer to most of the Marrano communities.

Paul Goodman was appointed Secretary-General of the London committee. For twenty years Goodman conducted from London the works of the "Rescue Work" taking place in about thirty "Marrano communities" in the municipalities of Amarante (Rebordelo and Travanca), Armamar (Vila Seca), Belmonte, Bragança, Chaves, Covilhã, Guarda, Idanha-a-Nova, Macedo de Cavaleiros, Meda, Valpaços, Vila Nova de Foz-Côa (Cedovim), Vila Real, Pinhel, Vila Flor, Vimioso (Argozelo, Carção, Caçarelhos) and Vinhais.

Before leaving for these places Captain Barros Basto received the first Marranos at CIP, acting towards them all as if he had discovered the secret for immediate conversion to Judaism: a trip to the infirmary and the attribution of a Hebrew name. Imagine the amazement of the *Ashkenazi* Jews in the face of all this.

According to Rabbi Tubia Hod, grandson of Menasseh Knikinsky Bendov, "Barros Basto acted on the principle that the Marranos were matrilineal Jews, an argument that on the whole was accepted by his peers". That might be the key to this mystery, despite the many reservations imposed by Halachah, as mentioned above. However, there are still doubts surrounding the case of the converts, simple candidates for conversion to Judaism, whom the Captain treated as he did the Marranos. It is quite likely that the *Ashkenazim* did not know, and in fact never knew, that numbering among the recent Portuguese arrivals were plain converts, with no known Jewish origins, such as the above-mentioned Eduardo d'Almeida.

The arrival of these Portuguese citizens began to divide the Jewish community in Oporto, during religious services. Tubia Hod explains that "including the Portuguese [i.e., Marranos and converts] for *minyan* depended on the opinion of the actual *Ashkenazi* members present in the room and the arguments among them", for not all of them accepted the instant conversions that these people had experienced.

Meanwhile, Gomes da Costa, an army general, instituted a dictatorship to end the political chaos at that time. One of the first acts of his government was to establish press censorship, which mixed serious issues with totally absurd subjects. Captain Barros Basto was on the recently formed Press Censorship Commission.

1927

The conversions carried out by Barros Basto were not only controversial in the city of Oporto but extended to the capital. As commented by the Board of the Jewish Community of Lisbon: "*While Abraham Levy protests against the «circumcision of New Christians»*" [the term used to describe the Marranos], because "*we have no religious authority that will take responsibility for such deeds*", and Samuel Sorin considers that the community being formed in Oporto is "*a sect, for the prayers he saw did not satisfy him as they were flawed in terms of the traditional orthodox rite*", Moses Bensabat Amzalak, president of the Lisbon Jewish Community (CIL), Samuel Schwarz and Adolfo Benarus have a broader and more favourable view of the movement. In particular, Professor Amzalak advocates that New Christians should be circumcised, arguing that "*in the case of crypto-Jews joining the heart of Judaism the Reverend Jacob Meir, Chief Rabbi of Palestine, had once been consulted and was*

*openly in favour of such crypto-Jews joining, provided it was proved that they descended from our ancient brothers forced to accept Christianity to escape persecution”.*⁴³

In fact, three years earlier, CIL had consulted Chief Rabbi Jacob Meir, but the statement of this religious leader had been based on a false premise – the certainty of the Marranos’ Jewish origin through matrilineal descent – and neglected their strong link to Christianity. The Marranos were people whose genealogy was unknown and who engaged in many heretical practices in the light of official Judaism. Hence, they could not be Jews, that is, they could not be considered “crypto-Jews”, a word that might rightly designate the first converts after the Edict but never their descendants, much less those who reached the 20th century, in view of the latter’s extreme difficulty in accepting Judaism, for it invaded the sacred area of their specific conscience, mentality, identity and culture.

In any case, all alone and with incredible tenacity, Captain Barros Basto set in motion an attempt to rescue the Marranos, to the observance of the *mitzvot* (Jewish religious duties), causing huge sentimental impact on Jewish communities the world over. He visited villages, sometimes on horseback, a distinguished figure in his uniform, with no fear of the local authorities. Very soon, he began to think that it might be useful to build a monumental Synagogue to rival the best Christian churches in majesty, grandeur and beauty.

*To most Jewish intellectuals and to the Jewish communities worldwide, which took an active interest in this phenomenon, the image depicted was that of a multitude of Portuguese descended from Jews who were forcibly converted to Christianity four centuries ago, who had remained secretly faithful to their ancestors’ religion. Now that freedom of worship had been established in their country, they asked to be accepted in the Synagogue, having chosen a brave officer of the Portuguese Army to head the movement.*⁴⁴

Things were never that romantic. Despite the Captain’s commitment, there was little receptivity for the “Rescue Work” on the part of the Marranos. Those to whom the rescue was addressed were not willing to amend their centuries-old practices, give up their chazanot (the female cantors and women Rabbis who were the guardians of tradition) or indeed add anything at all to what they already did.

Had the Marrano community at the time with its thousands of people have wished to adhere to the rescue project, that is to the *mitzvot*, “It would hardly be surprising if it had adopted official Judaism under the guidance of Captain Barros Basto. The reality was quite different, however. Most of them continued as before, while a few, not always the most enlightened, accepted change, seen also as a change of conscience”.⁴⁵

When “Ha-Lapid”, CIP’s official newspaper, began to be published, the Marranos were informed that “All those of Jewish descent who get this newspaper should obtain instructions from the Jewish Community of Oporto on any matter concerning Judaism” (“Ha-Lapid” n° 24). Requests to subscribe to this small periodical came in from all over the world, but mainly from towns in Portugal and Brazil.

The Jewish Community of Oporto had now an official newspaper, a department providing assistance to the Marranos and an objective plan to organise the Marrano communities in

⁴³ Minutes of CIL Committee sessions, 21 April and 27 October 1927.

⁴⁴ Inácio Steinhardt, *Elvira Mea*, “Ben-Rosh”, Afrontamento, 1997, p. 248.

⁴⁵ David Augusto Canelo, “Belmonte - Judaísmo e Criptojudaísmo”, Belmonte, 2001, p. 97.

other places. It was the organisational base of the expeditions undertaken to seek out and try to rescue Marranos born and bred in places that for centuries had been immersed in the Christian spirit that shone forth from its churches and chapels.

1928

It has already been said that in order to create a Chief Rabbinate of Portugal, Captain Barros Basto, a Jew who had started from nothing and achieved great things, had seized on the pretext of the Marranos. This pretext would be transformed into a project, an addiction and a death sentence, for instead of making use of his many strengths to enrich and strengthen the Jewish community of Oporto by attracting the vocations and the merits of Oporto's Jews to develop the *minyan*, the school, kashrut, Tzedakah and the organisation's social might, the officer became dependent on the Marranos and on a situation in which he had to answer to foreign organisations for the rest of his life.

Barros Basto wrote to the London Marranos Committee saying that he lacked assistance and that the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe were only good for *minyan*. He showed increasing distance from Judaism which in fact does depend on rites practiced by a quorum of at least ten men, on the study of the Torah, on *mikvah* and a number of Halachic details that the Marranos and converts (simple candidates for conversion to Judaism) neither respected nor desired.

The "Rescue Work" increasingly turned into a personal project of Captain Barros Basto. The Jewish Community of Oporto had become a proselytising station, causing astonishment in and indeed the protest of Portuguese churches, which had never gone so far in recruiting the faithful. In addition to Eduardo d'Almeida, the association already had about ten Portuguese citizens "converted" to Judaism on the day of their arrival.

It was with this background and the financial backing of the Portuguese Marranos Committee and of Baron Edmond de Rothschild from Paris, that the corporation known as the Jewish Community of Oporto bought a plot of land with 1.200 square metres on Rua Guerra Junqueiro in Oporto, to build the monumental new Synagogue.

1929

In the presence of Moses Amzalak, the president of the Jewish Community of Lisbon, the first stone of the Synagogue was laid. Inside, is an iron pipe with 18 coins (in Jewish tradition that is the numeric value of *chai*, i.e., life) and a parchment signed by the founders of the Jewish Community of Oporto with a welcoming message for future generations. There were then three Sefarim in the Synagogue (which in the meantime had moved to Rua 5 de Outubro): two were given by the Spanish & Portuguese Jews' Congregation of London and the third had been acquired by CIP in Antwerp.

Oporto welcomes the visit of historian Cecil Roth and the president of the Union of Sephardic Congregations, Rabbi David Sola Pool. The former describes the "Rescue Work" as "the most romantic adventure of the modern world", despite knowing that the Marranos were suspicious of official Judaism and of the London-headed movement of foreign authorities which wished to take down their simplistic religion that contained isolated,

unconnected fragments of the Law of Moses blended with significant Catholic practices. Many Marranos were unfamiliar with Latin characters, let alone Hebrew ones!

Although the Marranos were constantly advised to “*stay away from churches, even with the customary mental reservation*”⁴⁶, it was impossible to break with a tradition going back centuries. Marranism, a stand-alone religion, had been acquired in a rural culture-poor environment, where tradition plays a strong part, the Catholic priest inspires reverential fear and mentalities are strongly against radical change.

When he died, the father of one of the founders of the Covilhã community received the last rites and had a Christian burial. Barros Basto was furious:

*I cannot believe it. Such lack of character is incredible, or they were playing a dirty trick on me. From now on, I will be more cautious in my assistance to the crypto-Jews of Covilhã, for I am not interested in procuring aid for poor people calling themselves Jewish who, once on the receiving end of such aid, manifest themselves in public acts as Catholics, or perhaps they would rather I contracted a Catholic priest to provide public religious assistance to these people!*⁴⁷

Mordechai Van Son, a chemical engineer from Holland, visited Oporto and offered to obtain subsidies to contract a Rabbi of Portuguese origin in Salonika. The proposal was welcomed. The Rabbi would be better able to conduct the “Rescue Work”. Indeed, that same year saw the start of the operations of the Jewish Theological Institute of Oporto (Yeshiva Rosh Pina), its aim being to try to train officiants, chazanim and Rabbis.

The institute was not only open to young Marranos.

*The news that there was a school in Oporto that provided high quality teaching including free boarding, attracted several young men who claimed all they wanted was to become Jewish, with very hazy allusions to the existence of converted among their ancestors. Barros Basto never inquired too thoroughly into these matters.*⁴⁸

The misunderstandings were many. The students were not even validly converted to Judaism and yet they were studying to be Rabbis. The Institute’s regulations were quite literally “military” in nature, from “reveille” (7 am), to periods of prayer, meals and study, until “lights out” (10 pm)⁴⁹.

Barros Basto neglected the education of Marrano girls. Perhaps, he feared, and rightly so, that if they boarded he could be the target of backbiting and false sexual charges. However, if the girls converted validly to Judaism, they would ensure a line of Jewish children brought up in the Jewish faith. The fact is that women’s “conversions” were never considered, not even the instant ones marking that period at CIP.

To a large extent, the Marranos came from the lower echelons of society, lacking prestige and status, although there were others, as well.

There are two types of Marranos”, wrote Barros Basto, “rural ones (small tradesmen, workers, peasants), good people but grown-up, ignorant children, open to all impressions; and the burghers, resident in towns or cities (doctors, officials,

⁴⁶ “Ha-Lapid”, n° 24.

⁴⁷ CIP/CJP Archive.

⁴⁸ “Ben-Rosh”, p. 118.

⁴⁹ CIP/CJP Archive.

*civil servants, property owners and tradesmen), who are virtually assimilated. Some measure of proselytism is required with these. They are invaluable to us because they are more cultured, richer, and tomorrow will constitute the bases of future communities and act as their guides*⁵⁰.

As the great patriot that he was, the captain wished to make the Marranos and the converts a proud people – the Portuguese people! – with their incredibly engaging and valorous history throughout the world. As usual, he *“was not particularly drawn to proving the candidates’ Marrano origin, accepting in good faith anyone with the potential to absorb religious teachings so as to propagate them later in the Marrano milieu”*⁵¹.

In the following years, the Institute accepted 83 students. Two of them, Samuel Rodrigues and Norberto Moreno, became chazanim and were given responsible duties within the Jewish Community of Oporto, despite the fact that their inclusion for purposes of *minyán* in the Synagogue depended, as mentioned above, on the halachic sensitivity of particular *Ashkenazi* members present in the prayer room on any given day.

Whatever mistakes may have been made, Barros Basto’s work and that of the Portuguese Marranos Committee was absolutely colossal and ground-breaking. Thus, far, nothing similar have ever been attempted in any country in the world. All alone, the Captain tracked down clusters of populations hitherto unknown or even registered in any form. He went looking for Marranos in the farthest corners of Portugal, setting up official communities, establishing Synagogues in the villages, translating into Portuguese many texts of Jewish liturgy and literature, as well as procuring funds for the construction of a Synagogue as a symbol aimed fundamentally at the people who, as a matter of fact, actually lived hundreds of kilometres away.

1930

The Synagogue and the yeshiva moved permanently to Rua Guerra Junqueiro as soon as the front block was completed. A Synagogue great in size and beauty, symbolising the rescue of the Marranos and the power of the Jews in the world. As the majestic building was being erected, a contemporary journalist observed that “a piece of Palestine” was being planted in the heart of Oporto.

The enthusiasm of historians, liberal Jews and others passionate about the Marranos collided with the specific particularity of Marranism and with unsurmountable issues regarding Halacha, not easily resolved. The first official conversions to Judaism were taking their time to occur and it seemed that it was no longer anyone’s concern.

The community newspaper described Marranos as those descended from Jews *“who are shackled by their ignorance of official Judaism”*⁵². In one of the many episodes that exhausted Barros Basto’s patience, the president of the Marrano community of Covilhã wrote to the captain to complain about the Pole Samuel Schwartz (the man who had officially discovered the Belmonte Marranos in 1915) who, before the entire Marrano community of Covilhã, made an apologia for Jesus Christ, calling him *“a great prophet and a great man of his time”*. He also applauded the speech of a Marrano who was present

⁵⁰ Isabel Lopes Archive.

⁵¹ “Ben-Rosh”, p. 118.

⁵² “Ha-Lapid”, nº 35.

who “exalted the name of Christ to the highest place, for he was the best and wisest prophet who ever existed”⁵³.

Mordechai Van Son was responsible for setting up the Nederlandsche Marranen Comité in Amsterdam with the declared object of providing Oporto with a Rabbi, who would become “Chief Rabbi of Portugal”. This intention immediately created much friction with the Portuguese Marranos Committee of London, and appeared to coincide, or perhaps not, with Barros Basto’s key project.

1931

On Van Son’s instructions, Rabbi Baruch Ben Jacob of Salonika arrived in Portugal to assess the situation of the Marranos. While on a visit to the Bragança community of Marranos with Barros Basto, he entered a Synagogue and immediately set eyes on a book of “history and moral” of the Catholic Church. He approached the Ehal and saw that it was covered in flowers, like altars in church. Even the cover (mapah) of the Sefer Torah was covered in flowers.

Although touched by the singing of the prayer women, the Rabbi underlined that everything must change and came into conflict with Captain Barros Basto, thus precluding any future solution. Consequently, another Rabbi, Jacob Shebabo, had to travel to Oporto.

Also, Van Son travelled to Oporto at the same time and disapproved of everything he saw. In his opinion, there should be no more than five students, who should be selected based on their intelligence, health and vocation. They should also scrupulously observe the *Sabbath* and *kashrut*. He also defended transferring religious teaching to Rabbi Jacob Shebabo, with Barros Basto taking on other tasks.

*If such conditions are not met, the Committee will not only withdraw its support from Oporto but will focus on creating a temporary school in Lisbon, open to boys and girls, and headed by the local community*⁵⁴.

Given his disagreements with the captain, Van Son sends Rabbi Shebabo to Bragança and suggests to London that the Theological Institute should be closed, for he believes it is doomed to failure. He claimed that Barros Basto was not a Rabbi, but a converted Jew whose observance of religious obligations was poor, which meant that he was not sufficiently qualified to “rescue” the Marranos to the *mitzvot*, corroborating the murderous opinion promoted by Catholic newspapers for almost a decade: “The president [of CIP] is a distinguished teacher, more of a philosopher and a pantheist than a religious Jew, with the aggravation that he was once a revolutionary”⁵⁵.

1932

Rabbi Jacob Shebabo became leader of the Marrano community of Bragança. Had there been any doubts concerning the Marranos’ relation with Rabbis, these were quickly

⁵³ CIP/CJP Archive.

⁵⁴ “Ben-Rosh”, p. 130.

⁵⁵ “A Voz”, 25 March 1938.

dispelled. The Rabbi was completely disregarded and had to leave the country, for the Marranos would not agree to the Synagogues replacing the homes of the prayer women, to Hebrew words replacing those they had learnt from their grandmothers, to unfamiliar feasts bringing an end to their centuries-old feasts and, finally, that their entire life in terms of worship, bed and board, should change.

In the words of Arnold Diesendruck, it was all quite clear and objective:

The Marranos wished to remain apart from the Jewish mainstream, as a group of 'mudeus' [a mix of Marrano and judeu, or Jew], with their ancient beliefs strongly tempered by 500 years of Christianity and with no connections to traditional Judaism, however liberal that might be. And this was not acceptable to Judaism⁵⁶.

It was indeed unacceptable. In any case, the cultural relevance of the Marrano issue is unquestionable. As the person responsible for promoting Jewish culture at CIP, the Captain did not rest on his laurels and carried out remarkable work which, as we have seen, went over and above researching, writing and recording.

In Oporto, the "Order of the Jewish Message of the Rescue" is instituted before the Synagogue Ehal. A beautiful ceremony in which the students Joaquim Abrantes, Daniel Teles and Samuel Rodrigues, all gentiles, all charged with missions of Jewish proselytism, took an oath. This caused Yakov Yanovsky, a Polish Jew in Lisbon, who had already lived in Oporto, to publish an article in the newspaper Der Moment proclaiming the complete failure of the "Rescue Work".

Barros Basto was crushed under the weight of obligations, solicitations and worries. To cap it all, he had been posted first to the Infantry Regiment in Évora, and later to Lamego, which further impaired his solitary efforts to convert to Judaism those people who, truth be told, had no wish to be converted, for they had their own religion.

1933

Edwin Edwards, of the Portuguese Marranos Committee, arrived in Oporto to observe the progress of work on the Synagogue and the development of the community. Posted in Lamego, Captain Barros Basto wrote a letter to Eduardo d'Almeida, instructing him to ensure that the room was filled with as many Marranos as possible and for Menasseh Knikinsky (or Menasseh Bendov) not to intervene in the service, leaving everything in the hands of Samuel Rodrigues.

Concerning this episode Inácio Steinhardt and Elvira Mea found it odd that the captain did not mention the other *Ashkenazi* Jews, asking: "*What about the others? Were they not regular attendees at the Synagogue?*"⁵⁷.

The Lithuanian Menasseh Knikinsky was a close friend of Barros Basto. At great personal and professional sacrifice (he already had two daughters and sold pelts in Matosinhos) he helped him as much as he was able at the Theological Institute of Oporto. The other *Ashkenazim* were increasingly distanced from the Synagogue and in those days did not even attend religious services, for they did not understand the Halachic status of the Marranos

⁵⁶ Arnold Diesendruck, "Os Marranos, 1920-1950", 2000, p. 52.

⁵⁷ "Ben-Rosh", p. 147.

and the simple candidates for conversion to Judaism and these in turn did not cohabit peacefully with the Jewish reality, whatever it might be. Judaism was another world.

The conflicting feelings at that time were expressed in “Ha-Lapid” nº 64 (1934) by Eduardo d’Almeida, who said that every foreign Jew wishing to join the community “*must sign a declaration stating that he undertakes on his honour not to try in any way or at any time to change the rite in use by this community, which was organised for the Portuguese and consequently must always be ruled by the Portuguese or Sephardic rite*”, under pain of being “*dismissed from the aforementioned Community*”.

Meanwhile, Judah Cassuto, a German Sephardic Jew who had recently moved to Oporto, became the President of the Jewish Community of Oporto on the suggestion of Captain Barros Basto. The minutes of the respective General Meeting state that “*Captain Barros Basto took the floor and declared that he would not accept the candidacy for the presidency of the Mahamad [Board], indicating Mr. Judah Cassuto. The General Meeting wished Captain Barros Basto to continue as president and given his insistence on not accepting they agreed to his suggestion*”.

In September, two philanthropists from Hong Kong, Elly Kadoorie and his son Lawrence Kadoorie, visited the city of Oporto with a view to donating two thousand pounds sterling to complete the construction of the Synagogue. To this end, they required that the Synagogue should bear the family name in memory of the late Laura Mocatta Kadoorie (Elly’s wife and Lawrence’s mother), of Portuguese origin, who had died in a fire at their home in Shanghai. It was not their first project in Laura’s memory. The Kadoories had already set up a school for girls in Baghdad, a hospital in Istanbul and sundry charitable activities in Shanghai, London and other places.

According to later testimonies by the Mocatta-Kadoorie family, during the meetings they had in this city, the two philanthropists became aware of the existence of deep divisions within the community, the enormous size of the Synagogue for such an insignificant Jewish colony and, mainly, the absence of results of the “Rescue Work”, following so many years’ propaganda abroad. However, they stuck to their purpose, convinced that sooner or later the Synagogue would prove of use to the Jewish people, whose history is filled with trials and unexpected regenerations.

Work, at a cost of almost five thousand pounds that the Kadoorie family paid, recommenced on the Synagogue. At the centre of the façade of the Synagogue are the words: “Sinagoga Kadoorie 5694” (1933). To this day, the Synagogue is known to the Kadoorie family as the “Laura Kadoorie Synagogue”.

Meanwhile, with the advent of Nazism in Germany, the first refugees began arriving in Oporto. Such trains, their number increasing tremendously in the years to follow, came from all over Europe, but mainly from Hamburg.

When illegal, these refugees’ stay in Portugal led to detention, home searches and extraditions. If legal, they had to seek an independent activity for foreigners were forbidden from engaging in almost all the professions. That is why the family of Emil Oppenheim, a prominent German jurist, opened a laundry; one doctor became a chiropodist and others went into import and export activities, representing foreign products or became language teachers and nursery teachers.

On 1 August 1934, the Brazilian packet boat Ruy Barbosa, carrying about one hundred passengers, all Jews fleeing Germany, was shipwrecked in Oporto. By miracle, there were no victims among the passengers who were heading for Brazil, which they then proceeded to do by other means. It is not known if any of these passengers stayed on in Oporto with the Community or indeed if the latter helped in any way. No doubt this did happen, but it has not been documented. CIP was then facing very confused and negative times.

Barros Basto was an idealist who never could understand why the Law of Moses contemplated the sins of envy and language. He was never meticulous about selecting the members of the Jewish Community of Oporto but filled it with whoever came along.

I have organised the community in Oporto with the Jewish elements I was able to find without taking care to make a selection. It was like building a barracks and I accepted all those who would be soldiers.⁵⁸

Alfonso, Judah Cassuto's son, was now head of the Theological Institute where, over and above matters relating to teaching, things were not going well. Many poor children from country villages, pure of heart, whose parents had let them come to Oporto to board and acquire a free education, faced the rivalry of some of their peers as well as abuse and homosexual practices, making the Theological Institute of Oporto unworthy of respect. Created to form officiants, chazanim and rabbis, this institution had become home to a large number of delinquents.

An anonymous letter is sent to the Public Security Police, accusing Barros Basto of homosexual crimes committed on the students at the Institute. This serious charge made by the students Duarte Rebordão, Judah Lopes, Augusto Horta and Joaquim Abrantes, was worded so as to characterise the Captain as a violent homosexual who stopped at nothing to coerce the students of the Israeli Theological Institute of Oporto.

As soon as this charge became known in the community, and even before the identity of its authors was established, the Institute closed its doors and the students were sent back home. Empty rooms, tidy beds, no light, no life. There was a rumour that if this had not been done quickly, the Portuguese authorities would have closed the place as a “den of iniquity”.

It was the start of a terrible saga. Augusto Canelo rightly wrote:

Until 1934, the Captain managed to have a strict and strong hand on the tiller of the community's fate. But this year would mark a turning point and the start of his downfall⁵⁹.

1935

Menasseh Knikinsky chaired a commission set up within CIP to establish the origin of and reasons for the charge. As the commission would establish, “*It was a calumny raised by the Cassutos and by Miguel Vaz, with the intention of causing the Captain to lose the trust of the London Committee, which was expected to provide 300 contos [1500 Euros] to complete*

⁵⁸ Isabel Lopes Archive.

⁵⁹ “Belmonte – Judaísmo e Criptojudaísmo”, p. 85.

*the works of the Synagogue, and the Cassutos and Miguel Vaz would seize the money instead*⁶⁰.

According to the reports of the Portuguese Marranos Committee, and while police investigations were ongoing, Alfonso Cassuto wrote to Paul Goodman to say that he “*had become aware of the immoral acts carried out at the Synagogue*”, and that he “*had ceased being a member of CIP, which did not comply with the rules of the Jewish faith*”.

This singular missive immediately resulted in the Secretary-General of the London Committee travelling to Oporto. He made haste to try and find out more details from Cassuto and other Community members.

I appeared to be in the midst of gangsters in a melodrama, and these accusations seemed so unreal and fantastical that the whole story began to seem inconceivable to me.

The Marrano Miguel Vaz, once accepted within the organisation following an instant conversion and linked to many tales of madness, had become president of CIP on the promise of “cleaning the community” (i.e., get rid of Captain Barros Basto). He wrote in the minutes of the board that “*the only people who can become members of the community are those who fully prove their Jewish origin*”.

To his great frustration, Vaz had to resign the presidency following the arrival of Goodman, who was immediately charged with setting up a new board. This he did, choosing Marranos, proselytes and German and Polish Jews. Daniel Furriel, a Marrano, was appointed President. The other members of the board were Eduardo d’Almeida (proselyte), Albert Kiefe (German), Hans Warmbrun (German) and Nathan Beigel (Polish).

At the same time, it was decided that ownership of the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue should be registered on behalf of the Spanish & Portuguese Jews’ Congregation of London (which never actually happened) and Elly Kadoorie was chosen as honorary president of CIP, with Paul Goodman and Moses Amzalak serving as honorary vice-presidents.

In the meantime, the criminal charges against Barros Basto at the Public Security Police were closed, as the police considered that the charges were due to internal intrigue within the organisation. As Paul Goodman wrote, “*the Police had come to the definitive conclusion that the charges made against Captain Barros Basto by the four young men were due purely to intrigue. That was why the case went no further and collapsed completely*”⁶¹.

Daniel Furriel was dismissed and again Captain Barros Basto took his place as president. His first act was to try and dislodge a family living in the Synagogue at Miguel Vaz’s instigation. A rude, argumentative family of the lowest order that would do anything to denigrate the Community. In the end, the police had to evict these people.

One thing was very clear. Captain Barros Basto had suffered more from the character assassination perpetrated by the Jewish community than from Catholic or State antisemitism. The Board produced a disciplinary ruling indicating under what circumstances, from that time onwards, members of CIP should be expelled without further ado. The Community adopted the in-house name of “Kahal Kadosh Mekor Haim” (Font of Life Sacred Congregation). It was not long before a group of Institute alumni paid tribute to Captain Barros Basto, but the material and moral authors of the earlier charge did not give in easily and awaited a new opportunity.

⁶⁰ “Ben-Rosh”, p. 195.

⁶¹ “Ben-Rosh”, p. 174.

Similar in all respects to the previous one, another anonymous accusation is made against Barros Basto, this time addressed to the Army. The accusation ended with a savage question: *“Are army officers entitled to set up Jewish seminars that accept boys for purposes of engaging in pederasty?”*

This horrible charge was no more than the follow-on from the first, which had already been dismissed by the Public Security Police. This time, however, agents of the State seized the opportunity to carry out a full persecution case against Barros Basto to destroy him and the Jewish Community of Oporto, at whatever cost. CIP’s activity had been upsetting Portugal’s leading classes for some time, now. To destroy the Captain was to destroy the organisation, which would lose its helmsman and from then on would be restricted to a small group of *ashkenazim* who prayed together, no more.

On 15 July, the captain wrote to the military tribunal where the proceedings were held. He said that there was a plot against him within the organisation of the Jewish Community of Oporto. It was all the *“product of sick fancies of Freudian individuals”*, with *“dirty souls”*, he said, a reference to Jews from Hamburg (Cassuto family), Odessa (Bronstein family) and Amsterdam (Mordechai Van Son), who had organised some Marranos at the Institute, *“creating envy and grudges in the students who were not selected, and who had no vocation for the purpose in view”*⁶².

Life in the community suffered a huge setback. The *Ashkenazi* Jews did not even want to hear about the Synagogue, so emotionally weary were they, and the Rescue Work, which had always been in its difficult throes, was now at death’s door. If the accusers’ commitment had been to sentence the Rescue Work to death, in every respect and in every meaning they could not have done better or in such a short space of time, or even with a better system.

1937

The year was marked by Captain Barros Basto’s two trials, one criminal, one disciplinary. What was essentially at stake was the crime of homosexuality which, if proven, was punishable by criminal law, signifying his total dishonour before the religious Jewish world.

The testimonies of the young men summoned to appear before the military court are unfit for publication. They clearly demonstrate why it has never been lawful in any country to reproduce procedural documents in proceedings of a sexual nature, albeit based on falsehoods, given the violent effect on the accused. Words cannot describe the moral depravity of the whole thing.

In his defence, Barros Basto strongly attacked all those who had conspired to his civil death, accusing them of being motivated by material interests and the desire to halt the national project he had in hand, which was to connect Portugal to the Sephardic communities around the world.

At the trial, his accusers were discredited by the military tribunal and it is clear they were acting under orders. The panel of judges unanimously acquitted the captain of all his crimes, once the military prosecutor, Colonel Arnaldo de Oliveira, as representative of the law, acknowledged that there had been a conspiracy between people of low moral character. The echoes of this decision quickly reached Oporto.

⁶² Letter from Barros Basto to the Army.

Minutes of the General Meeting say the following about this ignominious crime:

Our esteemed President, Captain Barros Basto, was tried last 26 July at a military tribunal. Based on the action, his public defender, Captain Luís Pereira Ferreira, demonstrated that the principal movers behind the conspiracy were the Jews Van Son, Samuel Swartz, the family of Judas Leão Cassuto, his wife and son Alfonso Cassuto, Miguel António Vaz, the Bronstein family and two miserable former students of Catholic teaching institutions, António Duarte Rebordão and Joaquim Brito Abrantes.

Said Joaquim Brito Abrantes later admitted that “*if for any reason which I now do not know, I did or said anything against the Community or the Captain, I did so because I must have been misled or pressured to do so, never having acted of my own volition*”⁶³.

Neither was Cecil Roth, the famous historian, indifferent to all that had happened. He wrote that Alfonso Cassuto, “*of whom I had such high hopes, has turned perverse and pernicious, first by creating rival activities and then by instigating a persecution against Barros Basto, making serious accusations, which in the eyes of ignorant Portuguese acquired credibility, because of the circumcision procedure*”⁶⁴.

The agents of the State who wished to cause the civil assassination of Barros Basto did not give up. Although acquitted in the criminal proceedings, Captain Barros Basto was convicted in the disciplinary proceedings brought against him. It was a question of circumcision procedures in which he had participated, and the way he greeted the students. As per Act 16:963 of 15 June 1929, laying down “*separation from service*” for cases of immorality, the Army Disciplinary Council decreed that the plaintiff “*carried out the circumcision of a number of students according to a precept of the Jewish religion*”, and so was “*morally unsuited to the prestige of his office and the decorum of his uniform*”.

This decision was influenced by the Christian doctrine that moulded army morals, a pro-syllabus doctrine based on the ex-cathedra teachings of the Catholic Church and on the patently antisemitic determinations of former Councils, according to which each Catholic was bound to obedience, and which considered “*abominable circumcision*” to be “*an injury to the body*”⁶⁵.

For Arthur Barros Basto (an officer and a Jew), separation from service was like a death sentence in civilian life. He was removed from his duties; his career progression halted; he was forbidden to wear his uniform, badges and military insignia, and had to be forever subject to the army’s military discipline (i.e., his civilian life and his religious life had to be modelled by military regulations hostile to the most elementary Jewish precepts), on penalty of again being tried and convicted.

The decision against Barros Basto weakened him considerably and represented the institutional demise of CIP. From then on, and throughout the 20th century never again was there any record of association life, for notarial and tax purposes. The organisation was a phantom body, which existed, yet did not exist; indeed, the building of the Synagogue had not even been registered in full with the Property Registry Office. A sad case, indeed.

A few days after this army decision, the Jewish Community of Lisbon, headed by Moses Amzalak, and the Jewish-Marrano community of Lisbon, under Amílcar Lobo, paid official tribute to António de Oliveira Salazar. Many saw this tribute as the Jewish and Marrano

⁶³ Inácio Steinhardt Archive.

⁶⁴ “Ben-Rosh”, pp. 253-254.

⁶⁵ IV Council of Toledo, Canon LIX, Year 633.

communities turning their backs on Barros Basto. However, any person of good faith knew that the ultra-Catholic and antisemitic morality of the Portuguese army was centuries old and that the captain's main enemy had been neither Salazar nor the Church nor even the Army, rather the envy and slander of mediocre men within the Jewish world. A lesson for the future.

At the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue, those responsible did not go unpunished. Menasseh Bendov, who was very severe regarding character assassinations, presented a motion at the General Meeting of the Jewish Community of Oporto to proclaim a *herem*, which was unanimously approved.

*Considering that the Asriel Bronstein family, Judas Leão Cassuto, his wife and son, Miguel António Vaz, António Duarte Rebordão and Joaquim de Brito Abrantes jointly decided on the character assassination of our President [Captain Barros Basto] and to disgracefully discredit a Jewish institution; in compliance with the precepts of our sacred Torah, given to us by Moses, our master; the men of the Mahamad [Board] have decided to apply herem for all time.*⁶⁶

1938

The same year of the “Night of Broken Glass” in Nazi Germany, a mere 2500 kilometres away, in Oporto, an imposing Synagogue was inaugurated. The opening occurred in the month of January, in an atmosphere not only of festivity and rejoicing but also of ruptures, uproars and endless arguments in the Jewish world.

A few days before the inauguration, the Dutchman, Mordechai Van Son, published a letter in the Jewish Chronicle suggesting the sale of the building to return the money to the Kadoorie family and other benefactors. The reason, according to him, was that the community “has no more than fifteen people” and it is vital “to clean out this infernal stable”.

There is nothing in Oporto deserving of the name Kahal (congregation), there is nothing deserving of the name Kadosh (sacred) and this community is no “Source of Life”, rather a source of evil, which must be excised as soon as possible. There is no rabbi, there is not one qualified teacher, there is no shechita, there are no religious classes for children, there is no Jewish cemetery, indeed nothing to justify the construction of even the smallest Synagogue. Of the sixty students between the ages of 14 and 19 who attended this yeshiva none has become a Jew who is observant or follows some precepts, much less a rabbi fit to be a teacher of the People of Israel.

The Oporto Synagogue was inaugurated with the name “Kadoorie Mekor Haim” in the presence of a number of Jewish communities – Lisbon, Berlin, London –, many Marranos from the villages whom the captain had mobilised for that day and also ministers of other faiths: Catholics, Anglicans, Evangelicals and Baptists. Out of modesty, the Marranos opted to remain outside the temple. Paul Goodman recounts that “those men who work the land, shepherds and small traders, in their picturesque costumes, some wearing tall berets, others fur-lined capes, remained respectfully outside on the steps so as not to disturb the service”⁶⁷.

⁶⁶ Minutes of the General Meeting of CIP on 26 December 1937.

⁶⁷ Goodman's report to the Portuguese Marranos Committee.

The presence of the Marranos was also underlined by Augusto Canelo: “*On the day of the inauguration, the newspapers mentioned that a strong contingent of Marranos had come from Trás-os-Montes. If true, they never came back*”⁶⁸.

Despite the fact that a first wedding at the Synagogue had already been scheduled between Max Hans Dreifuss and Hildegard Midas, both of German origin, the outlook for the future was anything but bright. In fact, one might say that no one believed that it was possible to strengthen the tiny community occupying the imposing, majestic building.

History was already being made on the day of the inauguration, as if everything was now over. The Portuguese Marranos Committee commissioned a plaque in honour of Barros Basto, to be affixed to the entrance hall of the Synagogue, stating that “*his name must forever be linked [to said building] given the “historic services” he had already provided!*”

The official inauguration was presided by the rabbi of the Jewish Community of Lisbon, Mendel Diesendruck, a man of great Halachic culture. Seventy years later, his son Arnold wrote a devastating testimony:

*The city of Oporto had not had a Jewish temple for 440 years and according to the majority taking part in the inauguration the absence of a temple was not greatly felt, not even after it was built.*⁶⁹

1939

Barros Basto tried to convince Menasseh Bendov to accept the Presidency of the Jewish Community of Oporto, but Bendov dismissed the idea out of hand. He knows nothing of associations and wishes to be no more involved than he is already. The other members of the Community felt the same way. No one wished to take charge of the association and the Synagogue. For Barros Basto it was a burden. A burden but also a responsibility.

The inauguration of that temple, so controversial in the Jewish world of the time, gave one of Europe’s smallest communities one of the largest Synagogues. It was large enough to contain rooms that could house one thousand people at the same time but was almost always empty. There was no religious base, and *minyan* was never consistent.

At that time, the religious services were conducted by a Cohen from Warsaw – Srul Finkelstein – who had arrived in Oporto possessed of a much higher standard of Judaism than the one experienced in the Oporto and even in the Portuguese community as a whole.

As for Barros Basto, the many years of trying to rescue the Marranos back to official Judaism had produced no great result except to fill his life with impoverishment, losses and insults. Everything had failed. The rescue of the Marranos had been a total disaster. There was no record of any valid conversion to Judaism or of any child’s brit milah, bar mitzvah, wedding or burial in Oporto.

The CIP book of members records the existence of around twenty Marranos living in Oporto and its environs, but the Synagogue did not hear from them. The only Marrano who appeared to be full-time in the Synagogue was an informer of the State Defence Police who told that organisation the following year that Barros Basto was disconsolate with the

⁶⁸ “Belmonte - Judaísmo e Criptojudaísmo”, p. 89.

⁶⁹ “Os Marranos, 1920-1950”, p. 48.

failure of the “Rescue Work” and wished to inform London that he had failed: “*I must inform London that I have failed and give everything up. It is the only solution*”⁷⁰.

As if the Marranos’ rapid assimilation was not enough, they were soon immigrating in large numbers to other countries. For instance, “Ha-Lapid” nº 99 mentions the emigration to Brazil of the following ex-students of the Jewish Theological Institute of Oporto: Manuel Augusto (Emanuel) Rodrigues, born in Vilarinho; Artur Henrique (Abraham) Lopes, born in Vilarinho; António (Yomtob) Rodrigues, born in Belmonte, and Manuel António (David) Lapo, born in Vila Nova de Gaia.

Barros Basto’s utopia has ended – writes Augusto Canelo –, a “romantic utopia unable to nourish the reality desired with the conveyance of the rescue message.”⁷¹

1940

Fleeing the Second World War, many refugees had been arriving in Oporto. They were advised not to meddle in politics, to take pains with their appearance, to be modest, polite and discreet, not to praise the virtues of the country they had just left, to quickly learn Portuguese and respect local customs and laws.

*The war was fought in most of Europe but fortunately the Iberian Peninsula and Switzerland were neutral. These were tragic times for those of us who had left our families in Poland and Russia, and there was a great flood of Jewish refugees who were able to reach the safety of Portugal.*⁷²

The Synagogue now had a new function: to take in the hundreds of refugees as they arrived, many having benefited from clandestine assistance provided at the border by Artur Mirandela (President of the Jewish Community of Bragança) and the ever fearless Captain Barros Basto.

A sixth section is created at CIP – “Help for the Homeless” - under Menasseh Bendov, which channels most of the refugees to the Portuguese Committee of Assistance to Jewish Refugees (COMASSIS – Oporto branch) directed by the Jewish Community of Lisbon and sponsored by the international organisations HICEM and JDC. Heading the Oporto branch of COMASSIS was a German national, a member of the Board of the Jewish Community of Oporto, named Hans Warmbrun.

From the 416 refugee files at CIP, which were ransacked so often (therefore merely a fraction of the real figures), we see that these refugees came mainly from Belgium, France and Luxembourg, reaching Oporto throughout 1940 and up to April 1941. People from all walks of life, mostly aged between 25 and 46, of many nationalities: Polish (the large majority), Belgian, Czechoslovakian, German, Dutch, French, Austrian, Romanian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Argentinians, Iranians and the stateless.

The Jewish Community of Oporto provided quarters on the first floor of the Synagogue for the committee assisting the Jewish refugees. Most of them dreamed of going to the

⁷⁰ Proceedings of the Polícia de Vigilância e Defesa do Estado - Police of Vigilance and Defence of the State nº 458-SR, information dated 3 August 1940.

⁷¹ “Belmonte - Judaísmo e Criptojudaísmo”, pp. 88, 91.

⁷² Testimony of Eta Pressman Wright, then a gentle young girl of the Oporto Jewish Community.

United States and failing that, any destination far away from Europe: Palestine, Venezuela, Ecuador, Argentina, Mexico, Bolivia, Shanghai, Haiti, Curaçao, Santo Domingo, Costa Rica, Panama and Cuba.

There were large numbers of gaunt refugees with broken lives. Generally speaking, they were given a warm welcome by the Oporto population. Any discrimination they felt came at the hands of members of the Oporto German community. This community, known as the “Deutsche Kolonie Porto”, comprised German merchants, ship owners and businessmen who lived in the city and held meetings in rooms decorated with swastikas to raise funds for the “Winterhilfswerk”, which in turn helped poverty-stricken Germans who belonged to healthy families of “the master race”.

Many of the refugees appeared in Oporto with visas issued in Bordeaux by the Portuguese Consul, Aristides de Sousa Mendes. The Portuguese Committee of Assistance to Jewish Refugees, based in Lisbon, opened an office in Oporto on Rua do Almada, 517, to help those who were not allowed to dream about residing here permanently.

The refugees were lodged in inns, rooms in private houses and in hotels, such as the Aviz, Tivoli, Luso-Império, Avenida, Monumental. They would visit the Majestic, Arcada, Imperial and other cafés and spend each day passing the time, waiting for visas, waiting for berths on the ships. Portugal was just a place of transit. They would either travel from Lisbon on large ships, or from Oporto, on smaller vessels.

Isabel Meirinhos writes:

They would meet anywhere they could to tell their stories, which while all different, were all the same, for they had all lost their identity and were all lost in a world where they did not fit in. Some left behind loved ones, either because they were interned in concentration camps or simply because they could not afford to bring the entire family. Most arrived with no money, regardless of their status. They are supported from the moment they enter the country, or else request support a while later, mentioning that the scant resources they were able to bring have been spent on the way there. Even those who declare bringing some money with them are concerned regarding the length of their stay in Portugal, because if it is extended, what they bring will not suffice to pay their fares. A few, a very few, have means, deposit accounts and shares in American banks, so can provide the guarantee required by most host countries – the affidavit.⁷³

1941

Secular and religious Jews travelled through Oporto, including men who were or would become internationally renowned. Rabbi Abraham Dembinski, the religious leader of the Hasidim Congregation, was a devout man with first rate intelligence and great kindness. He spent time with Menasseh Bendov, Barros Basto, Srul Finkelstein and other members of the Community. The same occurred with young Ralph Baruch, who had left the previous November for the USA where he became an executive at CBS and the first chairman and CEO of Viacom.

⁷³ Isabel Meirinhos, “Judeus no Porto durante a II Guerra Mundial” [The Jews in Oporto during the Second World War], Oporto Arts Faculty, July 2012.

Every day there were several *minyanim* at Kadoorie Synagogue. In addition to the constant presence of the many refugees fleeing Nazism, the *Ashkenazi* Jews of the city did everything they could to console and encourage their recently arrived peers, which included assiduous attendance at the religious services. For the first time, the Synagogue was actually in use.

In Oporto, a newspaper wrote a lengthy report on the reality of these refugees:

Innocent victims of the horrors of the current war, persecuted, humiliated, stateless, homeless and almost without a family, many Jews took refuge in Portugal – a safe harbour, a peaceful part of Europe, one window wide open to the immensity of the Atlantic. Almost all of them will wait here until they have an opportunity to immigrate to North America – in search of work and in pursuit of the happiness they have lost. Many have settled in Oporto, where they have always been warmly welcomed, with open and sincere hospitality. They all profess to be deeply grateful to the people and the authorities of Oporto – who to some extent have managed to lessen the misfortune of their wretched existence. The date drew near for the Jewish Passover and although in this sad year they would not be able to kill the sacrificial lamb, they wished in these eight days to be able to eat unleavened bread. In this present time, this sacrifice of humility and resignation would symbolise a boost, helping them heroically to endure the more painful episodes of their future. They obtained legal authorisation and without losing a moment, improvised their “premises” in a city bakery, where they could knead and bake their unleavened bread. This is baked in flat rounds suspended from wooden stakes, for two or three minutes. The entire Jewish community resident in Oporto – men, women and children, academics and labourers, rich and poor – hastened to help, spontaneously and at no charge, in this votive task – which is an eloquent lesson of civic-mindedness and an edifying example of the noble sacrifice to an ideal, whose tradition is perpetuated and spiritualised in the admirable achievements of a mystic, sincerely religious rite. Yesterday, we surprised the Jewish colony in Oporto, working at full steam in this curious, improvised bakery. There was joyful and brotherly conviviality – as if for a few moments those people had forgotten the tragic misfortune of their tormented existence.⁷⁴

1942

Most of the Jewish refugees living in Oporto were transferred to Caldas da Rainha. “Ha-Lapid” mentioned this fact:

The town of Caldas da Rainha contains about 400 Jewish souls, refugees. For the New Year and Kippur festivities they improvised a Synagogue in a spacious ballroom owned by Montepio and embellished with decorations kindly provided by the Serrano family. To provide moral assistance to their brothers in faith, uprooted from their homes, the Jewish Community of Oporto entrusted its worthy first secretary Menasseh Bendov with the charitable task of wishing that the Blessed Lord may soon put an end to their tribulations. Mr. Menasseh was accompanied by a Sepher Torah (the Book of the Law) and various prayer books for the three feasts. A prayer to bless the country’s

⁷⁴ “O Primeiro de Janeiro”, 27 March 1941.

*leaders was said first in Hebrew by the respective officiant and then in Portuguese by the Oporto delegate, Mr. Menasseh Bendov.*⁷⁵

Member Jaime Yanovski quoted his father, one of the founders of CIP, saying that “the Synagogue was alone again”, recalling an interesting detail which was noted at the time of the massive presence of the refugees in town. “The existence in the building of one single, tiny bathroom, divided for ladies and gentlemen or, rather, one lady and one gentleman, as there was no room for more, created problems during the time of the refugees, as well as later, when weddings or larger ceremonies were held”. What appears to have been a minor problem, which was only solved many years later (2014), is said to have caused considerable halachic and family constraints during the Synagogue’s long life and naturally was in blatant contrast with the immense expanse of the building.

1943

Within the Jewish Community of Oporto, the Lithuanian Menasseh Bendov is officially recognized as a benefactor of the organisation, “*having for the twenty years of the Community’s existence dedicated his efforts, willingness and unassailable faith to developing Jewish liturgy, teaching and assistance in the city of Oporto, inspired always by an instructive spirit both in spiritual and material works*”⁷⁶.

The Spanish & Portuguese Congregation of London encourages the Jewish Community of Oporto to deposit at the Bank of Portugal all documents stating that the first organization is the owner of the land and building of the Synagogue. It is feared in London that the Jewish Community of Oporto may suddenly cease, given the failure of the “Rescue Work” and the danger of the progressive migration of the *Ashkenazi* colony which had always been the mainstay of Judaism in the city.

The focus of the international Jewish communities had long moved from the “Rescue Work” to concentrate on Nazism, the war and the drama of the refugees, yet the Portuguese Marranos Committee of London, now under the presidency of Sir Elly Kadoorie, wished to be apprised of the situation regarding the Jewish Community of Oporto, the number of members in the organisation, its sectoral proportions (Marranos, residents and refugees) and whether the school was still running. Paul Goodman reminded Barros Basto that for fifteen years now London had been supporting the “Rescue Work” without a break and it had been expected that after ten years the organisation would at the very least be self-sufficient, if only to justify the cost of building the Synagogue.

As an organisation, CIP was a repository of bad memories and great resentment. “Ha-Lapid” recalls the *herem* that followed Barros Basto’s separation from the army. It said: “*Their bodies still move among the living, but their souls are dead*”⁷⁷.

In the same issue, the newspaper reveals the tale of vices and punishments:

One day, the vices decided to travel the Earth. They travelled far and wide without looking back. However, one day they turned and saw that someone was tailing them at a slow, unhurried pace.

⁷⁵ “Ha-Lapid”, nº 113.

⁷⁶ Minutes of the General Meeting.

⁷⁷ “Ha-Lapid”, nº 119.

- *Who are you? – they asked.*
- *I am the punishment – replied the one behind them.*
- *Stop following us. You will never catch up with us.*

The punishment replied:

- *I may be late but I always get there.*

1944

Menasseh Bendov left Portugal for Palestine, where he wished his daughters to be married, for there were no young Jewish males in Oporto. His departure was deeply felt by all those who had worked with him for so long and particularly by Captain Barros Basto, who had never known such a fine example of rectitude and firmness.

Portugal remained neutral during the Second World War. Sales of wolfram to Germany and to the Allies, led Óscar Carmona, the President of the Republic, to consider dismissing Salazar, who, in the words of CIA was “a strange grey little man”. Some accused this prototype of a Catholic village priest of being unfit for government because of the absurd fact that he was “Jewish”⁷⁸ or a “*Jewish New Christian on both sides: on his father’s side through the Salazares de Castela and on his mother’s side through the Oliveiras da Beira*”⁷⁹.

Death of Sir Elly Kadoorie, honorary President of the Jewish Community of Oporto. Born in Baghdad, Iraq, in 1865, Eleazer (Elly) Kadoorie had been President of the Anglo-Jewish Association, the Shanghai Zionist Association and the Union of Sephardic Communities and had been decorated in England, France, Syria, Taiwan and China, to mention just a few countries. Known as the “Prince of Benefactors”, he often said that “*wealth is a sacred responsibility to be managed for the good of society*”.

1945

In response to the construction of the Synagogue, a church had been built on the same street. The only religious life to be seen on Rua Guerra Junqueiro came from that Catholic Church. The community was lifeless.

All the *Ashkenazim* cared about were their families and jobs. They did not have time for the Synagogue. It was hard to have a quorum of ten men, even on feast days.

The Portuguese Marranos Committee announces that this will be the last year they support the “Rescue Work”, after twenty years of investment. Barros Basto is urged to clarify certain details regarding the number of Marranos present at religious services, whether there are Hebrew and religious classes for the children, and the children’s ages, if any Marranos had been circumcised, if there is shechita, if the Jews are buried in a Jewish cemetery, the names of the current board members, if Samuel Rodrigues and Moreno are still officiating in any village and if it is foreseeable that they will continue to do so in the future, what is the status of the Bragança community, what

⁷⁸ Luís Bivar Guerra, “Inquérito Genealógico à Cristánovice, Concubinato e Outros Defeitos de Sangue na Ascendência de Salazar”, Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa, 1947.

⁷⁹ João Paulo Freire, “Os Judeus e os Protocolos dos Sábios de Sião”, Lisbon, 1938, p. 23.

other organised Marrano groups exist and, finally, how does he see the future of the community of Oporto.

Paul Goodman says that he regrets having to ask these questions but he is about to be 70, wishes to retire shortly from active life and leave everything set for those following on. Barros Basto's reply is laconic. He tries to avoid the awkward questions and mainly emphasises the difficulties of the Bragança community which, months later, closed the doors of its Shaare Pideon Synagogue, sending to the Synagogue in Oporto all religious artefacts and the blue parochet.

1946

The following families were then members of the Jewish Community of Oporto: Warmbrun, Kiefe, Kolback, Jafe, Platchek, Beigel, Pressman, Finkelstein, Cymerman, Gotlieb, Knikinsky, Yamansky, Elbogen, Palumbaum, Hertz, Salomon, Rubinfeld, Wright, Bronstein, Levi, Simon and Garcea, among others, but there were few religious services at the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue.

Barros Basto signs the last minutes as President of the Jewish Community of Oporto, asking the congregation “*to celebrate with dignity the Feast of Tabernacles*” (*Sukkot*). Although he remained as president of the organisation until 1949, this legendary president no longer signed the minutes.

The captain makes a last trip to Trás-os-Montes.

Last autumn the Messenger of the Rescue left Oporto for Trás-os-Montes, taking words of encouragement to the local crypto-Jews. He visited a number of villages and town, including Chaves, Vila Real, Bragança and Macedo de Cavaleiros, and was pleased by the demonstrations of sincere faith in the old Luso-Jewish traditions of these Marranos. With the same purpose in mind, the Talmid of the Theological Institute of Oporto, Amílcar Paulo (Levi Ben-Har) visited villages in the municipalities of Mogadouro and Freixo de Espada à Cinta and returned home well pleased with the brotherly welcome he was given.⁸⁰

After the Captain's death, his new student, Amílcar Paulo, became the greatest authority on Marranism, its peoples, cultures, virtues, limitations, fears and problems.

1947

The wedding between Ronald Wright and Eta Pressman Wright took place in Oporto Synagogue, with an abundance of flowers, red carpets and great elation. “Ha-Lapid” records the occasion:

On 31 August 1947 at 14.00 hours, the wedding of Miss Eta Prezman to Mr. Ronald Wright of London, took place at the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue, the Israeli cathedral of the north of Portugal on Rua Guerra Junqueiro, 340 – Porto.

⁸⁰ “Ha-Lapid”, nº 133.

The father of the bride is Mr. Prezman, an industrialist of São João da Madeira. The wedding was officiated by the Rev. Rabbi Mendel Disendruck, the notable spiritual leader of the Lisbon Community, who delighted the congregation with his excellent baritone voice. The well-known music teacher, Cipriano Gil, played the organ. The bride and groom and all the guests were ceremoniously dressed. After the ceremony there was a magnificent wedding breakfast at the residence of Mr. Finkelstein, with speeches by the Rev. Rabbi Disendruck, Captain Barros Basto and several friends of the bride and groom. The Synagogue was splendidly decorated, with many plants and flowers. The tapestries reached as far as the street, all arranged with great artistry⁸¹.

Seventy years later, the happy bride recalled:

Our wedding, the second one to take place since Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue was consecrated, took place in August of that year. Rabbi Mendel Diesendruck from the Lisbon Synagogue officiated, the groom's friends and family came from London and every member of the Lisbon and Oporto communities was invited. The red carpet was laid outside the Synagogue. It was truly a great event. In Ronald Wright I not only gained a marvellous husband, but my parents gained a son and the successor they had always wanted for the business. He was very experienced in matters of Judaism and proved to be an invaluable member of the Oporto Community. He was appointed Secretary and Treasurer and given his fluency in English, provided great assistance in communicating with the Kadoorie brothers and the Hakham of the Sephardi Community of London with whom the Kadoorie brothers were in direct contact⁸².

1948

Miraculously, what few *Ashkenazi* families there were had been able to intermarry. A huge new wedding took place at the Synagogue. "Ha-Lapid" reports:

On 17 March at 14.00 hours, the wedding of Miss Renia Finkelsztein, aged 22, born in Warsaw, the sweet daughter of the well-known industrialist and merchant, Mr. Srul Finkelsztein, to Mr. Paltiel Cymerman, aged 25, born in Poland, a Lisbon industrialist, took place at the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue. The wedding was officiated by the Rev. Rabbi Mendel Disendruck, the notable spiritual leader of the Lisbon Community, who delighted the numerous congregation with his excellent baritone voice. The well-known music teacher, Cipriano Gil, played the organ. The bride and groom and all the guests were ceremoniously dressed. The Synagogue was full. Many Jewish personalities came expressly from Lisbon to attend this ceremony. They included Messrs. Dr. Elias Baruel, Vice-President of the Jewish Community of Lisbon and President of the Assistance to Refugees section, Abraham Abner Levy, Parnas (Ombudsman) of the Shaare Tikvah Synagogue (Doors of Hope) and Dr. Semtob Sequerra, President of the Hehaver Israeli Youth Association (the comrade). The sponsors were: for the bride her parents and for

⁸¹ "Ha-Lapid", n° 139.

⁸² Testimony of Eta Wright Pressman.

the groom Mr. Chaskiel Sznayder and his wife D. Genia. The Rev. Diezendruck gave a darush (sermon) allusive to this occasion. The Synagogue was splendidly decorated, with many plants and flowers. The tapestries reached as far as the street, all arranged with great artistry. After the ceremony there was a magnificent wedding breakfast at the residence of Mr. Finkelstein, with speeches by the Rev. Rabbi Diezendruck, Captain Barros Basto and several friends of the bride and groom. This was followed by a fine dinner with strictly kosher (orthodox) food.⁸³

That same year, “Ha-Lapid” naturally exalted the proclamation of the independence of the State of Israel. The Jews had always been persecuted because of their culture, their religion, their “race” and their alleged influence. Now, they had their own State. Immediately following the foundation of this small State, and against all expectations, Israel won a military victory against a number of Arab nations that had savagely invaded it.

In Oporto, a unique event was reserved for *Yom Kippur*:

On that day of Yom Kippur, the service could not begin because there was no minyan. We were beginning to be resigned to this fact when several young men came to the Synagogue. They were all Jews. We then found out that our God-sent visitors were officers and crew of a cargo ship belonging to the Israeli Merchant Navy.⁸⁴

1949

Death of Barros Basto’s son. Nuno does not survive a severe pulmonary disease, not even after Horace Kadoorie had made funds available to buy medication that only existed in the US. The captain resigns from his position as president. He is a broken man, with grief in his heart. He feels he lost a lot of time. The timespan of his dear son, over two decades, had been wasted with misguided battles.

Ten years had passed since the Synagogue was inaugurated.

With the inauguration of the Oporto Synagogue one might expect a new and happy period for Portuguese Judaism, but this good beginning was short-lived. It took no more than ten years for Portuguese Marranism to lie on its deathbed.⁸⁵

Elections are held. Although all key positions were held by foreigners, a number of Portuguese citizens were part of the establishment:

Board (Mahamad): President – Nathan Beigel, Vice-President – Srul Finkelstein, 1st Secretary – Moisés Ettner, 2nd Secretary – Isaac Lopes Martins, Treasurer – Paul Bronstein, Members – Samuel Rodrigues and Luís de Carvalho. General Meeting: President – Paulo Pressman, Vice-President – Dr. Alfredo Kiefe, Secretaries – José Pereira Gabriel and Amílcar Paulo.

The President, Nathan Beigel, was Polish and had been a member of the Community since 1927. Wishing to join heaven and earth, he invited the people who had suffered the *cherem* in 1937 to rejoin the Community as members. This strategy greatly displeased

⁸³ “Ha-Lapid”, n° 141.

⁸⁴ Testimony by Eta Pressman Wright.

⁸⁵ “Os Marranos, 1920-1950”, p. 54.

Captain Barros Basto, but there is no news that any of the people once removed and excommunicated had returned to the Synagogue.

From the first day Beigel had said that he had neither the time nor the vocation to conduct the destinies of the Jewish Community of Oporto. He had only agreed to the position because no one else wished to occupy it. His son Eliezer said:

Like every member of the community that I knew, my father understood nothing of associations. Furthermore, he was fearful, filled with negative family memories. He was very discreet, kept a low profile and all he knew about was pelts, he sold pelts.⁸⁶

Vice-President Srul Finkelstein, an observant Jew, took control of the religious life of the Jewish community of Oporto. Regarding the Marranos, he unhesitatingly adopted for all times the same criterion of the Synagogues of Madrid, Parish, London, Brussels, Jerusalem and others where Halacha reigned. This was that the Marranos could never be considered for purposes of *minyan*. The few Marranos that were still linked to the Jewish Community of Oporto, whose surnames were Rodrigues, Araújo, Martins, Xavier, Carvalho, Moreno, Ranito, Mendes and Lopes, withdrew almost entirely from the organisation and the Synagogue.

1950

Nathan Beigel arranged with Srul Finkelstein that he would handle matters regarding the exterior of the Synagogue (carrying out rehabilitation works) while the latter would work on the inside (promoting Judaism). Then, Beigel wrote both to CIL and to the Kadoorie family, requesting financial contributions for the works on the Synagogue. The answers were late in arriving but arrive they did.

Amzalak, President of CIL, was puzzled by this request for money:

Despite our sympathy towards the Oporto community, our community is not involved in the repairs to its Synagogue. Given the large sum requested by your architect, 140 contos, CIL would be unable to contribute, as it still has unpaid charges regarding the reconstruction of its own Synagogue.

The Kadoories offered to donate 1,500 dollars, using for the purpose CIL's bank account, as CIP was prevented from touching its own. Nathan Beigel played his part: the Kadoorie money was on its way and the works would be carried out.

Srul Finkelstein also sought to fulfil his promise. To know the atmosphere of the Synagogue at that time was literally to know the "rabbi and executive director" of the Oporto community. He had struggled mightily against the fact that the congregation was tiny and not religious, seeking to bring together its peers, scheduling the presence of people and instituting a rule of compulsory but alternate attendance. His daughter, Helena, recalls her father as a man of prayer and work. An entire life where each day was the same, no breaks in his routine: prayers with the tefillin and the tallit, breakfast prepared by his wife, work, prayers again, then work, then more prayers.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Testimony of Eliezer Beigel.

⁸⁷ Testimony by Helena Finkelstein.

He was also an official member of the Jewish Community of Lisbon, which sent him *kosher* products and ensured he had a grave in the cemetery. Finkelstein had a very singular personality. Born in Poland, he had moved to France and came to Oporto by chance. Having heard that a knitting factory was required in this city, he departed for Portugal shortly after his marriage. However, his battle in Oporto was not so much with trade but with the creation or attempted creation of a true Jewish community.

Death of Paul Goodman, honorary Vice-President of the Jewish Community of Oporto. The Portuguese Marranos Committee continued sending money to pay for the continued publication of “Ha-Lapid”. However, in Oporto, unfortunately the Marranos only deserved a mention as a result of their mixed marriages, emigration and the progressive liberalisation of customs in Portuguese society.

1951

While Barros Basto was at the helm of the organisation, CIP made itself felt on more than one occasion. This was not the case when management of the organisation was entirely in the hands of the *Ashkenazim*, in reality the total Jewish population resident in Oporto with the exception of Barros Basto and his family. The discretion and fear characteristic of former refugees, who had at one time viewed the following day with dread, led to a strategic shutdown. Halacha, discretion and a vacuum seemed to be the only orders of the day.

The Oporto Jews were still few in number and the solidity or lack thereof of the Community was always impaired by successive problems. One example occurred with Helena Haber Szilvassy, who wrote to CIP and to CIL requesting financial aid in order to move to Lisbon. She claimed that she was “*very unhappy and lacked the money to keep herself, her husband and her daughter*”. A donation of 1,700 escudos was made by the Lisbon Jewish Community, which included a contribution by Isaac Yanovsky, who twenty years earlier had been one of the CIP founders. So, Helena moved to Lisbon, lock, stock and barrel, with her husband and daughter.

At Srul Finkelstein’s request, the Israeli rabbi Jacob Goldreish was contacted by Paulo Pressman to celebrate *Rosh Hashana* and *Yom Kippur* in Oporto. In subsequent negotiations, Beigel wrote to this religious man to arrange about the fees: “*We must remember a small detail, which is that this community is very poor, so we would kindly request you to charge as little as possible*”. All was arranged. The parties reached an agreement and the feasts were celebrated by the rabbi.

Financed by the Kadoories, rehabilitation works were carried out on the Synagogue. They were directed by an engineer, Jacob Spitz, from the Jewish Community of Lisbon. The exterior façades were painted afresh and at the same time the telephone company informed that CIP’s telephone number would now be 60220.

1952

Nathan Beigel receives the following letter:

I take the liberty of informing you that I am again residing in Oporto. Who I am is recorded in the Community’s book of minutes. I wish to study the Shulchan-Aruch and

Gemara whose books are at the Rabbi Dr. Sola Pool Library in the Synagogue building. As there is no Jewish shamash, I most respectfully ask you to provide me with a key so that I may enter as and when I like, after work, without having to bother the servant.

The letter was signed Menasseh Bendov, who had returned to Oporto driven by the idea of returning to business in this city. Not long afterwards, he gave up, not only for market reasons but for the fact that he had not forgiven Nathan Beigel for cancelling the 1937 cherem and arranged for those who had been expelled and excommunicated to return, albeit without success.

As a Cohen, Srul Finkelstein cannot say funeral prayers at the cemetery. It fell to Captain Barros Basto to accompany deceased members of the community at their burial. This was the case with the funeral of Berta Sarah Oppenheim (wife of Emil Oppenheim), in Agramonte municipal cemetery, where the captain said the prayers according to the Luso-Hispanic Sephardic rite.

To provide information to the Jewish Agency for Israel, Inácio Steinhardt, born and raised in Lisbon but living in Tel Aviv, wrote to Barros Basto and asked:

What is the Community's current situation in Oporto and elsewhere? What are its activities and how does the Community operate nowadays? What books have so far been published? What are your future plans and possibilities? What help do you need and how may the Jewish Agency help?

The captain puts the letter away. He does not reply. He no longer knows what to say to London or now, to this agency. It is hard to acknowledge that he is old and weak; that the official Marrano communities vanished too quickly; that the Marranos did not adhere to the "Rescue Work"; that not a single official Jew, not a single *mitzvot*-observing student, not a single Jewish family issued from the students at the Institute; that the Marranos were gradually becoming assimilated through mixed marriages and emigration; that everything had failed; and there is no prospect of a future Marrano regeneration.

1953

At this time, religious services on the *Sabbath* and *Yom Tov* are held regularly at Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue, officiated by Srul Finkelstein. He became known for preventing Jews who had visited the Synagogue for purely cultural reasons from leaving before participating in the next religious service, for they might be necessary to make *minyan*.

Five years had passed since Finkelstein had embarked on the complex mission of maintaining the religious life of a monumental temple with a lack of Jews.

The Synagogue was home to a tiny community which was not only filled with quality and advantages. Its location, at some four or five kilometres from the homes of most of the effective members, made practising Judaism almost impossible, particularly during the heavy rains that fell on the city, and it was a problem that left deep marks on and weakened the congregation during decades.

Keren Hayesod, headed in Portugal by Isaac Yanovsky, given his closeness to the Jews of Lisbon and Oporto, was able to raise money from all the Jewish families of CIP, in particular from Beigel, Pressman, Barros Basto, Lemchen, Finkelstein, Gotlieb, Yamansky, Warmbrun,

Kiefe, Kolback, Jafe, Platchek, Elbogen, Palumbaum, Hertz, Salomon, Rubenfeld, Wright, Bronstein, Levi, Simon, Garcea and others.

The idea disseminated by historians and other interested parties that there were no Jews in Oporto in the second half of the 20th century is quite wrong.

1954

A woman was hired to live in the building and to open and close doors as and when required during religious services and other activities.

In this year, the Kadoories once again financed maintenance works on the Synagogue, through the good offices of Donald Wright, married to Eta Pressman. She recalls the enormous difficulties experiences in maintaining Jewish life in Oporto:

The Synagogue had few members, but I can guarantee that both the men and the women did everything in their power and within their religious knowledge to ensure the continued existence of the Community and respect for Jewish principles.

The Oporto Jews had the idea, not always correct, that the Jewish Community of Lisbon experienced absolutely no problems and had many members, considerable religious activity and even great social influence due to the friendship of its President, Moisés Amzalak and the President of the Council of Ministers, António Salazar.

An Oporto Jew, born and raised in Oporto, Eliezer Beigel says that *“the members of the Lisbon community were an elite, intellectuals, people connected to the university and the regime, people with social prestige, while in Oporto all we had was Dr. Oppenheim, Barros Basto, industrialists and tradespeople. Even Menasseh Bendov had to become a policeman, when he arrived in Israel and failed at business”*.

CIP sent CIL cordial congratulations on the fiftieth anniversary of Shaare Tikvah Synagogue. It also requested a young celebrant for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, noting that although there were enough Jews in Oporto, *“this year the Community has barely the minimum number of ten people given the recent deaths and absences abroad.”*

At this time, there was a curious discussion, on the arrival in Oporto of a black Jew who asked permission to attend the Synagogue, and soon revealed that he was totally familiar with the tefilot. Surprise was rampant in the *Ashkenazi* community. Could there be black Jews? Was the recent arrival a Midian like Zipporah? One of the Egyptian magicians in Sinai? A descendant of the Queen of Sheba and her marriage to King Solomon? Was he descended from one of the ten tribes lost 2500 years ago?

No valid answer was ever reached. No interaction was achieved. No one was ever brave enough to ask the man himself, who in turn was quite laconic and uncommunicative. For months, until he disappeared as mysteriously as he had arrived, there was much philosophical and historical debate among the *Ashkenazim* in the city.

The man was probably related to a Lisbon Amzalak (a relation of the then President of CIL) who went to Africa, first marrying a white Catholic woman and then several black women, with whom he had many children.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Testimony of Inácio Steinhardt.

1955

Death of Asriel Bronstein, of Ukrainian origin, one of those affected by the cherm in 1937, about whom Barros Basto said he was “officially Romanian although he does not speak Romanian but Russian, and that he lived in Odesa”⁸⁹.

Elias Baruel, Vice-President of CIL, writes to CIP regarding the funeral of Bronstein, saying that “the Lisbon community has decided to donate free of charge the plot in the cemetery and pay for all expenses with the burial, including the shroud, construction of the burial site, and so on, but it will neither pay for nor contribute to any payment to Agência Magno, the undertakers.”

CIP contacted the daughter of the deceased, who paid part of the undertaking costs, and asked the communities to help pay the rest. Buruel, with justification, did not hold back:

Your letter regarding the cost of transferring the deceased Mr. Asriel Bronstein has puzzled us. We understand and accept that his daughter should wish to pay the Magno account, but in its entirety, she should not require contributions either from here or from there.

Members of CIP clubbed together to make this payment, but unwillingly, as the deceased was not favourably regarded within the Oporto community given his involvement in the charges that had led twenty years earlier to Barros Basto’s downfall.

As for the Captain, he continued to go to the Synagogue, as all good Jews do, sometimes more frequently than others. He taught Hebrew and Judaism to a few students, always in public cafés, so that never again could he be accused of abuse, as in the past. Before and after these classes, he sat in the café, a sad figure, unable to rewrite the past with any joy, drinking wine, reading excerpts from the Torah, crying, and making strong remarks against the New State, which led the political police to visit him at home on more than one occasion.

As a rule, evil causes men to philosophise. The opposite was true in the case of Barros Basto. The philosopher that had always resided within him survived only until he fell victim to the scum of society in combination with the anti-Judaism of agents of the State. He became subject to successive depressions which lasted to the end of his days. His daughter Miriam recalls that “When he came home, he would sit and bury his face in his knees, asking what he had done to deserve such a sad ending”.⁹⁰

1956

Nathan Beigel wrote to the British Consulate General, at the time the legitimate “owner” of the German school adjacent to the Synagogue, to say that “the tree branches are spreading over the wall dividing the Synagogue and the school and littering the grounds of the Synagogue with fallen leaves”.

The enormous Synagogue and its maintenance are the only things that appear in any way to unite the Jews of Oporto. Lawrence Kadoorie offered a further contribution of 300

⁸⁹ Isabel Lopes Archive.

⁹⁰ Testimony by Miriam Azancot.

pounds, for works on the building. Its walls were often witness to a solitary Srul, praying and singing, a small beacon of light within that vast coffin. The Pole begins to fail. He no longer believes in the Jewish Community of Oporto.

The size of the Synagogue is such that when its few members were assembled, they felt crushed by the solitude and the sensation of emptiness. Some visit the Synagogue in haste, others impair *minyan* by an unexpected absence, others had no interest in their association to Judaism, to the point of actually rejecting their condition as Jews.

Having such a gigantic Synagogue with a tiny community with few members present at tefilot was not a positive thing. Cecil Roth was to write about *“the unfortunate megalomania that led Barros Basto to manipulate the construction of a monumental Synagogue instead of being content with the former, to me, quite impressive, house of prayer. What will now become of it?”*⁹¹.

1957

Finkelstein, a businessman, needs to support his family and his employees and cannot live a double life. He is tired and needs help. Nathan Beigel writes to the Rosenthal family of London requesting financial aid to hire a rabbi. The answer is encouraging. It might be possible. The CIP President is asked a number of questions: What will be his duties? Should he be married or single? If married, should his wife take part in the job? What nationality should he be? Would Spanish be preferable to Israeli? If not Portuguese, would he encounter difficulties with regard to the job? What is an appropriate monthly salary to be able to live comfortably in the city?

Beigel replies that the duties are those of chazan and shochet, he should be married and his wife should take part in the job, he should speak Spanish or Ladino and should earn in the region of 2,500 escudos if married and living in the Synagogue. The fact is that these steps went no further and Srul Finkelstein continued to enliven the Synagogue on his own.

Despondent with the fact that the Synagogue is almost always empty, and despite Finkelstein's fruitless endeavours to bring the *Ashkenazim* to religious services at the Synagogue, Barros Basto arranges for “Ha-Lapid” to publish “The Ten Commandments for attendance at the Synagogue”, taken from the Mount Sinai Congregation bulletin, for he said that these *“reflected the problems of all Jewish congregations”*.

I. I am the Synagogue, your Congregation; it can take release you of your worries and labours in this world for the freedom of your soul.

II. You must have no other meeting or commitment before mine. You must not make a poor excuse to yourself that keeps you away from me, even if it the rain from the sky, or the mud and snow on your feet, or anything that requires your attention, because I, the Synagogue, shall accept no excuses concerning theatre, concert or any other commitment.

III. You must not clamour in vain that you are a good Jew even without attending the Synagogue, because the Synagogue is the religious home of the congregation and you and your family must live within that home.

⁹¹ Cecil Roth, letter to Daniel Friedenberg, 21.06.1960, quoted in “Ben-Rosh”, p. 254.

IV. *Remember the Sabbath and the time set for its service; keep it sacredly. You have the rest of the week for other things, but the hour of prayer of the Sabbath is for the Synagogue alone. On that day, you, you, your son, your daughter, shall not be absent. But you must remember that if you are late or leave early before the service is ended you will disturb others at prayer. So, you should always abide by the time.*

V. *Honour in the Synagogue the ambience of its devotion and the beauty of its grandiosity.*

VI. *You shall not kill the enthusiasm of others for their Synagogue.*

VII. *You shall not adulterate thy devotion with whispers and idle talk.*

VIII. *You shall not steal the golden opportunities in the hands of your brother, discouraging those who are anxious to fight for the future of Judaism.*

IX. *You shall not falsify the true philanthropy of religion with your behaviour towards a stranger in your Synagogue.*

X. *You will not wish for very brief religious services. You will not desire the sermons preached in other religions. Love your Synagogue and respect it with veneration, within its own environment.*⁹²

1958

Nathan Beigel writes to the Portuguese Marranos Committee saying that a cemetery must be built (he had already located a walled plot of land worth half a million escudos) and that they should have someone to act as chazzan, shochet and teacher. He claims that *“it is not possible for this community to contribute any amount as it is very poor and has no capital”*, and that, *“to maintain the cemetery will be difficult for the same reason: that this community is poor and very small. Only with your monthly assistance and a small contribution from our members will it be possible to maintain the cemetery. We have already had Jews who died and had to be buried in Catholic cemeteries because we did not have enough money for the deceased to be transferred to the cemetery of the Jewish Community of Lisbon”*.

After such generosity from the Jews of London and the world towards the Jewish Community of Oporto, London's reply was that Beigel's letter *“had given rise to much disappointment for making clear that he did not believe that the Jewish community of Oporto could contribute with any money at all. We are sure that you will understand how difficult it is for us constantly to call on England's generosity and that of other countries to collect the funds required for your Community”*.

The reply added that there was no justification for spending *“half a million escudos”* on purchasing a plot of land and building a cemetery to harbour a community that, according to Beigel, was made up of *“about 50 Oporto Jews, half of them Ashkenazim”*. CIP was advised to *“strengthen its ties with the Jewish Community of Lisbon and continue the existing practice of burying the Oporto dead in the Jewish cemetery in Lisbon”*.

Regarding the rabbi, London informed CIP that there was someone available in Israel and that his travel expenses were covered. This was Rabbi Raphael Zvi, a married man, who could become the religious leader, chazzan, shochet and teacher. CIP would have to provide accommodation for him in the Synagogue and pay him a monthly salary of 2.500

⁹² “Ha-Lapid”, nº 155.

escudos. Once again, it all came to nothing. There was no money for said salary, although the community numbered rich businessmen as members, such as Lemchen and Paulo Pressman.

The last issue of “Ha-Lapid” is published. Throughout its existence, the newspaper had relied on the talent and energy of Barros Basto, Leo d’Almeida and collaborators such as Norberto Moreno, Hernstedt de Almeida, Isaac Martins, Max Azancot, Isaías Nogueira and Amílcar Paulo. Although “Ha-Lapid” was published between 1927 and 1958, it is important to note that from the mid-1930s it referred less and less to the Marranos and increasingly to the international situation. “The Torch”, the Community’s official mouthpiece, was forever extinguished.

Substantial sums of money donated from abroad had been expended so the “Rescue Work” could travel the country in search of Marranos, yet in Oporto, the cornerstone of this missionary action, there was not one single former Marrano Portuguese Jew to show for this large outlay of money. This is the faithful depiction of the complete failure of this rescue in the first half of the 20th century despite the Captain’s best efforts.

1959

There are financial problems and bills that keep on coming. One such was from a contractor in Leça da Palmeira, who wrote to Nathan Beigel requesting payment of the *“sum of 2425 escudos and thirty centavos regarding the work carried out at the Synagogue. As you know, the work was completed a year ago and I am a small-time contractor and cannot wait so long for the money. You could do me the favour of lending that sum to the Synagogue and be repaid as soon as possible”*.

Ronald Wright, CIP treasurer, decides to nip things in the bud and writes a letter to Lawrence Kadoorie, saying:

*The beautiful building of the Synagogue has withstood many storms, rains and scalding heat over the course of its thirty years’ existence. If our community were a little larger and somewhat richer, we would have repaired the building at frequent intervals. However, given the scarcity of our resources we cannot pay for more than minor restorations and repairs and even then, at some sacrifice. Now, because of an unusually damp period, the rain is pouring in through the roof of the dome, which no longer has its waterproof lining.*⁹³

The American Daniel Friedenburg, a researcher who among other things was to write “The Jewish Catacombs of Portugal” and “Marranos and Christian Converts”, arrives in Portugal eager to know the situation regarding the Marranos. He seeks out the Lisbon Jewish community. He is told that the Oporto Synagogue is merely “a museum” and that “the Marranos do not exist”. He is shocked.

Friedenburg travels to Oporto and meets with Barros Basto, by now an old and physically weakened man. Together they visit the Synagogue. The captain offers the visitor some of his translations of the liturgical works he had once done for the Marranos. Friedenberg is overcome.

⁹³ CIP/CJP Archive.

Before we left, we stood before the Ark and with great simplicity the captain sang the Shema, the ancient affirmation of the Jewish faith, his hat firmly jammed on his head, whilst a hand on the railing supported his broken body.⁹⁴

1960

Paulo Pressman assumed the position of President of the Jewish Community of Oporto, replacing Nathan Beigel, who had held the post for 11 years. Captain Barros Basto assumed the position of President of the General Assembly, at the request of the *Ashkenazi* members of the community, who held him in high esteem.

Pressman was a businessman. Born in Poland, he had settled in São João da Madeira, a town near Oporto, in the 1930s. His daughter, Eta, notes:

Then it happened that, for many years, among that population of 8,000 or 10,000 people of São João de Madeira, my parents and I were the only Jews. And once we settled there, our house became a mandatory stopping point for any Jewish person who made a trip from Lisbon to Oporto or vice versa.

The Pressman family had a beret-selling business run by the head of the family and his wife, Ida Pressman. Returning to Eta's account: *"What began as a small craft industry turned out to be an industry of national interest, because the Paul Pressman factory became the only supplier of berets to the entire Portuguese Army."* The colonial war, which would begin the following year, would mobilize close to 1 million Portuguese.

The first act of Paul Pressman's presidency was to apply for financial help from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims. He claimed that there were about 20 Jewish refugees living in Oporto and that the community needed 1,200 contos (equivalent to 6000 Euros) to hire a rabbi for four years (which would cost 480 contos) and to buy a cemetery plot worth 720 contos.

The Conference did not accept his request. At most, they could donate 36 contos, but to do this they needed to see the legal and fiscal records of the Jewish Community of Oporto. The requirement imposed an insurmountable problem because there were no valid documents to satisfy it. In legal terms, the CIP organization had a ghost existence since the 1930s.

1961

The year was marked by the death of Captain Arthur Carlos de Barros Basto, who was an Army officer and a Jewish community leader. He was also a writer, a publicist, a researcher of military and Jewish history, a member of the Military History Commission, an expert in national defence doctrines and a revolutionary / conservative. He had raised the flag of the Republic in Oporto and served on the censorship committee of the military dictatorship.

According to his wishes, he was buried in the municipal cemetery of Amarante, wearing his military uniform. He never gave up hope of seeing his name cleared and being fully reinstated in the military, having said on the eve of his death: *"One day I will get justice!"*

⁹⁴ "Ben-Rosh", p. 239.

The President, Paul Pressman, presented the Synagogue with a large number of berets. For twenty years, the berets of Mr. Pressman were at the disposal of visitors to the Synagogue, Jews and non-Jews alike, rather than traditional *kipot*.

1962

The Pressman, Wright, Cymerman, and Finkelstein families celebrated the bar mitzvah of two boys and received telegrams of congratulations from the President and Prime Minister of Israel. The little community remained alive. Lawrence Kadoorie also made a new contribution to the Community and sent two representatives to the city to make a photo dossier and a film to be integrated into the family project “*Our Home, Our Story*”.

Paul Pressman wrote again to the *Conference on Jewish Material Claims* making the same request for 1,200 *contos* that he had made two years earlier. The Conference reiterated their response. They replied that, at most, they could donate 24 *contos*, but for this they would need to see the legal and fiscal documentation of the Jewish Community of Oporto. Pressman knew this did not exist, and in a tough letter, accused the *Conference* of not being interested in the CIP and the efforts of its members, under the leadership of Srul Finkelstein, to maintain Judaism and Jewish life in the city.

1963

The Kadoorie family was well aware of the efforts of Paul Pressman and Srul Finkelstein to keep the Synagogue alive and believed in them. They asked Pressman to search, in Europe or Morocco, for a capable *chazan* (cantor) and *shochet* (*kosher* butcher). Steps were soon taken to find them.

Barros Basto's place as President of the General Assembly was occupied by Emil Oppenheim. This German Jewish refugee from Nazism was a prominent jurist in the past. On arriving in Oporto, he worked for three decades in a laundromat on Rua Nossa Senhora de Fátima. He was crushed by the sadness of seeing one of his daughters convert to Christianity, after the death of his wife Berta.

Chaim Sorin, the Rabbi who thirty years earlier was among the founders of CIP, died in New York in 1963. He was buried in Montefiore Cemetery. His descendants then lived in Israel.

1964

With the help of the Kadoorie family, the Community hired Rabbi Judah Cohen for two years as a *chazan* (cantor), *shochet* (*kosher* butcher) and *mohel* (ritual circumciser). Srul Finkelstein benefitted from having another Cohen (member of the priestly family) in the community.

A community that almost dead, overwhelmingly unobservant and too assimilated, now had two *cohanim*. It also had the help of Rabbi Abraham Assor of Lisbon. The Rabbi's wife,

Rebeca Assor, wrote that: “*The community of Oporto had few people but people who were very faithful to Jewish principles and did everything possible to properly fulfil the tradition*”.

Excited by the rebirth of the Jewish community of Oporto, brothers Lawrence and Horace Kadoorie visited the Synagogue and the Pressman family residence in São João de Madeira. It was following this visit that Pressman’s daughter moved to London with her husband Ronald Wright. Many years later, she recounted:

Having lived many years within the Jewish Community of Oporto, its great Synagogue being sadly empty most of the time, I still can’t believe that all those hundreds of people around me in the North London Synagogue, of which I’ve been a member since I arrived, are all Jews.

1965

While Rabbi Judah Cohen and Srul Finkelstein tried to keep the Synagogue’s *ner tamid* (eternal light) burning, Meyer Samuel Cymerman became President of the Jewish Community of Oporto. Originally from Lutzk in Eastern Europe, Cymerman had arrived in Lisbon many years ago, but decided to build his clothing factory in Oporto.

Meyer was described by his grandson Henry as:

*an industrial entrepreneur and a man ahead of his time, with a strong Jewish identity. He left work in Portugal in World War II to rescue Jews in the Pyrenees, fleeing Nazism. His intelligence and humanity are still alive in all those who knew him*⁹⁵.

The books of members of the Jewish Community of Oporto then recorded the existence of 25 official members, including five individuals of Portuguese origin, who did not count for *minyan* but who were collaborators of the Community, especially Amílcar Paulo, a scholar of Marranism and the last traces of the Portuguese Marranos communities.

Amílcar Paulo described, the end of the Portuguese Marrano communities in the Oporto magazine ‘Tripeiro’:

*Some thirty years ago there were, in certain localities of Trás-os-Montes and Beiras, nuclei of New Christians who followed some Jewish religious traditions. These Jewish-Portuguese traditions are almost completely disappearing. From the above it is concluded that nothing was worth the instigations and diligences promoted to those who for centuries abandoned Judaism. The creation of a seminary and the lifting of a majestic temple of enormous dimensions have served nothing*⁹⁶.

This former student of the Jewish Theological Institute (who was “converted” to Judaism by Barros Basto and who had taken the Hebrew name Levi Ben-Har) would gain worldwide fame, focusing his attention on the customs and prayers of the Marranos, the history of the Jews and the New Christians, and the defence of Israel.

The intellectual, personal, and sentimental qualities of Amílcar Paulo were so advanced that they made the worst consequences of the failure of the “Rescue Work” obvious. In

⁹⁵ Testimony of Henry Cymerman.

⁹⁶ Amílcar Paulo, “A Comuna Judaica do Porto - Apontamentos para a sua História”, Tripeiro, 1965, p. 27.

addition to Barros Basto's waste of energy and money, the anonymous letters against him, the scandalous trial, the dishonour of the community and his family, there was also the suffering of all those who followed him closely, including Samuel Rodrigues, Norberto Moreno and Amílcar Paulo. They lived and died unjustly as non-Jews and mere "friends" of the Jewish Community of Oporto.

1966

For financial reasons, the Jewish Community of Oporto dispensed with the services of Rabbi Judah Cohen. Once again, Srul Finkelstein found himself working alone. One of the members who helped him the most, the German Jew, Emil Oppenheim, had a complicated temper and ended up dividing the small Community by making enemies. Because of his work in the laundry, he could not bear the late arrival of his fellow members for the start of prayers. At one point he simply refused to appear in the Synagogue.

President Meyer Samuel Cymerman reached an agreement with a Public Security Police officer and his wife to live free of charge in the basement of the Synagogue. According to Eliezer Beigel, there was a deeper reason for hiring the couple.

*The few Jews in the Community did not want problems with the authorities. With the police officer living in the Synagogue, he could tell the political police that the Synagogue was only used to pray, there were no Jewish conspiracies!*⁹⁷

1967

Paul Pressman again became President of the Jewish Community of Oporto, replacing Meyer Samuel Cymerman, who had held the post for two years. Despite the departure of Rabbi Judah Cohen, Srul Finkelstein maintained close contacts with Rabbi Abraham Assor of the Synagogue of Lisbon, who helped the Oporto community as much as he could.

At Srul Finkelstein's request, Rabbi Assor asked chazan (cantor) Mohluf Arama to travel from Lisbon to Oporto to lead the High Holiday services. CIP paid for his travel expenses and provided accommodation for the cantor from Lisbon. This practice had already begun in the 1950s, with some interruptions.

1968

Among the members of the Jewish community of Oporto, there were already a number of Sephardic Jews, including Henry Tillo, Alain Piccioto, Abraham Sequerra, Isaac Attia and others, in addition to 20 *Ashkenazi* Jews, including Paul Cymerman, Emil Oppenheim, Paltiel Bronstein, Nathan Beigel, Paulo Pressman, Srul Finkelstein and Rudolf Lemchen.

Although there were more than enough Jews to form a *minyan* in the Synagogue, this rarely happened. There were always a few missing that prevented the constitution of the

⁹⁷ Testimony of Eliezer Beigel.

necessary quorum of ten men. This led Paulo Pressman to start calling Jews from Lisbon for the holidays, to make sure that there would be a *minyan*.

His daughter recalls:

My father used to invite some members of the Community of Lisbon to the festivities, for them to help with religious service and to increase the number of Jews in the Synagogue. To that end, my father paid for their travel and accommodation expenses. The community had no money.

1969

The year was marked by the death of Srul Finkelstein, the leader, chazan (cantor) and religious engine of the Synagogue of Oporto for more than thirty years. Srul was buried in the cemetery of the Jewish Community in Lisbon, of which he was a member. His granddaughter, Luisa Finkelstein, would later say:

My grandfather was a kind of Rabbi of the Synagogue of Oporto for decades. He liked a lot of things in his life, but what he liked most was being Jewish.⁹⁸

Finkelstein's death coincided with the breakdown of the 19th century mechanical clock in the Tower of the Stock Exchange Palace in Oporto. According to the inscription on the clock, its last repair occurred on 18 December 1969, which not only marked the birthday of the founder of the Jewish Community of Oporto but corresponded, in the Hebrew calendar, to the 10th of *Tevet*, which marks the siege of the Temple.

1970

At a meeting of the General Assembly, Srul Finkelstein's name was recalled with emotion, *"for his religious assiduity in prayer, for his active and competent participation as chazan during religious services and for his efficient activity as [Vice-President and] Treasurer of the Committee."*

Between 1937 and 1969 Finkelstein imposed the rule of Halacha (traditional Jewish law), and the Synagogue was always open on *Shabbat* and Holidays, despite the small number of community members. His death marked the start of a period of religious emptiness, for the first time in the history of CIP.

Srul was no longer at the lectern to say the prayers with care. Technically, no one could replace him, and the usual problems remained. The Jews of Oporto were few, non-observant, lived far from the Synagogue, and had weak relationships with each other. Finally, everyone agreed that the building was too large for so few people.

Despite maintaining a minimal level of communal life, the community ceased to use the Synagogue weekly, with rare exceptions. The most important dates of the Jewish calendar were usually celebrated not in the Synagogue, but in the private homes of community members. In some cases, the Shaaré Tikvah Synagogue in Lisbon was used because of its welcoming atmosphere.

⁹⁸ Testimony of Luisa Finkelstein.

In 1970, two American Jews, Harry and Marilyn Flitterman, arrived in Oporto seeking a better life. Born in neighbourhoods in the US with hundreds of thousands of Jews, and where there were no monuments as large as the Kadoorie Synagogue, they were shocked to learn that the only souls that existed there were those of ghosts.

The caretaker of the building arranged a meeting between the newly arrived couple and the President of CIP, Paulo Pressman. The caretaker was a great talker. Before the meeting with Pressman, the visitors knew already that the Community had abandoned its religious activities and that the Jews of the city were few and uninvolved.

1971

International institutions had cut off contacts with CIP, as if it no longer existed. One example is that of the Spanish and Portuguese Congregation of London, which was still interested in the community until the end of the 1960s. After Srul Finkelstein's death, they ceased contact. That English Jewish organization that morally owned the Synagogue, left it to its fate in the care of the small local community, with no concern for the future.

At this time, a Jewish Encyclopaedia in an article on Captain Barros Basto, wrote:

*Due largely to the changing religious atmosphere in Portugal, but partly to its overly ambitious plans and certain character flaws (weakness in its personality), the project only had limited success, not maintaining its promising start. He died, almost blind and frustrated.*⁹⁹

1972

Harry and Marilyn Flitterman took their young children to the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue every Sunday for them to play with two other children of the same age. Adults gathered to watch their children play in an almost abandoned building that was the only Jewish symbol in northern Portugal.

One of the young people in the community, Henrique Cymerman, was 12 years old at the time and prepared for his bar-mitzvah. In the Synagogue, the name of Barros Basto was pronounced in a low voice. One day he went into the basement of the building and found thousands of pamphlets written by the Captain for the Marranos, as well as copies of the "Ha-Lapid". He asked for more information and was told that the first President of the Community *"came to a bitter end and was much maligned"*¹⁰⁰.

Families of merchants and industrialists, mostly *Ashkenazi* Jews, arrived in Oporto. Max Gozal, Moris Wilson, Edward Solal, Emil Bendahan, James Sequerra and Samuel Mendler joined the Community.

⁹⁹ Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia, Keter Publishing House, Jerusalem, 1971.

¹⁰⁰ Henrique Cymerman, "Haaretz", 12.01.2012.

1973

Journalist Mordehai Avishai travelled to Oporto to talk to a board member, Paltiel Cymerman. The interview took place in the Synagogue and the Jewish reality of Oporto was revealed. The Synagogue was only full on the day of its inauguration, the Jews of the city were currently few, there were about 15 official members and others further apart, a lady was paid to watch over the Synagogue (where she lives with her family) and the only thing left of the Marranos is one letter or another, arriving from time to time, asking about what it will be like to live in Israel.

That year the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue was visited by Kurt Weinberg, a writer and professor at the Universities of Iowa and British Columbia, Canada. He had published numerous studies of Franz Kafka's books. Kurt had arrived earlier in Oporto in 1936 to teach French, English and German. He quickly learned Portuguese and wrote several articles for The Rising Sun magazine. Kurt enjoyed life in Oporto and had an excellent relationship with his students. At the same time, he reported in Die Zukunft, a German newspaper for Jewish refugees about the landing of "heavy goods" in Portugal from German ships. These were artillery pieces, tanks, armoured cars, and personnel transport vehicles, destined for Spain. At 2:00 a.m. on Monday, February 22, 1937, the political police broke into his residence and arrested him. They gave him eight days to get out of Portugal. He was told that if he returned he would be charged with espionage.

1974

The Revolution in Portugal of 25 April 1974 ended Marcello Caetano's "Social State". Freedom was proclaimed, but not for all the Jews. That changing social climate produced even more dispersion within the small and divided Jewish community of Oporto.

The Jewish Community, consisting only of a few dozen people, experienced a climate of fear created by the occupations of the business of Ozias Cymerman and Meir Cymerman, the escape to Spain of Henry Tillo's family, and the threats of arrests by an army commando unit that fell on other Oporto Jews.

Paulo Pressman, President of CIP, felt that his freedom was threatened and entered his factory with care. His daughter, Eta Pressman Wright, recalls this moment:

At the time, the workers had generally been indoctrinated that industries should stop belonging to the bosses and it was impossible to foresee what would happen. My parents (my mother, Ida Pressman, was also an active board member) suddenly found themselves facing the loss (as did so many others) of everything they had gained so far. When they entered the factory that first day, they noticed that the workers were present but not working, as if waiting for something to happen. My father then asked who had been chosen to run the factory. As no one stepped forward, everything returned to normal. We were lucky!

The atmosphere in Lisbon was also agitated. The President of the Jewish Community of Lisbon, Moses Amzalak, who had been close to the *Estado Novo* (the old regime), took refuge so as not to be the target of violence. Samuel Ruah, a specialist in otorhinolaryngology,

who had treated Oliveira Salazar was arrested on the grounds that he had been a “*doctor of the fascists*”.

Wild occupations also affected some of the members of the Lisbon community. Inácio Steinhardt recounts:

A friend of mine, whose father had died in the Holocaust, had a small but prosperous firm with nine employees with whom he was on the best of terms. A few days after the 25 April, they told him that they belonged to a communist cell and were taking over the company from that day forward. Traumatized by his memories of the past, my friend did not hesitate but transferred his family to Spain. Years later, the company was bankrupt and his former employees invited him to return. Naturally, he refused.¹⁰¹

1975

One day in the late afternoon of July 1975, the Synagogue was pelted with stones for more than an hour. The next day, a letter was put in the mailbox addressed to the (non-existent) “Rabbi”:

The Synagogue was stoned by nationalists, which is unfortunate but it happened. It is not the fault of the nationalists but of certain Jewish people who collaborate with Freemasonry and the Communists. That is what led them to act like this, because among the stone throwers there was no anti-Semitic or pro-Nazi, but as they were all victims of certain Jews, the action was a kind of reprisal through their own fault.

The authors of the letter also complained about an interview of a person of the community in which they

attacked Salazar’s regime. She bragged about being arrested by the PIDE and was trying to make it clear that Salazar was anti-Semitic. (...) If we have to, we will liquidate all the Jewish collaborators of the Communists. If we ever attack Jews, it will only be those who collaborate with the Communists, and if that’s not enough to have peace, and if we have to, we will eliminate the whole community with a single pogrom more efficiently than Hitler did, and for that we don’t need publicity. It remains to be added that we are Christians and because of this we are not capable of such carnage. (...) Finally, we mean that the Jews of judgment, the intelligent, the anti-communists, the anti-exploiters have nothing to fear. They are an aimless people, capricious and unethical. You need bosses to get in order and stop bothering others.¹⁰²

At the same time, Barros Basto’s widow, 82-year-old Lea Azancot, requested justice for her husband in a letter to the President of the Republic, General Costa Gomes. The letter says:

To the generals of the Disciplinary Council who judged him, it was considered unworthy for an army officer to engage in religious ceremonies that the Law of Moses imposes on its initiates and for that practice alone he was separated from the army.

¹⁰¹ Testimony of Inácio Steinhardt.

¹⁰² CIP/CJP Files.

Tormented always by heartbreak, he died in 1961, without having achieved his moral rehabilitation and his reintegration in the ranks of the army. I hereby inform you that I have delivered a petition in this regard to Oporto Army Headquarters, where I was told that it would be forwarded to the Committee on Examination and Information of Political Processes.

The petition was legally grounded in a diploma published on 26 April 1974, in the heat of the revolution. It stated that “all political crimes and disciplinary offences of the same nature” would be amnestied (Article 1(1)) and that all “*military and civilian servants of the State who have been dismissed, retired, or compulsively placed in reserve and separated from their service due to reasons of a political nature shall be reintegrated in their positions, on presentation of an application*” (Article 2(1)). The widow understood that the spirit of Law No. 173/74, of April 26 would apply to a case of political and religious discrimination against a Jewish community leader using sanctions imposed by a military Disciplinary Council, at a time of Nazi and Church persecution of the Jews of Europe.

Law 498-F/74 rules that “*in cases of incapacity and death [of the soldier to be reinstated], in cases of incapacity or death [of the military to be reintegrated], the benefits of reintegration may be requested by their spouse, parents or children*” (Article 1(3)), “*and such benefits may unofficially and at any time be granted by decision of the Chief of Staff of the branch to which the military belonged*” (Article 1(4)) of the same act, with the wording given it by Executive Act nº 434-N/82 of 29 October).

1976

The Jewish writer Arieh Chem planned to write a play on the story of Captain Barros Basto, the “Rescue Work” and his expulsion from the Army. For this purpose, he had the help of Amílcar Paulo and Barros Basto’s daughter, Miriam Azancot.

The writer’s enthusiasm was diminished when, on visiting Lisbon, and talking to Moses Amzalak, he realized that the expulsion of Barros Basto from the Army came from a process of internal intrigue and destructive anonymous denunciations.

Arieh Chem recounts the author’s dilemma:

If until my visit to Portugal I imagined the conflict as a one of the Church against the Rescue, now everything seems more complex to me. It is logical that complexity is interesting, especially when it is not the product of imagination but of reality, but it is also more difficult to write about, especially in theatre, in which the foci should not be many for better interpretation of the public and, last but not least, impact.¹⁰³

At this time, in Israel, Rabbi Yitshak Yaakov Wachtvogel received a letter from the Jewish Community of Oporto asking for the following clarification. What should a Community do when there are only 10 Jews to make up a *minyan* and one of them intends to travel before the High Holidays to another city? The Rabbi replied that the Community has the right to compel this Jew not to travel or, alternatively, to pay a Jew from anywhere else to complete the *minyan*, later imposing one-tenth of the expense to the Jew who left town.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Isabel Lopes Archive.

¹⁰⁴ From the archive of Ignatius Steinhardt.

The message “Death to the Jews” with swastikas was written in large letters, on the central wall of the Synagogue of Oporto in 1977. Jews were targets from all sides of the political spectrum. Right-wing parties jeered at Jews as unwanted immigrants and communists and called them owners and imperialists.

Paul Pressman, as an old man, felt powerless to protect the Synagogue and the Jews who were at risk of coming to harm from dangerous extremists. Guilhermino Ranito, a former student of Barros Basto who visited the Synagogue that year, said that one day, he was trapped for hours, because the building was pelted by stones from all sides and its windows were all broken. Police cars passed by and no one wanted to protect the Jews.

The Army delayed in responding to Lea Azancot’s request for her late husband’s moral rehabilitation. The Jewish Community of Oporto followed the case with great interest and concern, as it concerned its benefactor and first President, but never intervened directly. There was also a period of great revolutionary unrest.

1978

The General Staff of the Armed Forces rejected the request of Lea Montero Azancot, accepting the worst facts that had remained unproven during the old regime.

The problem focused on the plaintiff – in the spirit of Executive Act No. 173/74 of 26 April of cases of political and religious segregation, especially when it occurred at a time when, as is known, there was antisemitism in Europe – would have a great deal of interest in being debated, not the circumstance that the facts completely disprove such an appeal. The facts that justified the decision to separate from service are translated into homosexual practices with several students of the Jewish Theological Institute of Oporto and which have nothing to do with the ceremonies prescribed by the Semitic religion.

The arguments of the General Staff of the Armed Forces did not restore justice to the deceased, but condemned him for the second time, using arguments that had been discredited by the courts four decades earlier. That decision revealed the anti-Jewish bias of the judges in the case. It was not challenged, so that theoretically the decision became final in the legal order. But also, the 1937 decision regarding Captain Barros Basto was also made without being challenged. The crime had been the trial itself. *Quae rerum natura prohibentur, nulla lege confirmata.* (What is forbidden by the nature of things cannot be confirmed by any law.)

More than thirty years later, the First Commission of the Assembly of the Republic wrote the following about this decision of the army:

The Opinion/Decision dismissing the claim of the widow Lea Monteiro Azancot Barros Basto, dated 1978, fallaciously attempts to remedy said antisemitic motivation and engineers a simulacrum of facts, which had been deemed not proven in 1937, trying in vain to convey some reputability to a previously defined decision.

Lawrence Kadoorie wrote a 20-page historical essay on the family's benevolent works around the world in honour of his mother Laura Kadoorie. No mention was made of the Synagogue of Oporto, as if it symbolized the shame of a failed project.

The “Instituto de Relações Cultural Portugal-Israel” was created by Amílcar Paulo and 30 other non-Jewish Portuguese citizens. The Institute's address was Rua de Guerra Junqueiro, 340, Oporto, i.e. the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue building, which was then an empty space, given the functions that a Synagogue must perform.

At that time, there was no religious observance, although a Synagogue is intended as a meeting house (*Beit kneset*) and a house of prayer (*beit tefilah*) for adult Jews.

In November, Ephraim Eldar, Israel's ambassador to Portugal, was the target of a terrorist attack on the embassy. The perpetrator of the attack, an Arab supporter of the Palestinian cause, took advantage of the moment when the ambassador arrived in the morning to make use of a machine gun and a hand grenade. Eldar, who sustained leg injuries, only survived thanks to the extraordinary intervention of his bodyguards from the Public Security Police. One drove the car to flee the scene and another was killed at the scene, by the hand grenade. The name of this hero of the PSP was Ildefonso Pereira.

1980

The Jewish writer Eytan Bergman visited the Synagogue. He wrote of this experience:

The extravagant Synagogue is so large that its benches can accommodate hundreds of people. It was filled only at its inauguration. When I arrived, only the ghosts remained there. The most disturbing aspect of the Synagogue was silence. The Synagogue is in the care of a lady who is not Jewish and a dog protects the property. The Kadoories still pay for her maintenance and she probably takes good care of it. But how long will it take for another Jew to visit the Synagogue?

Throughout its history, the Jewish Community of Oporto was judged by third parties by the number of people that observers saw in the Synagogue when they came to Oporto. The Synagogue was consolidating its sad reputation in the 1980s as a museum, even though there was always a Jewish community with a sufficient number of people for the full exercise of worship.

1981

The Synagogue opened its doors for the High Holidays in 1981. Rabbi Abraham Assor, from the Jewish Community of Lisbon, sent his son Isaac, then 16 years old, as chazan (cantor). This was the extent of religious life in the Kadoorie Synagogue for the year. It had become a kind of museum, closed to the public.

The Jewish community of Oporto was dispersed and Jewish life in the city remained moribund. The only cultural activity was that of Amílcar Paulo, who participated in a Jewish Studies congress in Jerusalem, because of his worldwide reputation.

Amílcar had long specialized in guided tours of Marrano land, a name that the Portuguese Marranos Committee attributed to the regions where Marranos lived in the interior of Portugal. Any historian, researcher, journalist or Jew visiting Oporto and interested in cultural issues inevitably included a meeting with Amílcar Paulo. He would sometimes accompany visitors on trips to Trás-os-Montes and the Beira provinces, so that everyone could see that Marranism, permanently fuelled by a multiplicity of marriages between cousins, was still practiced in Portugal, although it was disappearing.

In addition to the longer trips he made with visitors, Amílcar Paulo invariably opened the doors of the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue, where he knew all the corners of the building and the history of each religious object or document, welcoming his guests in a friendly manner and technical knowledge of enormous value.

1982

Emil Oppenheim died in 1982. The news did not reach the Jews of the city. These included the Bronstein, Tillo, Henaler, Proxman, Yanovsky, Azancot, Beigel, Piccioto, Flitterman, Finkelstein, Cymerman, Joanes, Sequerra, Gozal, Terlo, and Rothwell families and others. President Paulo Pressman, an octogenarian, was ill at this time.

A story from this time recounts how, at the request of the German Consul, the German Jew Rudolf Lemchen visited the cemetery of Agramonte with two Catholic nuns who had cared for Emil Oppenheim in the last months of his life. The nuns asked Lemchen to take a siddur (prayer book) with him to say the kaddish (memorial prayer). He did that. After, one of the nuns took the prayer book from him and said the kaddish alone: *“Yitgadál veyitcadash shemé rabá...”*¹⁰⁵

1983

The magazine “História” published an article about Captain Barros Basto, saying that his work *“resulted in only an abandoned temple after the 50s”* and *“a Jewish community that no longer exists, without a minyan, with only two families of Polish origin and one of German origin, descendants of refugees from the time of World War II”*.

These statements in the journal, made in good faith, did not reflect the truth. In 1983, the same families mentioned earlier were still living in Oporto.

Pressman’s presidency, like that of Barros Basto, lasted 25 years. Although his tenure had no great adventures, he faced a lot of challenges. Before he died, Pressman met with two young Israelis, Moses and Marco Medina, who had recently arrived in the city. He asked them to try to revitalize the Synagogue. *“You do not go from here, I assure you that later I will go to Morocco and get you a Rabbi with ten children, we will have minyan...”*, he said.

According to Moses,

¹⁰⁵ From the archives of Ignatius Steinhart.

*The community did not function and they told me... there was a Portugal-Israel Association that was chaired by a very dear person here in the community of Oporto, I can't remember his name, plus his wife.*¹⁰⁶

That year, Paulo Pressman and Amílcar Paulo died. They were the guarantors of the promotion of Jewish religion (Pressman) and culture (Paulo) in the community.

Self-proclaimed “fighters of the Palestinian revolution” carry out a terrorist attack in 1983 in the Algarve against Issam Sartawi, Israel’s friend in the Palestine Liberation Organization. Sartawi was shot while attending a congress of the Socialist International. The case, which has never been fully clarified, had a major impact on the international community and, according to the New York Times, there may have been direct involvement of PLO leaders.

1984

Rudolf Lemchen, a German Jew, was appointed President of the Jewish Community of Oporto. He had a large, empty Synagogue to run. In addition to cultural events initiated by Miriam Azancot, the daughter of Barros Basto, the Synagogue only opened on religious holidays, with the help of the two young Israelis mentioned above. They tried to bring together a community that was aged, inert, and disinterested.

Fifteen years passed between the death of Srul Finkelstein and the death of Paul Pressman. With the exception of the cultural activities led by Amílcar Paulo and Pressman’s desperate efforts to maintain some Jewish life during the High Holidays, the Jewish Community of Oporto and the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue did not fulfil their religious and social mission.

The Synagogue had a library that was open for study by interested parties who did not belong to the Community. It was eventually closed to the public after several thefts.

Throughout this decade and the following one, Ignatius Steinhardt and Elvira Mea, a former student of Amílcar Paulo, documented the disappearance of the Marranos.

*In the course of our investigations, we have located and talked to some alumni from Yeshivat Rosh Pinah. Some have passed away since then. They all married Catholics and raised children and grandchildren who were not Jews.*¹⁰⁷

1985

The President of the CIP, Rudolf Lemchen, told Ignatius Steinhardt that he only opened the Synagogue one day a year on Yom Kippur. *“He spent all day alone and together with the nine scrolls that were there, made a minyan. No one else.”*¹⁰⁸

Many non-Jewish citizens called the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue a “Mosque” out of ignorance. In a programme on Portuguese television in 1985, the story of the old Synagogue was told by an ill-informed reporter with a politicized version of events. The programme,

¹⁰⁶ Marina Pignatelli, “Interioridades e Exterioridades dos Judeus de Lisboa”, 2008, pp. 162-163.

¹⁰⁷ “Ben-Rosh”, p. 254.

¹⁰⁸ Testimony of Ignatius Steinhardt.

however, had the opportunity to affirm that the building was a Jewish Synagogue and not a Muslim Mosque.

The identity of the building at 340 Guerra Junqueiro Street seemed to be a secret. The habit of regularly celebrating services on *Shabbat* and Holidays had long since been lost. Without the help of a Rabbi or someone capable of uniting the secular Jews of Oporto, it was not possible to revive the Synagogue, now associated with poverty, loneliness, and desolation. It was a kind of monumental cemetery, or a “black hole” from which no light emerged.

Throughout the eighties, it was very difficult to bring together a minyan with moribund people and expect from them the slightest animation. The Medina brothers, who were young, regularly opened the Synagogue for religious services, but it was difficult to attract people who were not used to attending Synagogue, since the death of my grandfather, Srul.¹⁰⁹

1986

A meeting of former Yeshiva students was organized in the Synagogue of Oporto. Inácio Steinhardt, the organizer, also invited members of the Jewish Community of Lisbon and the widow of Barros Basto, Lea Azancot, who was then 93 years old.

The former students who were present, now all septuagenarians, did not hide their surprise and above all veneration, as they greeted the widow of their rector. The words they addressed to her with tears of emotion, evoked memories of the distant past.¹¹⁰

The defamation of Barros Basto had condemned the Community and the Synagogue to failure. The oldest member of the Jewish Community of Oporto, Jaime Yanovsky, born and raised in the city of Oporto and who for many years was part of the Directorate of the Jewish Community of Lisbon, said, at the age of 90, that “*the Estado Novo and Salazar were Catholic, but were always good for Jewish residents and refugees and only people poorly informed or in bad faith do not agree. But there were many anti-Semites in the state and Captain Barros Basto was the victim of them and, of course, of internal intrigues they precipitated.*”¹¹¹

1987

In a videotaped interview, President Rudolf Lemchen said to a group of French visitors that he had always heard that behind the tiles in the entrance hall of the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue, the Captain had entered a list of names of new Christians convicted by the Inquisition. This testimony was not corroborated, nor has it ever been, by any other source.

Abroad, the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue was better known for the fantasies of enthusiasts than for reality. It was said that the Synagogue had been “*built by Barros Basto*”, “*a Marrano*”, “*leader of the Marranos*” and “*leader of the Marrano community of Oporto*”, “*persecuted by the slander of fascism*” and “*that is why the Marranos fled*”. None of the assertions were correct, but no one seemed interested in correcting the errors.

¹⁰⁹ Testimony of Luísa Finkelstein.

¹¹⁰ “Ben-Rosh”, p. 120.

¹¹¹ Testimony of Jaime Yanovsky.

Captain Barros Basto's widow, Lea Azancot, died at the age of 94 in 1988. His daughter Miriam took his place as an official member of the Jewish Community of Oporto. She began to play an important role at this stage, given that *"she had immense pride in her father and sought to clear his name and image for the world. She fought hard for this for almost twenty years, until she died, dedicating herself daily to the Synagogue, accompanying the first schools and organizing cultural events, guiding visits of academics, journalists and writers, both Portuguese and foreign, with an interest in the history of the Rescue Work and the Synagogue, in addition to the lectures she gave in various auditoriums."*¹¹²

The final question about the expulsion from the Army of Arthur Carlos Barros Basto: *"Will they ever do you justice?"* was conveyed from mother to daughter. The controversy around the decisions of 1937 and 1978 did not fade. In Portugal and in the world, under the leadership of Miriam Azancot, politicians, historians, journalists, and humanists intervened, noisily at times. However, the various initiatives were met with silence from the Portuguese authorities.

1989

Eliezer Beigel, son of Nathan Beigel, was elected President of the Jewish Community of Oporto, replacing Rudolf Lemchen.

I was President because there was no one else who would do it. It was a symbolic position, like Lemchen before, because there was nothing to preside over. Only Moisés [Medina] and Miriam, the daughter of Barros Basto, opened the Synagogue when they had time.

It was up to the new President of the CIP, on a business trip to Asia, to call Lawrence Kadoorie. He explained that he was in Macao and that he was returning the next morning to Europe. *"Lawrence said to me: There's lunch here at home. I won't take no for an answer."*

Eliezer Beigel immediately travelled to Hong Kong, where, the next day, in his best suit, he had lunch with Lawrence Kadoorie, his wife Muriel Gabbay and their children, Rita and Michael. Faced with a remark from the host, *"So you're now the President of the Synagogue?"*, Beigel replied: *"No, I'm just the trustee!"*¹¹³

In 1989, the President of the Portuguese Republic, Mário Soares, asked the Jews for forgiveness for the persecutions of the Inquisition that took place in Portugal. This long-awaited symbolic gesture by the head of State seemed to mark a new era in relations between political institutions and the Jews.

At the same time, in Belmonte, in the statutes of the newly constituted "Jewish Community of Belmonte", one of the objectives was *"To integrate into the Jewish community of Lisbon, as an autonomous congregation, because it is the only representative entity of Judaism in Portugal"*. Marie Antoinette Garcia would describe this as *"a sign of pettiness as opposed to what usually happens in Jewish communities"*¹¹⁴.

¹¹² Testimony of Isabel Lopes.

¹¹³ Testimony of Eliezer Beigel.

¹¹⁴ Maria Antonieta Garcia, "Judaísmo no Feminino", UNL, 2000, p. 170.

In 1990, a German rabbi named of Tuvia Hod visited the Synagogue and said he was the grandson of Menasseh Bendov. He met with the daughter of Barros Basto.

*The conversation did not go well. I heard the following words: 'Your grandfather was crazy. As soon as a boy at school fell in love with his daughters, he left for Palestine and left behind everything he possessed; friends, the house, the store, the business,' to which I replied, 'Sara is my mother. Today, my brothers, my cousins and I are all observant Jews.'*¹¹⁵

1991

The year 1991 was marked, in the Jewish Community of Oporto, by the news from Belmonte, related to conversions of Marranos. Of the more than two hundred Marranos of the Belmonte community, including men, women, old people and children, 85 people were officially enrolled in the "Book of Conversions". The community was divided between Marranos (more than a hundred) and converted Jews (85).¹¹⁶

Sociologist Maria Antonieta Garcia, who accompanied the community of Belmonte in the periods before and after the conversions, which occurred in 1990, 1991, 1994 and 1995, says that conversions were carried out for reasons such as a desire for "*integration into the chosen people and the consequent acquisition of Israeli nationality*", "*the possibility of openness to other Jewish communities that would result in the widening of human horizons and would be positively reflected in the diversification of marriages*", "*in business*" and "*for prestige*"¹¹⁷.

Moisés Espírito Santo, a Professor of Sociology of Religions in Portugal, said that conversions in Belmonte in the 1990s were "*a loss to Beirã culture*" and explained that Marranism had its own particularities that made it an irreconcilable with official Judaism, which "*is in contradiction with local customs, imposing food casherization [Kosher food], confessional inbreeding [family purity], masculinization of worship [according to tradition] and a dead language in the liturgy [Hebrew]. Its only guarantee is not to miss the 'train of fundamentalism' led by the American and Israeli rabbinate.*"¹¹⁸

The New Jews (ex-Marranos) of Belmonte, who made an Orthodox conversion to Judaism, assumed that they would be treated equally by other Jews. This did not happen. There were those who complained that they and their friends were more Jewish than those from Belmonte.

It was as if the word "Jew" had diverse degrees and shades and could be considered in an exaggerated or minimalist way. Moreover, the first Portuguese Jews in 500 years continued to be presented to tourists as being "Marranos", leaving the small Jewish community of Belmonte condemned to life under the eyes of the tourists.

¹¹⁵ Testimony of Rabbi Tuvia Hod.

¹¹⁶ "Judaísmo no Feminino", p. 286.

¹¹⁷ "Judaísmo no Feminino", pp. 165, 184, 286.

¹¹⁸ Preface to the book "Judaísmo no Feminino", pp. 19-20.

To make matters worse, the Belmonte people who had always lived in harmony, were now experiencing the confrontation between new Jews and old Marranos, between Judaism and Marranism.

Orthodox rabbis told the women that they should forget the past” and that “the role of the priestess is no longer prestigious, but refers to a past of ignorance, of defilement; her ancient knowledge now has a pejorative connotation.”¹¹⁹

1992

In 1992, for the first time, Portugal assumed the presidency of the European Economic Community, under Prime Minister Cavaco Silva and Minister of Foreign Affairs João de Deus Pinheiro. There were those who thought the country would become more attractive to Jewish businesses and foreign investment, but Europe’s smallest Jewish community remained unchanged.

In Lisbon, the Jewish community, with just over three hundred people, was secularized, with successive mixed marriages. Rabbi Abraham Assor wrote that when he died, he wanted to be buried by the Chevra Kadisha (burial society) of Madrid.

In Belmonte, Jews recently converted to Judaism, instead of feeling the joy of those who had lived under shackles for centuries, lived in permanent conflict with their Marrano brothers and were seen as “rare animals” by tourists who appeared there.

In the Algarve, which half a century earlier saw its Sephardic community disappear, populated by the same families who now lived in Lisbon, there were not enough Jews to form a *minyan*. All Jewish events held at this time took place sadly in the cemetery of Faro.

In Oporto, with just over two dozen people, Miriam continued to show the Synagogue to interested parties and President Eliezer Beigel placed his hopes on the young Medinas, who were trying to boost Mekor Haim with religious services on *Shabbat* and Holidays. The Jews of the city included Alain Piccioto, Henry Tillo, Abraham Sarfati, Donald Okon, Marcos Trejger, Michael Rudowsky, Dale Jeffries, Yossef Grinman, Vladimir Grinman, Eliezer Beigel, Rudolf Lemchen, Rui Neuman and a few others.

1993

A budget was prepared in 1993 for the possible hiring of a Rabbi and for promoting the religious and cultural activities of the Community. It was estimated that \$250,000 would be needed for a two-year contract for Rabbi Moshe Sorotzkin, including two annual trips to Israel, the purchase of a *Sefer Torah* (Torah scroll), prayer books, cooking utensils, and heating for the *mikvah* (ritual bath). The Rabbi would also be required to accompany the President of the Community on a visit to the Kadoorie family in Hong Kong.

A letter from the Jewish Community of Oporto, signed by Moisés Medina and supported by Eliezer Beigel, was sent to Lawrence Kadoorie in Hong Kong. The letter did not quote

¹¹⁹ “Judaísmo no Feminino”, p. 288.

concrete numbers but said that the Synagogue needed repairs. The Community also felt the need to hire a Rabbi to unify the Jews of Oporto, to promote Jewish life and to attract the Marranos who lived in the area. *"We feel it is a matter of now or never."*

Horace Kadoorie replied to the Jewish Community of Oporto saying that he and his family would not pay for a Rabbi for the Synagogue, but that they were willing to fund repairs on the building, as long as a convincing budget was sent to them.

A few weeks later, Lawrence died, aged 94. He was an exceptional man, who had won the "Ramon Magsaysay" prize, Asia's equivalent of the Nobel Peace Prize, and had been a prominent figure in Jewish institutions. He inherited from his father his entrepreneurial spirit and interest in humanitarian and charitable activities. He was a successful president of more than a dozen companies. He promoted charities around the world and was decorated in Belgium, France, and England, where he received a knighthood in 1981.

1994

Since the Kadoorie family did not agree to support the hiring a Rabbi for the Synagogue of Oporto, a letter signed by Moisés Medina was sent to the Spanish and Portuguese Congregation of London. The Community felt the need to hire a dynamic religious leader to promote Judaism in the city. The letter describes the example of Belmonte, which a few years earlier had merited the interest of foreign Rabbis. The result was, according to the letter, the identification of 600 Marranos, the formal conversion of 200, with another group to be converted later. The final sentence again was: *"It is now or never."*

A response from London never arrived but Horace Kadoorie reiterated that the Family Foundation would support the work but wished to know: Is the Synagogue used? How many times? By how many people? Will the Community be able to ensure the future maintenance of the Synagogue, as the Kadoorie family will no longer do so?

Moisés Medina replied that the Synagogue was usually used by 45 people and that the future would bring better days. As a result, the Foundation agreed to provide 26,647 contos (about 5,000 Euros). The issue seemed to be resolved but the troubles were not over.

The accounts of the Jewish Community of Oporto were administered by Treasurer Luisa Finkelstein Cymerman, granddaughter of Srul Finkelstein, who was not involved in the negotiations. Horace received a letter from his representative in Portugal, John Basto, saying that the financial transfer should be paid directly to the builder, because wrote Basto, after a meeting with Medina and Beigel, he learned that they want to *"avoid any possibility of interference or criticism by members not directly involved"*.

Apparently, relations between the few people in the Community were not the best. In an internal document of this time, including the names of Luisa Cymerman, Rénia Cymerman, David Cymerman, Miriam Barros Basto, Isabel Lopes, Elisabeth Kiefe, Erika Hernandez and Luísa Hernandez, Moisés Medina writes: *"It is better that Eliezer [Beigel] talk to these people, because I have no confidence in them"*.

The Jewish Community of Oporto was interested that, after the repairs, the Synagogue would be integrated into the Kadoorie Foundation. Horace replied that the *"legal title of the Synagogue is unclear"*, adding that from documents, or at least from a moral point of view, the property belongs to the Spanish and Portuguese Congregation of London.

Sidney Gordon, on behalf of the Kadoorie Foundation, admitted, in a later communication, not to rule out the possibility of acquiring the property of the Synagogue, if this is legally possible. However, he pointed out that when Hong Kong becomes part of China, it may be difficult to explain how someone there owns property in Portugal.

A lawyer was hired to find a solution. It was concluded that nothing could be done. The CIP was undocumented as an association. It was materially extinct, since Barros Basto lost his civic status and strength and stopped keeping records. An association in such conditions, which had been at risk for many years of being formally declared extinct by an act of public prosecution, could not own property. The Synagogue belonged to no one.

1995

Eza Brostein-Greenwald, from the United States, wrote to the Jewish Community of Oporto in 1995 saying that his uncle, Paolo Bronstein, who had just died, had lived in Oporto and in Lisbon between 1938 and 1948 and that, on his behalf, he wanted to offer something that the Synagogue needed. Moses Medina replies: “*a Sefer Torah*” (Torah scroll).

The reopening ceremony of the Synagogue was held after completion of repairs. A Rabbi of Moroccan origin, Yossef Sebag, was hired to lead services on the Jewish holidays, after having managed to assemble a *minyan*. There were still few people who were interested in being active in the Community.

The President of the Jewish Community of Lisbon, Joshua Ruah, did not attend the ceremony because of his schedule. Months later, he asked the Board of the Jewish Community in Oporto to send him a statement of its activities. The answer, dated December 4, begins as follows:

This letter has no intention of giving justifications, because we do not assume the role of debtors before those who are not entitled to credits.

Among the regulars of the Synagogue of Oporto were now some who were interested in Judaism, who had been accepted as part of community life. However, what began as an exercise of philosemitism and humility by some individuals seeking a new spirituality, became a scene of struggle and conflict over time. Suddenly, they were so captivated by the story of the Marranos of Captain Barros Basto's time, who began claiming to be true Marranos, whose grandparents lit candles on Friday nights and who pointed out the first three stars at the end of *Shabbat*.

The fake “Marrano” Carlos Prazeres wrote a text to the Community Directorate where he stated the following:

After five hundred years [of the Manueline Edict] the Jewish heritage persists in Portugal and many Portuguese claim to be heirs to a lost Jewish identity. Today is the proper time to heal wounds and to re-encounter a large scattered family.

The letter, while moving and conciliatory, was not considered by the Board of CIP. It was dangerous. After the sad events of the 1930s around the Theological Institute of Oporto and the military court, a saga of new “Marranos” (and this time fake Marranos), had the potential to be damaging, both nationally and internationally.

Joshua Ruah, President of the Jewish Community of Lisbon, wrote to the Directorate of the Jewish Community of Oporto saying that he would like to help this entity to obtain legal status. He expressed concern that the Synagogue of Oporto welcomed a group of non-Jewish individuals who were preparing an “assault plan” on the organization and its heritage.

Following the letter, Ruah went to the city of Oporto to meet with the CIP Directorate, reiterating everything he had said, and saying that the Synagogue building should revert to the Jewish Community of Lisbon. Moisés Medina replied that the Community was alive and that if it were ever extinct, its assets would revert, according to the statutes, to the nearest Jewish community, that is, to the community of Belmonte, legally organized in 1989.

In 1996, Portugal officially revoked the Edict of Expulsion of 1496 after 500 years. The President of the Knesset (Israel’s Parliament), Dan Tichon, visited Portugal and honoured the Portuguese Jewish communities. The Jewish Community of Oporto was not forgotten and received a work of art from Jerusalem with the inscription: *“In recognition and appreciation for keeping the Jewish flame alive even on the most difficult days”*.

The Synagogue of Belmonte, called Beit Eliyahu, was inaugurated in a ceremony that was attended by the Minister of Justice, Vera Jardim and by Dan Tichon. He took the opportunity to urge the Portuguese Government to carry out the public rehabilitation and posthumous reintegration into the army of Arthur Carlos de Barros Basto.

1997

The fake “Marranos” wanted to be part of the Community Directorate and demanded recognition as Jews with full right, though they never offered evidence of their “Marranism” and concealed access to their past life.

These were times of great agitation in the Synagogue of Oporto. The fake Marranos were not only in conflict with each other but led some Jews to believe in the justness of their claims, dividing a Community that was already small.

The association that had remained moribund for decades, with symbolic elections in the past, now found itself ensnared in new problems with threatening letters from lawyers.

As a result of these events, elections were held in the Jewish Community of Oporto. Moses Medina was elected President for the first time in place of Eliezer Beigel.

In October, in an unpleasant environment of conflict, the Synagogue received a visit from the Ambassador of Israel. The Municipality of Oporto provided a red carpet for the stairs that give access to the Synagogue.

1998

At the beginning of the year, there were new requests for elections. The fake “Marranos” tried to enlist the support of individuals who intended to convert to Judaism, who were soon called Marranos too. They hoped to obtain the same rights as the older Jewish members of

the community, such as the Tillo, Piccioto, Cymerman, Medina, Okon, Beigel, Sarfati, Rudowsky, Jeffries, Rothwell, Lemchen, and Grinman families.

Indeed, the fake Marranos claimed to be the rightful owners of the Synagogue. They wanted to dominate and claimed to be, not mere descendants of Jews, like all Portuguese, but true Marranos, for whom, they said, the Synagogue had been built.

These allegations, the constant arrival of more “Marranos” to reinforce the contingent already installed in the Synagogue and the successive shouting in that almost empty building, weakened the local Jewish community that was composed of Jews by birth who were mostly indifferent to religion and ignorant of Jewish religious law. Some were romantic, charmed by the fake Marranos, and taking sides with them.

The newspaper “Jornal de Notícias” published an article in 1998 about the Jewish Community of Belmonte, entitled “*Rabbi on strike claims four months of wages*”. In a text accompanied by a caricature of a rabbi with a big nose, dressed in black, sitting, cross-legged, and bored, with a sign next to him saying “*So little money, so little work*”, one can read:

Rabbi threatens not to return to the Synagogue until they pay him 800 contos (about 200 Euros) in overdue wages”. “I cannot live from the air”, says Rabbi Shlomo Haber, lamenting the position of the benefactor of the community [the Moroccan Jew Solomon Azulay] who “twice said he was coming to Belmonte and did not keep his promise.

Moisés Medina wrote to Joshua Ruah: “*I think we should get together to see what’s going on in Belmonte, because it’s a shame that this kind of article comes out of that community every now and then*”. At the same time, an internal CIP document states:

The Community of Lisbon and its President appear as representatives of all Portuguese Jews in the case of the Nazi gold in the media and in the respective commissions” and “The Community of Lisbon and its President nominate representatives to negotiate the new law on religions” and “The Community of Lisbon and its President decide on the programmes to be shown on RTP 2 without giving us any knowledge of it, although they ask us for help and collaboration when they need it.

1999

The fake Marranos expressed their desire to run in the elections and appropriate the image of Captain Barros Basto, who was elevated to hero status. The protection that Jews now obtained in society, associated with the religious status of “chosen people”, generated an interesting attraction and gave rise to the appearance in the Synagogue of Oporto of more friends of the fake Marranos, who after two weeks claimed to be Marranos too. The Community felt it was in danger.

This same year a concert was held in the Synagogue led by a German woman linked to the “Carisma Church” of Vila Nova de Gaia, She was accompanied by some faithful of the Church, one of whom was a sexagenarian, named Fernando Izidoro. He fell in love with the Synagogue and never stopped going there. He seemed to be like a 14th-century Jew. He spent his life at fairs, collecting rare and ancient books as well as worthless trinkets. He drove an old car and always had his suitcase filled with things to sell.

There was famous a conversation between Fernando Izidoro, a passionate supporter of Judaism and a fake Marrano. They talked about forgiveness. On one side was a vain, hateful person, on the other a kind and happy man who never judged others, and who never uttered a harsh word against anyone. He was a man with an unwavering religious faith. Izidoro survived the deaths of a son, two daughters, a granddaughter and his son-in-law, but he never lost his faith. He continued to read the Psalms of David and, a month before he died in 2019, already very weak and without memory, said: *“Adonai will cure me of these diseases and give me a perfume factory, either in this life or the next!”*

2000

Arnold Diesendruck, son of the Rabbi who had conducted the services at the inauguration of the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue, wrote about the Synagogue of Oporto.

*You can count on your fingers the times when it is open for worship throughout the year. It was listed as a Portuguese public heritage building and became a monument.*¹²⁰

The Jewish Community of Oporto sent faxes to all the hotels in the city informing them about the schedules of religious services. The Community organized a concert of Ladino music on Israel Independence Day.

A “Marrano” of Vila Nova de Gaia addressed a letter to the Jewish Community of Oporto presenting himself as the President of B’nai B’rith Portugal, an association founded by him, with this name, without international approval. It welcomed Marranos who attended the Synagogue of Oporto and who tried to take control of it.

The meetings of the new association served only to speak ill of the Jews by birth, malevolence that led nowhere. The organization ceased to function from inactivity at a time when annual elections were called in the Synagogue. The last elections were held in 1997.

2001

Given the indifference of the Jews by birth to religious worship, resulting in their absence from the Synagogue, there were now more non-Jewish regulars in attendance than Jews. This led to non-Jews wanting to be part of the *minyan* and controlling the Synagogue. There was already a “*minyan*” of non-Jews, while a Jewish chazan sang.

It should also be noted that, at this time, relations between the members of the Jewish communities of Oporto and Lisbon hardly existed. Marina Pignatelli published the quotes she collected:

*‘I don’t know anyone’, ‘I don’t know anything’, ‘I don’t know little’, ‘Zero’, ‘I had childhood friends there, but they went out’, ‘I have few relationships’, ‘In Oporto I know very few people, there are very few’.*¹²¹

¹²⁰ “The Marranos, 1920-1950”, p. 47.

¹²¹ “Interioridades e Exterioridades dos Judeus de Lisboa”, p. 166.

The Law of Religious Freedom was passed. The Jewish Community of Lisbon applied for the status of a religious legal entity based in Portugal and became a member of the Religious Freedom Commission.

2002

Negative comments were made about the Jews of Oporto. It was said that the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue made religious conversions of foreigners paid in dollars. Many facts are unclear regarding those conversions. Given the small size of the community, the absence of a Rabbi, and the fact that the *mikvah* (ritual bath) was not *kosher*, it is strange that the alleged conversions, supposedly held there, were only known to the President. Who were the people who were converted? Under what conditions were they converted? Where did they come from? Who constituted the *Beit Din* (Rabbinical court)? Where were the certificates of conversion? These questions remain unanswered.

With regard to the Marrano question, Portuguese who entered the Synagogue were called Marranos, whether they wanted to be or not. The questions that were addressed to them did not give them a chance to refuse.

Do you have a family name from the regions of Trás-os-Montes or Beiras or do you have family living there? Do you have the family name of a tree, a river, or a biblical character? Do you feel uncomfortable in church? Do you reject certain foods? Do you know that pointing is ugly and that it generates calluses on your fingers?

There was never a lack of “evidence” for anyone to be called a Marrano. At the time, there was a kind of standing conversion to convince others that they themselves were Marranos. At some point, order would need to be restored in the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue to put an end to this.

2003

The President of the General Assembly of the CIP, Henry Tillo, a long-time philanthropist of the Community was killed in a car accident in 2003. Due to the need to perform the proper burial rituals, a Chilean Rabbi, Elisha Salas, from Belmonte, was called to Oporto. He was an emissary of an Israeli proselytizing organization whose purpose was the rescue of supposed “lost Jews” and of course he soon became interested in the “Marranos” of the city and other people of good faith who legitimately wanted to convert to Judaism. In addition, he was also interested in the Synagogue building, which in the future could be “used” as the world home of the proselytizing movement.

Happy with the arrival of the proselytizers, the President of the CIP, Moisés Medina, said to Marina Pignatelli: “*You know, they discovered even in India one of the lost tribes*”¹²², not knowing that organizations of this type only settle in countries where communities are almost non-existent, and assimilated. These communities not only offer no resistance to proselytism but are often delighted with it (as happened in Oporto and Lisbon), offer their Synagogues freely, for them to place their Rabbis there. This invariably generates mass

¹²² “Interioridades e Exterioridades dos Judeus de Lisboa”, p. 165.

conversions of local pseudo-Jews previously convinced that they must “return to the people of Israel”, along with fanciful stories in the international Jewish press.

A photograph was taken with Marranos inside the Synagogue. Some of the individuals present were indigent people from the area, hired for an hour to be part of the beautiful “postcard” that was sent to Israel and United States. One can imagine the sentimental impact that this photograph must have had on those who wanted to help the “lost Jews” return to their ancestral faith.

2004

This year was marked by very serious problems in the Jewish Community of Oporto. There were more and more divisions between the Jews by birth and the Portuguese citizens now united with the proselytizing organization. It had used abstract terms such as “Jewish roots” and “return to the religion of ancestors” and also proclaimed that the Synagogue belonged to the “Marranos”, that it was built for the “Marranos”, that the Portuguese citizens in the process of conversion to Judaism are all “Marranos” and that “Jews by birth should only enter the Synagogue if they are invited”.

The Israeli proselytizing organization took advantage of a trip to Lisbon by the Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel, Shlomo Amar (at the time of a celebration initiated by the Lisbon Synagogue) and asked him to visit Oporto in order to deliver a Sefer Torah that Rabbi Tuvia Hod, grandson of Menasseh Bendov, wished to donate to the Oporto congregation. The Sephardi Chief Rabbi accepted the challenge and arrived in Oporto in a horrible atmosphere which involved shouting and car racing between native-born Jews and false Marranos.

2005

The required annual elections had not been held in the Oporto Jewish Community for eight years. In addition to the problems caused by the fake Marranos, Moses Medina is the target of complaints by those who want elections to be held. Elections were finally held at great cost and a new Board of Directors was elected.

The new President was the American, Dale Jeffries, and the new Vice President was the granddaughter of Barros Basto, Isabel Lopes. The goals of the new Board were to help Portuguese citizens convert to Judaism, to collaborate with the proselytizing organization, to end the problems in the Synagogue and bring some order to the organization.

Some Portuguese citizens, at the behest of the proselytizing organization, formed a new legal entity called “Jewish and Marrano Community of Oporto” (CJMP), which had its address as Rua de Guerra Junqueiro, 340, Oporto, in the Synagogue building. It proclaimed in its by-laws that it “*replaces the extinct Jewish Community of Oporto*”.

Despite this organization being 100% illegal, it is certain that the situation of the CIP organization was not much better. As we said previously, since Barros Basto was censured by the military court in 1937, it left the Jewish Community of Oporto to its fate. From a material point of view, CIP had long been extinguished and, therefore, the Synagogue

building did not belong to it. A visitor to the Synagogue, when asked where he was heading, is reported to have said: *“Wherever I want. This belongs to no one.”*

2006

At the suggestion of Michael Rothwell, an English Jew, President Dale Jeffries asked for an opinion from the Chief Rabbi of Israel, Shlomo Amar, regarding who can run a Synagogue: Jews or non-Jews. The Chief Rabbi responded by saying that he does not know Portuguese law, but that according to Halacha, only Jews officially recognized as such can take part in the direction of a Synagogue. The letter of the Chief Rabbi therefore legitimized the Jews by birth by stating that only they can lead the Synagogue of Oporto. This had the immediate effect of subverting the project of the “Jewish and Marrano Community of Oporto”.

The Chilean Rabbi was no longer able to continue to work in the Synagogue of Oporto, given the controversy he faced, and returned to Belmonte. The Jewish proselytizing organization immediately tried to place another Rabbi in Oporto, the Italian Shai Di Martino.

At this time, three museum rooms were inaugurated on the first floor of the Synagogue. It was called the “Barros Basto Museum”. The fake Marranos wanted to elevate the Captain to the status of hero as a Marrano which he had never claimed to be.

2007

In the company of the Italian rabbi of the proselytising organisation, fifteen Portuguese citizens travel to Jerusalem, where they formally convert to Judaism before a qualified *Beit Din*. Some of the converts are very honest people who, even before the judges, clearly state that they are not Marranos and only wish to convert to Judaism, nothing more. Other, noisier people, swear they are Marranos, as well as those who say they are not, although everyone knows that in Portugal, outside Belmonte, there are no longer any real Marranos, just as there are no samurai in Japan.

An excerpt from a contemporary document, written by the “Marrano” José Jorge, connected with the cinema, says the following:

It was an historic moment. The process of returning the first group of Marranos from the Oporto community to the house of Israel was achieved. At last, the dream of Ben-Rosh [Barros Basto] has come true.

Anxious to lead the rejuvenation of the Community at this time, but aware that it had no more than 1,182 euros in its bank account, José Jorge outlined aims for an international fund-raiser in the amount of 178,750 euros, for the following missions: repair works on the building – 100 thousand euros, a petition to rehabilitate Barros Basto – 1,000 euros, production of a documentary – 50 thousand euros, a photobiography on its life and work – 25 thousand euros, a brochure introducing the Community - 1,250 euros, foreign-language versions of the site – 1,500 euros.

The fund raiser was a flop. The proselytising organisation actually sent an emissary to Hong Kong to ask the Kadoories for money, but with no success whatsoever. No one believed in the “project”.

A new *mikvah* is inaugurated at the Oporto Synagogue, sponsored by the proselytising organisation, and a while later Rabbi Di Martino decides to leave CIP and go to Lisbon. The proselytising organisation is faced with having to find another rabbi as soon as possible for the Oporto Synagogue. Lacking sufficient time to make a suitable choice, as they would have liked, they ended by hiring as a replacement an Argentinian rabbi with roots in Lithuania and Ukraine, a man called Daniel Litvak, not much given to conversions.

At the same time, the prestigious family doctor, Canadian-born John Yaphe, joins the community and becomes Guest Assistant Professor at the School of Medicine of the University of Minho.

2008

The lawyer, Dara Jeffries, who as a child played in the large Synagogue all by herself, is able to find all the missing records of the Jewish Community of Oporto in various registry offices. She manages to rehabilitate the community in legal terms as a religious and cultural body, having proved before the competent authorities that, among others, in the parish of Massarelos the existence of that community headquarters at Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue had always been well known.

Given this important step, the Jews by birth Dara Jeffries, her husband Dale (President) and Isabel Lopes (Vice President), all representing the oldest Jews from the city, decided to “give” the Presidency and the Vice-Presidency of the Community to two former “Marranos” – José Filipe and José Jorge – recently converted to Judaism in Israel. Everyone prayed that the risky experiment would go well.

2009

Although entirely lacking in any of the leadership qualities required, the new directors assumed administrative control of the association, the Jewish Community of Oporto. They ask the Israeli proselytising organisation to dismiss the Argentinian rabbi, whom they accuse of being very orthodox and averse to conversions.

There is now an open door policy regarding the “Marranos”. These are considered not as those Portuguese who from the time of the Edict onwards were secretly still practising some sort of Judaism, although apparently Catholic, but rather all citizens claiming to have “Jewish origin” or names such as Rodrigues, Silva, Pereira and thousands of others.

A brochure of the time reads: *“Once again, the Synagogue doors are open to all Marranos”*. At one given period, the gates and doors of the Synagogue building were “wide open”, although no member of the community was nearby during religious services, with only about half a dozen people present, all of them Portuguese. One early *Shabbat*, unknown persons walked in, stole a large number of books and disappeared.

Financially ruined, the “Marrano” José Jorge set up home on the second floor of the Synagogue, a situation that gave rise to much controversy among Community members who protested that the temple was not a hotel or a shelter for the homeless.

José Jorge claimed that it was thus much easier to teach the “Marranos” and welcome school and other visitors, before whom he gave a very negative image of the institution, having even been accused of smoking cigarettes in the prayer room.

It was a time of moral deficiency, material penury and total proselytization at the Jewish Community of Oporto. As a rule, those who were Jewish by birth – Finkelstein, Sarfati, Jeffries, Rothwell, Vaguima, Piccioto, Dor, Graedge, Grinman, Yaphe, Danino, Beigel and other families – showed no interest in the existing state of affairs.

2011

The Israeli proselytising organisation wishes to take the reins of the Synagogue and install a rabbi who will run everything on a professional basis, but the “Marranos” José Filipe and José Jorge are set on full control of the situation and are committed to their individual worth. Things do not go well. Not only is the Synagogue building severely rundown, its façade covered in mud, there is absolutely no Jewish community spirit. The two large palm trees in the Synagogue garden die.

The report of the Audit Board analysing this period speaks of “*negative rumours*”, “*unstable interpersonal relations*”, “*the need to discipline use of the premises*”, “*absence of internal regulations, insurance policies, inventory of the contents*”, “*greatly reduced revenue*” and “*the need to carry out urgent works for which there is no money*”, placing “*the future of the community and the Synagogue at risk*”.¹²³

The shadow of death hung over the Community. The “Portuguese Dreyfus” case itself remained unresolved 75 years later. A new impetus was urgently needed. It happened. Under the guidance of David Garrett (jurist and contributor to the “Journal for the Study of Antisemitism” in London), Barros Basto’s granddaughter, Isabel Lopes, “*met with a team of British and Portuguese jurists, all men of religious and civil laws*”¹²⁴ and addressed a petition to the Assembly of the Republic which reads as follows:

The undersigned petitions the Assembly of the Republic to reintegrate her grandfather Arthur Carlos de Barros Basto, in the army, in particular – in addition to Executive Act nº 173/74 of 26 April, applicable to the case by force of a maiori, ad minus – guided by the moral and inalienable duty of the State to repair such a serious breach of common international law. This petition is grounded in a serious breach of human rights and the intolerable allocation of the core of fundamental rights that are materially protected by the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic, whereby we request the intervention of the Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional Affairs, Rights, Liberties and Guarantees.

¹²³ CIP Archive.

¹²⁴ David Garrett, “Journal For The Study Of Antisemitism”, Vol. 4, London, 2012, p. 260.

Clearing Barros Basto's name in the papers, in the world, in Parliament and the army was going to involve more than just starting from scratch. Over the decades, the case had given rise to much uproar, the party in question having been derided by enthusiasts, the curious, the envious and those lacking goodwill, who confused guilty verdicts with convictions, criminal offences with disciplinary offences, facts proven with those not proven, credible with despicable witnesses, legal with indecent vocabulary, a veritable "Black Paper on the Barros Basto case".

This "Black Paper" included the Army's reply to Barros Basto's widow, which said that he "engaged in homosexuality" (1978), books transcribing testimony from Marrano denounciators, one of whom accused another of being "the Captain's second wife" (2000); newspaper articles filled with contemptible stories and words (2004); classes by the then "Vice-President of CIP" at Oporto Synagogue (José Jorge) saying that "Barros Basto liked young calves" (2010), etc.

Until 2011, the public image of Barros Basto (and of CIP and the Synagogue) was wretched and humiliating. The first step in the rehabilitation involved "purifying" in the national press the story of the lawsuit that condemned Barros Basto, and which had nothing to do with horrendous sexual matters. The president of the Law Society was involved in this undertaking. The second step was to get Parliament to accept a petition to reassess the lawsuit, a petition that contained only the signature of Barros Basto's granddaughter; a petition generally requires 4000 signatures. This stage involved the participation of some of the country's greatest jurists. The third step, still in 2011, was to have the case assessed by the Fundamental Rights Committee (the 1st Committee) not just by the Defence Committee.

The fight for justice was at its height. Isabel Lopes wrote some moving words about that.

*I do not forget that my grandmother fought hard for the rehabilitation of my grandfather. My mother continued this fight. Now I am going to fight. Tomorrow, if necessary, it will be my daughters.*¹²⁵

2012

The first committee of the Assembly of the Republic morally rehabilitates Barros Basto, considering that *"the conviction was factually justified and evaluatively motivated by religious intolerance and an antisemitic bias that are quite obvious from an analysis of the documents in the proceedings"*. Parliament therefore unanimously recommends that the Government reintegrate Barros Basto in the army.

At the home of former CIP President, Eliezer Beigel, under the guidance of another former President, Dale Jeffries, the oldest members of the Jewish Community of Oporto met, determined to put an immediate end to the very negative "experience" of the "Marranos" José Jorge and José Filipe. It was decided that same day that all CIP veterans would support David Garrett (who was jurist under the name Francisco Garrett) in everything he needed to try to rehabilitate the Synagogue, the organisation, the congregation, Jewish religion and Jewish culture, just as he had made with the moral rehabilitation of Captain.

¹²⁵ "Journal for the Study of Antisemitism", Vol. 3, London, 2011, p. 744.

New elections were set for 3 June. With the Supervisory Board in charge of the associates Michael Rothwell and Luísa Finkelstein, the representative of the oldest members, Dale Jeffries, assumed the Presidency of CIP, Isabel Lopes, granddaughter of Barros Basto, became Vice President, Eliezer Beigel, treasurer, Alain Piccioto, support member, Dara Flitterman, secretary, and David Garrett took the place of a delegate, having informed everyone that he would seek help from families of a strong Jewish community in London to which he was connected by family ties, and that he had no interest in taking a prominent role, and would continue to maintain his reserved, discreet and nondescript attitude.

Almost no one among those present believed that it would be possible to do more than merely approve internal laws, create departments and try to pay the debts. The Synagogue was stillborn, a phantom-like structure forsaken by the world, with no Jewish life, no Jewish culture, no real connections to the religious or cultural Jewish world.

The fact is that the tasks to be carried out bordered on the impossible. To create respect for an organisation everyone considered buried, which had neither thinkers nor doers, promote orthodox Judaism in the thirty people who were overwhelmingly agnostic and happy in their mixed marriages, end the myth that the Marranos still existed in the 21st century, develop Jewish culture in a place where not even the history of the 90 years of the modern Jewish Community of Oporto was known, create wealth to rehabilitate the enormous Synagogue, hire a rabbi, an administrative worker and a security officer, to increase the €403,41 in the bank account and pay off much greater debts, were just a few of the new Board's priorities, only possible in dreams.

Six months later, however, in December, all had changed. On Rua de Guerra Junqueiro, a pristine, freshly painted and majestic Synagogue drew the eye, now run by the recently hired Rabbi Daniel Litvak (the Argentinian rabbi who had not been to the liking of the proselytists) and it was possible to see an abnormal movement of Jews whose existence was not known or even supposed before.

There was an absolute separation between religious and synagogue activities which were the responsibility of the Rabbi and a Religious Committee, and the rest of the organization's activities, which were the responsibility of periodically elected members. The Religious Committee comprised an orthodox family – the Elijah family - that divided its life between Oporto and London, and the organisation now possessed a number of departments and very strict internal regulations.

In a document from that time, sent to the proselytizing organization, one can read:

It was no longer a Synagogue, rather a dubious dive of ill-repute, where the teachings were that King David and Yonatan were gay, that Ruth and Naomi were lesbian and Captain Barros Basto a homosexual. This community experienced dreadful times of total anarchy and moral and religious degradation. For these and other reasons, the oldest people (Jewish by birth) called early elections and excluded from the board and the company bodies all members who had been converted by X (proselytising organisation) and who had been responsible for these extremely serious cases that dealt a death blow to the Porto community's relationship with X (proselytising organisation). This was done to safeguard the community's future, restrict the entrance of potential undesirables who might in future subvert this Synagogue once more, turning it into a den of iniquity again, perverting the reason for its existence, which is and always shall be the practice of Judaism. For all the above reasons, the current board has

decided to break off political relations with X (proselytising organisation). As the saying goes: “quality over quantity”, which is the current policy outlined and practiced by the reputable board of Porto’s Jewish community little by little refurbishing the Synagogue (which was recently painted), and by the community itself. After many years of frustrated attempts, Captain Barros Basto has been rehabilitated. The Jewish Community of Porto and its Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue are currently being rehabilitated before international Judaism. Intrigues, lies and falsity no longer have a home here. The air we breathe is healthy... at last!

The following events took place on a Sunday. Luísa Finkelstein, born in Oporto in the 1950s to Polish parents, usually drove down Rua de Guerra Junqueiro, always sad to see the closed, empty and solitary Synagogue. One Sunday, she got a shock and in distress quickly telephoned Barros Basto’s granddaughter, Isabel Lopes, who was then Vice President. Luísa said she had seen a number of gypsy women seated on the outside steps of the Synagogue. In a few moments, all was made clear. It was in fact the wife and daughters of Rabbi Daniel Litvak, as well as Deborah Elijah and her daughters, all wearing long skirts, who were catching the sun on the steps leading into the temple. In addition to being amusing, this episode is quite significant. Finally, there were Jews, obviously Jews, in this case Jewesses, in Oporto.

The Community numbered no more than thirty people, but all participated in the collective endeavour, men and women, old and young, including those who, at the request of the Parliamentary Group of the Socialist Party, had given an opinion on a draft of a possible “Law of Return” to Portugal of Sephardim of Portuguese origin. The suggestion of a law of historic reparation regarding the Jews, which would quite amazingly later become a reality, while also leading to a perfidious antisemitic persecution of CIP/CJP, had begun with a petition entitled “Restitution of Portuguese Nationality to Portuguese Sephardic Jews”, which already had over a thousand signatures. These included the President of the Portugal-Israel Friendship Society, António Caria Mendes, and his sister Cecília, lawyer and board member of the Lisbon Jewish Community, and the Institute of Portuguese Democracy (including Francisco Cunha Rego, the Institute’s director, Bruno Cabecinha, Luciano Lopes, Carlos Zarur and Simon Albuquerque Senior), who contacted the Socialist Party members Carlos Zorrinho, Maria de Belém and Pedro Silva Pereira, exhorting them to produce this legislation, at which point members of the Jewish communities of Oporto and Lisbon were contacted to make their contributions, which they did.

2013

The celebrations of the Synagogue’s 75th anniversary (in January) and CIP’s 90th anniversary (in August) led to important events in the presence of a large number of people. Since 1948, the year of the marriages of Eta Pressman and Rénia Finkelstein, the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue had not been so full.

For the first event, Rabbi Abraham Serruya of Buenos Aires was invited and amid the tears of those present, said that he could see the physical energy seeping into the walls of the Synagogue. In the second event, Rabbi Doron Ahiel of London, stated that the temple

would serve a loftier purpose, whatever that might be, and that in a few years the Jewish Community of Oporto would undergo religious, cultural, political and financial rescue, because God had placed within it, in so many different areas, leaders with the greatest capacity, *mazal* and *emunah* of the last five centuries.

There was an absolute separation between institutional representation (which was in charge of the President), the treasury (which was in charge of the Treasurer and the Vice-President) and executive work in general (which was the responsibility of the appointed Delegates). The Board's decisions, taken by the majority of the directors, began to be recorded in detail in directive minutes for posterity to appreciate. The Presidents of the Board of the General Assembly and of the Supervisory Board were given the opportunity of knowing the deliberations of the Board of Directors and of being able, at any time, to make the suggestions they deem convenient.

This year the files that the Synagogue had on Nazi refugees are shared with the Holocaust Museum in Washington and we witness a considerable activity in legal and organisational terms within the Jewish Community of Oporto.

1. The Community was now considered a religious corporation based in Portugal by the Portuguese State, the highest status possible.
2. The issue of ownership of the land and the Synagogue on Rua de Guerra Junqueiro n.º 340 was definitively resolved. Owner: Comunidade Israelita do Porto (the Jewish Community of Oporto).
3. The Synagogue building, a “phantom building” since its construction in 1929, was finally registered with the Land Registry Office.
4. The byelaws of the Jewish Community of Oporto were updated. Breaches of the byelaws and of the internal regulations approved the previous year had consequences.
5. A committee was created to investigate cases of so-called “Marranos”. The regulations included the mission of performing mandatory interviews of relatives and neighbours of the people involved to prove their alleged Marranism. The result: not one Marrano candidate appeared and the Israeli proselytising organisation was reduced to the odd item of fake news outside the country, perpetrated by a corrupt journalist who said that sooner or later the Synagogue would be filled with Marranos.
6. The Portuguese Parliament unanimously approved the law of the return of Sephardim of Portuguese origin, in which members of CIP and CIL had participated, while regulation was left to the Government. The Jewish Community of Oporto suggested to the PSD/CDS Government of Portugal that it should set up an international commission to assess the Sephardism of the candidates seeking Portuguese nationality. The Government ignored the idea and in 2015 decided, as we shall see below, to have the Portuguese Jewish communities certify the Sephardism of the candidates, so as to reconnect Portugal with the Sephardic diaspora of Portuguese origin while also promoting Jewish religion and Jewish culture in this country.
7. The Portuguese army acknowledged that if not separated from service, Captain Barros Basto might have reached the rank of colonel in November 1945. A military uniform bearing a colonel's insignia was purchased and put on display, together with other objects and belongings of Captain Barros Basto, in a small museum inside the Synagogue building. However, it was felt that the life of that army officer would deserve, more than a space in a museum, a film of great quality. *“The story*

*of Captain Barros Basto is an extraordinary story, one that could be of interest to a filmmaker. It began when he traveled through the villages of Portugal, sometimes on horseback, trying to find descendants of the ancient Jews.*¹²⁶

2014

By the start of this year, the Jewish Community of Oporto as an organisation was duly registered, regulated and legalised. The captain had been morally rehabilitated, the Synagogue building shone as it had in 1938, the number of faithful had greatly increased, religious services now had a security officer at the gate to the temple, and the myth of the Marranos was unmasked. The time had come to invest energy in promoting Jewish religion and culture.

As a result of a partnership between the Jewish Community of Oporto and the Hoti-Hotéis Group, the first *kosher* hotel and the first *kosher* restaurant opened in Oporto, which immediately led to a substantial rise in the number of Jewish tourists in the city, the Synagogue and religious services. The hotel paid a monthly sum to the Rabbi to certify the project. Suddenly, CIP had acquired a *kosher* hotel (the only one in Portugal), a *kosher* restaurant (the only one in Portugal) and extra pay for its rabbi who did not earn very much and deserved more.

A Jewish woman from Canada asked at the Synagogue how a small Jewish community could have a *kosher* hotel, stating that there were none in her country. Someone replied with a question: “*How many rabbis are there in Canada?*”, to which she replied “*Hundreds*”. And the other person said: “*In Oporto, we have only one, so there are no quarrels between rabbis*”.

As well as the *kosher* restaurant, tourism as a whole and Jewish culture were also at the forefront during this period. Protocols were signed between the Community and Oporto Municipality, which gave rise to the Jewish Tour and a number of signs in the streets around the Boavista area indicating the route to the Synagogue, now nearly eighty years old, and virtually unknown in the city. A brochure published a few years earlier by Massarelos Junta de Freguesia had called the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue a “mosque”.

Thousands of tourists and school students visited the Synagogue this year. The visits always had an educational and religious nature. Non-Jews received a booklet with the “Seven Noahide Laws”, the basic norms of human morality.

*To the Jewish religion, God has a special relationship with all human beings, with whom He has established the Covenant of Noah at a time when there were not yet Jews and non-Jews, but only men.*¹²⁷

The rise in human activity in and around the Synagogue as people came to pray and visit the temple, the increasingly attractive religious services, the rise in the interest shown by schools wishing to know this Jewish monument, as well as the constant rehabilitation of the building led to an increase in donations and income, which in turn made it possible to hire a museologist. The organisation could now breathe more easily. Gradually, it became possible to initiate an investigation, however insignificant, into the hundred year-old history of the community, which was practically unknown to people both inside and outside the Oporto Jewish Community.

¹²⁶ David Garrett, “Journal For The Study Of Antisemitism”, Vol. 4, London, 2012, p. 262.

¹²⁷ David Garrett, “Journal for the Study of Antisemitism”, Vol. 5, London, 2013, p. 106.

At the same time, the Ph.D. in clinical psychology by Deborah Elijah, member of the Board of CIP, at Fernando Pessoa University, led to the latter's intervention in a partnership project (later developed) by that institution and similar French institutions. The aim was to bring to Oporto a lot of French students, some of them Jewish, to study dental medicine. This partnership led over the next few years to a progressive rise in the number of young Jews in Oporto.

However, not everything was positive. There was a struggle against an evil plan by the proselytisers who were unhappy at being "expelled" from CIP and CIL, and wished to set up in Oporto a "Centre of Jewish Interpretation" (making use of a Catholic priest, a building lent by the municipality and 1.6 million euros from a public European fund). This Centre would in actual fact be a Synagogue, a museum and a safe harbour for false Marranos and fake conversions.

Although its image was damaged, the Jewish Community of Oporto was forced to raise a hue and cry nationwide, with news items in all the newspapers against the "priest's plan", which was not in fact his, but rather that of those unbelievably persistent Israeli proselytisers aided by false "Marranos".

Notes on antisemitism:

In the knowledge that there had been no offences against the Portuguese Jewish community because it numbered a few hundred people and was totally irrelevant; and also that contemporary antisemitism could be found at the core of society as well as in radical groups defending the extreme right, the extreme left or extreme Islamism, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) commissioned an opinion poll on Portuguese territory and concluded that there were at least 1,8 million Portuguese with antisemitic feelings. The Jews are hated for their behaviour (25%), the Jews only care about themselves (26%), the Jews consider themselves better than others (21%), the Jews are very powerful (43%), the Jews are influential in the financial markets (43%), the Jews control world business (21%), the Jews control the United States Government (23%), the Jews control the media (17%), the Jews are responsible for most wars (15%), the Jews are more loyal to Israel than to Portugal (56%), the Jews talk too much about the Holocaust (49%), the Jews exaggerate the number of deaths (10%), and the Holocaust is a myth (1%).

2015

The Government approved the Nationality Law regulation and assigned the responsibility of certifying the Sephardic origins of candidates to the Jewish Communities of Oporto and Lisbon. Rabbi Daniel Litvak, Chief Rabbi of Oporto, with the help of Orthodox Rabbis from all over the world, led the department created in the North of Portugal for this purpose, and within a few years would become probably the religious leader who has reviewed the most ketubot in the Jewish world.

The connections between the Jewish Community of Oporto with the Jewish world were continually growing, and the management determined to create the conditions to bring a kollel of Chabad families to give a truly religious base to the Synagogue. However, the arrival in Oporto of another Rabbi, Yoel Zekri, a young student of dental medicine at

Fernando Pessoa University, quickly showed that he, equipped with appropriate conditions and advised by other members of the Community, had the capacity to mobilize all the Jews in the city and its surroundings, to meet others, including students from his own university, with energy, friendliness and availability.

The Community created a department of *tzedaka*, hosted festivities at full capacity, built a new mikveh, and a *kosher* kitchen. There was much joy. The Synagogue now had a *minyan* every *Shabbat* and *Yom Tov*, which continued at least until the moment these lines are written.

Notes on antisemitism:

The Nationality Law regarding Jews of Sephardic origin was regulated. It was soon quite clear that news about the Jews or Jewish realities was negative regarding the Jewish community, given the number of negative posts and malicious shares generated online, which were highly aggressive against “the Jews” as a religious and social group.

For security reasons, a wall with three-metre-high fence was erected around the Oporto Synagogue

2016

For the first time in its history, the CIP completed a full year with a *minyan* on *Shabbat* and *Yom Tov* and a cycle of Torah readings. With great emotion, reminiscent of a time over 500 years ago, the Grand Rabbi of Turkey, Isak Haleva, accompanied by a hundred Turkish Jews attended a *Shabbaton* held in the Oporto Synagogue.

The rooms on the upper floor of the Synagogue, which had been used by the Rabbi, were demolished and he was provided instead with an apartment rented by the Community. Works started on the upper floor to build a kiddush room with large seating capacity. The basement apartment of the Synagogue was demolished to give way to a second prayer room and offices for administrative services. For decades, the basement area of the Synagogue had been unused.

Sam Elijah, a Sephardic Jew born in India, was elected President (institutional representative) of the Jewish Community of Oporto. Possessing a diverse set of technical skills, the members and advisors of the Board remained basically the same, in a year when the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue received a Sephardic *Sefer Torah*. A *kosher* store was inaugurated in the building and a land for a cemetery was purchased. The Jewish Community of Oporto had not had a cemetery since 1497.

A protocol of friendship and cooperation was established with the Islamic Community of Oporto.

Notes on antisemitism:

A study of Facebook accounts, newspaper and blog comment sections showed that latent antisemitism was very much alive, expressed in thousands upon thousands of violent and aggressive messages against “the Jews”. Hand in hand with exaggerated and astonishing tales, making no distinction between Jews and alleged Jewish descendants, the famous invectives of the past were the same as those used today, centuries later: “*It’s the worst race on Earth*”, “*they are foreigners*”, “*they wish to divide the Portuguese*”, “*go to Israel*”.

The Board of CIP/CJP was worried about this situation and having considered that educating people about the Jews would be the best way to prepare future generations, it asked the Government to ensure that “schools gave lessons on the Holocaust”, and to “expedite the appropriate mechanisms for secondary school history textbooks to include, however briefly, the presence of the Jews in the Iberian Peninsula in general and in Portugal in particular.”

2017

The Community completed another year with a *minyan* on *Shabbat* and *Yom Tov*. The expression “*Simchat Chaim*” (joy of life) is the one that best describes the community environment at this time. A large *Shabbaton* was held with Sephardic Jews from all over the world and there was a discussion among key members of the Community, members of the Kadoorie family and Jacob Safra about the best ways to protect and invest the Community’s financial assets.

The layout of the main prayer room of the Synagogue underwent a significant change: the *Bimah* was placed in the center and the capacity of the men’s seating area was greatly increased. A second prayer room was set up in the basement of the building, which was named Kadoorie Mekor Achdut Synagogue. It is very attractive and has a pleasant temperature. A vending room was opened in the Synagogue, as well as a *Kiddush* room with capacity for two hundred people. In addition, underground shelters were created, in case of terrorist attacks.

At the back of the Synagogue, within its grounds, a *kosher* restaurant was built for the Community. On top of the building lies a courtyard, where a large *Sukkah* was constructed, with seating capacity for two hundred people.

Notes on antisemitism:

Stones were thrown at the windows on the north façade of the Oporto Synagogue during the night. Thirteen glass panes were broken.

The Oporto Jewish Community created an Antisemitism Observatory to observe and monitor in real time antisemitism in Portugal, to find ways to reduce or eliminate the prejudice against Jewish people and communities, to draw up scientific opinions and reports for information and action, if necessary, by the competent supervisory authorities, raising political parties’ awareness of the need to perfect the existing legislation and promote suitable school curricula.

The construction in Cascais of the Chabad Centre, a venue for religion, culture and leisure similar to others in some of the most prestigious and tolerant cities of the world was opposed by noisy residents. They wanted the plot of land to be turned into a garden, although thus far it had been nothing but a construction site and before that, merely open ground belonging to the Catholic Church.

Residents in Alfama contested the creation of the Jewish Museum of Lisbon, an initiative of Lisbon City Hall and the Jewish Community of Lisbon. They had chosen Largo de São Miguel (São Miguel Square) because it was a “symbolic place” for Judaism, the site of the old Jewish quarter of Alfama, where there is still a Rua da Judiaria (Street of the Jewish Quarter) today. It was claimed that “it would break with the tradition of the neighbourhood” and “deface Largo de São Miguel”, which houses the eponymous church.

For the third consecutive year, during *Tishrei*, the Community completed the annual cycle of Torah readings, as well as the days of *Yom Tov*, always having a *minyan*. A great Shabbaton was held, as had been the practice in previous years, with the presence of Community members, guests and Rabbis. In addition, there was the arrival of two new Sifrei Torah, the creation of a Beit Midrash and the strengthening of Community activities for about 50 Jewish children from Oporto.

Yigal Dias Benzion, born in Uzbekistan, descendant of Portuguese Jews from Smyrna, became President (institutional representative) of the Jewish Community of Oporto, which changed its name (to Comunidade Israelita do Porto/Comunidade Judaica do Porto, or CIP/CJP), changed its official headquarters (to a property acquired in front of the Synagogue) and extended its statutory purposes, which, in addition to the promotion of Jewish religion and culture and the support of brothers and sisters in faith, now includes the security of the Jewish people and the promotion of a better, fairer and more equitable world.

CIP/CJP started providing *Shabbat* food products to poor families on all continents, signed a memorandum of friendship and cooperation with the Diocese of Oporto and offered the most beautiful channukiot in the world, hand-crafted in Toledo, to the Presidents of the United States, Russia and Portugal.

The Community produced a feature film entitled “Sefarad”, which tells the story of the Jews in Portugal since the time of the Edict of Expulsion in the 15th century to the present day, with particular focus on antisemitism and anonymous accusations such as destroyed Captain Barros Basto. The film completed the moral rehabilitation of the Jewish soldier. One of the scenes in “Sefarad” was shot near the village of Vilarinho dos Galegos, in Mogadouro, where Marranos lived for decades and where they were once sought out by the Captain alone and distinguished, on horseback. One villager present at the filming location disclosed that the Marranos were known to have a tail like the animals. The idea of Jewish people having a tail, as described by the Frei de Torrejoncilo in the 17th century, in the book “Sentinel Against the Jews”, was still alive in Portugal in the 21st century.

Notes on antisemitism:

The Jewish Community of Oporto informed the Portuguese Government about the growth of antisemitism and added that if nothing were done, sooner or later the Portuguese Jews would be subject to violence by a small but furious percentage of antisemites. The Community expressed its willingness to contribute to the development of a national strategy to fight antisemitism and protect the Portuguese Jewish communities. There was no government response.

2019

The Jewish Community of Oporto, now with about four hundred people, completed another year, the fourth consecutive one, with a *minyan* on *Shabbat* and *Yom Tov*. The President of the Republic of Portugal visited the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue, enjoying Kabbalat *Shabbat* and Arvit with the congregation. He was delighted with the number

of Jews present, a vast majority of whom are Sephardic, of Portuguese origin, with many foreign students who were proud to be a part of the Jewish congregation of Oporto that had just founded the first Bet Din in Portugal since the Edict of D. Manuel, and included two rabbis from Oporto.

The Community distributed *Shabbat* food products in Jerusalem, New Delhi, Bangkok, Buenos Aires, Brooklyn, Moscow, Odessa, Beijing, Sydney, London, Ashdod, and Johannesburg, set up an Achdut center for children and young people in Ashdod and inaugurated another *kosher* restaurant. Similarly, with a substantial donation from CIP/CJP, Chabad Portugal built the largest Chabad Center in Europe.

In the Synagogue, every *Shabbat*, to the sound of melodies and Sephardic rituals, the name of Barros Basto was remembered. In his day, he had intended to “*connect the communities of Portuguese rite from all over the world to Portugal once more*”. It was likely that at least three hundred thousand Jews of Sephardic origin, about one third of the possible candidates, would come to apply for nationality. After four years and forty thousand hours of work by the team, which included exchanging about two million emails and letters with individuals from more than sixty countries, CIP/CJP by now had exceeded fifty thousand certificates issued (this number does not include the ones issued by CIL).

A community which a few years earlier, had been a tiny organization that did not even know its own history, erected the Jewish Museum of Oporto that even housed a cinema, and told the world, in its own way, cinematically, the story of centuries of Jewish integration in the city of Oporto, through four films it produced: “The Light of Judah”, “Sefarad”, “1618” and “The Nun’s Kaddish”.

The feeling within the Community was that one of the most insignificant European Jewish organizations in the world had become one of the most prosperous and happy, when taking into account the combination of religion, culture, and social utility. With the help of God and discreetly, a team of secular and religious leaders had been able to manage maximum intelligence, belief, wealth and advantages for the benefit of others, achieving a balance that enriched the world as a whole.

Michael Kadoorie, Lawrence’s son, addressed a message to the Community:

The development of your community has filled our family with pride and honor. The Kadoorie Synagogue is the embodiment of our old family tradition of doing sustainable works and providing practical assistance to those most in need. We are pleased that the Synagogue is a house of prayer, learning and sustenance for a substantial and growing Jewish community. Your temporal and spiritual leaders are energy sources of inspiration. May the congregation of the Kadoorie Synagogue continue to prosper!

Given the symbolism of the number seven, the Community Board, including effective leaders and support members, met to take stock of the work carried out since 2012. Isabel Lopes, Dara Jeffries, Dale Jeffries, Deborah Elijah, Sam Elijah and Michael Rothwell (who were part of the collective team that continued to work since that long-ago year) considered that the Board member David Garrett should be the next President of CIP/CJP. In response, he informed that he would be absent for two weeks, as he intended to write a book to give to his children. Published under a pseudonym, the book was entitled “Interviewing a Regular Joe”¹²⁸.

¹²⁸ John Rose, “Interviewing a Regular Joe”, Amazon, 2020.

At the same time, at Garrett's daughter's Bat Mitzvah party, Rabbis from Oporto, Lisbon, Cascais and London and the Israeli ambassador Raphael Gamzou said that they envisioned a bright future for all young Jews in Portugal.

Notes on antisemitism:

Led by board member Michael Rothwell and Museologist Hugo Vaz, the Jewish Museum of Oporto, created in a property across the street from the Synagogue, was designed to spread Jewish culture and promote philosemitism. A large plaque was attached to the door which states: *"Throughout the world, wherever a Jew finds a Portuguese, let him help him; and where a Portuguese finds a Jew, let him help him, too".*

During the opening speech to the Jewish Community at the Museum, the President of B'nai B'rith International told the more than 150 Jewish people present:

This Jewish Museum will arouse interest in Jewish life in Portugal and serve as a beacon of light for the rest of Europe, now obscured by resurgent antisemitism.

In June, CIP/CJP formally contacted Oporto's Public Security Police (PSP) with a view to hiring a police officer to protect the Museum. He would be paid by the Community. To everyone's shock, the PSP said that it did not consider this necessary and was opposed to placing any police officer at the Museum, as there were no security risks. Consequently, for security reasons, to date, the Jewish Museum of Oporto has not been open to the public. It exclusively serves the Portuguese and international Jewish community, public figures, schools, and teachers.

2020

The Jewish Community of Oporto now numbered five hundred people and completed the fifth consecutive year with a *minyan* on *Shabbat* and *Yom Tov*. It had developed numerous religious, cultural, social, and philanthropic activities in Portugal and abroad, created an online newspaper of good news called "Mazal News" (to share inspiring actions based on solidarity and love, and that encourage the construction of a more just world, without anti-Semitism). Internally, the organization announced the creation of a perpetual endowment to ensure that the Jewish Community of Oporto continues its sustained growth for many years.

Between October and December, CIP/CJP built the Oporto Holocaust Museum (in cooperation with Holocaust museums around the world), which it inaugurated on the 10th of *Tévet*, and submitted the feature film "1618" (about the Inquisition) to international film festivals and competitions abroad, where it was highly awarded. In addition, it promoted the installation of the Oporto chapter of B'nai B'rith International, to ensure that in the future, antisemites pay a price for their antisemitism.

Notes on antisemitism:

As stated in the introduction to this work, and we see no inconvenience in repeating it, what began as, in the words of the President of the Portuguese Republic, a "*Palestinian cause of the Minister of Foreign Affairs*", probably with too many interests behind it, gave way, over time, between 2020 and 2022, to an unthinkable association of different forces (some

linked to political, economic, media and judiciary elites and others linked to high crime) that converged to the total and implacable persecution of all Jewish realities significant connections with Portugal: the strongest national Jewish community, the most able leaders, the wealthiest Jews, B'nai B'rith International Portugal and, of course, the “law of the Sephardim”, which was a great missed opportunity (and never recoverable) for the country founded by D. Afonso Henriques, which sinks, year after year, in the concert of nations.

In the year of the COVID-19, a small group of State antisemites and some lackeys in the media made their appearance, surreptitiously, and in violation of the most elementary norms of the rule of law, to try to destroy the legal regime that granted Portuguese nationality to Sephardic Jews. Ribeiro e Castro, one of the authors of the legislation under attack feeling defrauded, wrote a prominent article entitled “*The anti-Jewish alley in parliamentary tricks*”, adding that “*Constança Urbano de Sousa, the first sponsor of the PS proposal, is President of the working group where all this was set up, against the ethics of the Constitution, the Rules of Procedure and democratic loyalty.*”

In other words, influential people in Portugal – in the Government, in Parliament and in the “public” press – decided to end the Nationality Law in favor of Portuguese Sephardic Jews through a violent smear campaign against the Jewish communities involved in the certification process. Unable to point out a single case of a misattributed certification, claiming millions of euros of profits earned by the certifying communities of Oporto and Lisbon, and remaining silent on the billions of euros brought by Sephardim to the Portuguese economy, as well as the promotion of Jewish religion, culture and social philanthropy, these people disseminated stereotypes (“material interests”, “business”, “money”), suspicions (the “Sephardi only want passports of convenience”), exaggerations (“tens of millions of candidates”), anti-Jewish feelings (“Sephardi are married and children are constantly being born”), slander (“In order to obtain citizenship, applicants only need to pay thousands of euros to genealogists, lawyers and the Portuguese Jewish communities”), falsifications (picking phrases from the official sites of the Communities and distorting their meaning), falsehoods (“the law requires a Portuguese name or the Ladino language”) and anti-Israel feelings (condemning abusive advertising in Israel, but not in other countries).

José Oulman Carp, President of the Lisbon Community, wrote to CIP/CJP saying that the Portuguese Jewish community was facing “*a Dreyfus case*”, and Joshua Ruah, former President of the same organization, publicly stated, in a debate at SEDES, that it was “*religious antisemitism*” reminiscent of the book “The Invasion of the Jews” by Mario Saa.

Amid this calamitous storm, an anonymous complaint was sent to members of various parties in Parliament saying that CIP/CJP had set up the 2013/2015 legislation to take advantage of it economically with acts of corruption. The false and malicious denunciation was forwarded by the deputies to the inevitable Minister of Justice, who had just said in Parliament that the Sephardic law had to have an end-date.

2021

The Jewish Community of Oporto reached seven hundred people and completed the sixth consecutive year with a *minyan* on *Shabbat* and *Yom Tov*. In addition, it developed numerous other religious, cultural, social, and philanthropic activities in Portugal and abroad, providing its “*Shabbat Meals from the Diaspora*” project in even more cities.

III

The film “1618”, about the Inquisition in Oporto, became the most award-winning Portuguese film ever abroad and, despite the surge of the pandemic, which affected the whole of society and, of course, the Community, a new *kosher* restaurant was created. In addition, a new *kosher* store and an *achdut* Center for young students were created near the university they attended.

Headed by its director, Michael Rothwell and museologist Hugo Vaz, like the Jewish Museum of Oporto, the new Holocaust Museum, free for all, became the most visited Portuguese museum of the year, with about forty thousand visitors, comprised overwhelmingly by young people. The Museum hosted teacher training courses and receptions for numerous public figures, such as the political leader of the opposition in Portugal, the Mayor of the city, the Prime Minister of Sweden and the Ambassadors of Israel, the USA, the United Kingdom, Russia, France, Belgium, Poland, and many others.

Notes on antisemitism:

In Oporto, the façade of a Jewish family’s home was vandalized in red paint, including the mezuzah. The head of that family had told his daughter’s school that a young boy had complained because “*the Jews are killing children in Palestine*”.

A group belonging to the German antifascist “Anti Faschistishe Aktion” pasted stickers of its organization on the Oporto Synagogue, linking it to fascism. The group is also suspected of preparing to vandalize the Holocaust Museum in this city. Indeed, some of its members were identified inside the space the day before the action against the Synagogue.

The director of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in Europe said publicly that the “*vandalization of the Oporto Synagogue shows how the haters of Israel express their hatred of the local Jews*” and CIP/CJP publicly repudiated “*the link between Synagogues and fascism or any political movements*”.

A Portuguese influencer – a former April 25 captain – wrote on Twitter: “*As they dominate world finance, the Jews bought and possess as many vaccines as they wanted. It is a sort of historical revenge. And I’ll say no more lest the Zionist bulldogs react.*” Yet another episode of antisemitism by an influencer, to add to all the other episodes of recent years.

In a communiqué, CIP/CJP said that

Rather than condemning antisemitic opinions by influential people in Portuguese society, it should be noted that the State neither prevents nor punishes the spread of such stereotypes which in the past gave rise to the genocide of the world Jewish population and in the present, jeopardizes the respectability and security of Jewish people in general, and Jewish communities in particular. The latter simultaneously must guarantee and pay for the protection of its members, properties, Synagogues, museums, and cemeteries.

Within the scope of the procedures triggered by the anonymous denunciation made to Parliament the previous year, the Judiciary Police of Oporto conducting an investigation concluded that the alleged facts were so generic, basic and devoid of substance that they could not even integrate the concept of “criminal notice” to give way to a criminal investigation. The complaint, however, would be reused later, by State agents who definitely wanted to defeat the Sephardic law at any cost.

Sensing that an antisemitic wave was coming, the Community amended its statutes to prevent a future dissolution, perhaps practiced by State antisemites:

In the event of dissolution or extinction of the Comunidade Israelita do Porto / Comunidade Judaica do Porto, all its goods and assets of any kind revert to the World Jewish Agency, founded in 1929, with the exception of the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue and the surrounding land, which revert, for historical and moral reasons, to the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Congregation of London, founded in 1657, if that entity still exists.

At the end of the year, on December 18, the discussion around the necessary changes to the “law of the Sephardim” returned with the publication of a scabrous piece of news about an alleged case of corruption between a billionaire from Russia and the Jewish Community of Oporto, without being heard beforehand. The entire world, on every continent, has pointed the finger at the Community.

2022

For the first time since 1496, the population of the Jewish community of Oporto has reached close to one thousand individuals, including permanent residents and foreign students. For the seventh year in a row, there was a *minyan* in the Synagogue on every *Shabbat* and for all Holidays. In addition to the sanctuary of the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue and the smaller prayer room, called the Kadoorie Mekor Achdut Synagogue, a new Synagogue, named Kadoorie Mekor Simcha, was opened near the University.

The Jewish Museum of Oporto received an important honour from the Minerva Council of the University of Brazil, in the presence of the Mayor of the city: the Order of the Chain of Merit of Dom Pedro I of Brazil and IV of Portugal.

The largest celebration in Europe of the European Day of Jewish Culture took place in Oporto. It was a joint initiative of the Jewish Museum, the Holocaust Museum, the Jewish cinema, with the screening of the film “Sefarad”, the opening of an art gallery (under the tutelage of Flor Mizrahi) showing the history of the Jewish community of Oporto, a gastronomic exhibit, a performance of the Mekor Haim Choir led by the Community’s distinguished doctors, Luciano Moura and John Yaphe, and much more.

Under the aegis of the Jewish Community of Oporto, an online school for Portuguese Jews called the Portuguese Jewish School, and a website called the Portuguese Jewish News were created for teaching and to disseminate news, reports, and opinions about the Jewish community in Portugal, Europe and the world.

Gabriel Senderowicz, a member of a Polish Jewish family that had suffered from a long history of persecution, was elected to President of the CIP/CJP, in a year that was marked by the biggest attack in the organization’s centenary history, a case of State corruption mixed with dangerous criminals from all walks of life.

Notes on antisemitism:

As we wrote previously, at the end of the year 2021, the discussion around the changes to the “law of the Sephardim” returned with the publication of a scabrous piece of news (commissioned by State agents) about an alleged case of corruption involving the Jewish Community of Oporto and a billionaire born in Russia. The Community was not heard before the publication of the news, as required by law, so that it would not have the opportunity to

refute the supposed donations received and the Wikipedia tricks on which that certification of Sephardicism would allegedly be based. This was how a scandal was sold to the world.

Social networks were filled with statements of hatred against the Jewish Community of Oporto during months: “Jews are corrupt!”, “God is money!”, “Sell-outs!”, “Suitcases of money!”, “Anti-patriots!”, “Jews are not Portuguese!”, “They are the garbage of society!”, “Criminals!”, “Immoral!”, “Sons of bitches!”, “Mercenaries!”, “Animals!”, “Con artists!”, “Cheaters!”, “Thieves!”, “Prison now!”

This point of unprecedented aggression was reached due to a case of serious corruption of the State, with exchanges of undue favors between personalities of the Government, Parliament, the press and, after, the Portuguese judiciary, which launched a gigantic attack against the Jewish Community of Oporto without having any evidence that would allow a persecution like that. Anything went in the attempt to crush the Community.

The Judiciary Police of Oporto had concluded, the previous year, that the anonymous denunciation against CIP/CJP sent to Parliament was worthless. There was no incriminating evidence against that institution and against wealthy Jews. Therefore, the new year began with robberies in Oporto and Lisbon, carried out during the night, in offices and residences of lawyers and the former President of SIRESP. All the victims were women in their fifties who had never before been targets of similar crimes. A criminal association promoted these thefts carried out in a European country in 2022.

Night thieves, convicted of defamation, people with mental health problems, journalists, influencers and anonymous sources were used to end the “law of the Sephardim” and to defame, for months on end, daily, the secular and religious leaders of the Jewish Community of Oporto. No one has escaped this kind of “purification”. From religious to secular leaders, including the museologist and the doorman, everyone was seriously affected in their reputation and honor.

The European Jewish Association hastened to ask the President of the Portuguese Republic to stop the indecent persecution that was taking place.

We have observed comments referring to the Jewish community as a “passport mafia” and stating that the community are selling passports “to whoever is willing to pay for it”. These comments play to the basest instincts of the antisemite, and simply reheat for a modern audience, the trope of the ‘money-hungry unprincipled’ Jew. We also note that certain Portuguese opinion leaders, who have previously been involved in high-profile antisemitic incidents, have been contributing to this debate.

The response to that letter was given by the Police (complying with superior orders from despicable elites) who used as fuel “anonymous denunciations” of corruption against the Chief Rabbi of Oporto which involved favors to billionaires he did not know (Patrick Drahi and Roman Abramovich) and control over Registry Offices whose contacts he did not hold. For these technically impossible reasons, on the Eve of one *Shabbat*, the Rabbi was arrested by individuals who did not even know what a Jew is, the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue was raided, the sanctuary was searched, books of minutes with the history of the CIP/CJP were seized, and files related to the return of Sephardi Jews were as well as confidential communication between the Community and the Jewish world including B’nai B’rith International, the Anti-Defamation League, Keren Hayesod, CEJI, and embassies from many countries.

Six months later, the Lisbon Court of Appeal ruled that all these steps, and others of equal gravity, were carried out *“without factual basis, on the basis of anything”*, that is, based on denouncements by madmen and information obtained by robbers that antisemitic agents of the State very conveniently took advantage of, in the midst of the earthquake, to destroy, as they did, the “law of the Sephardim”.

By order of the General Assembly, unanimously, a new room dedicated to antisemitism in Portugal (2015-2022) was inaugurated in the Jewish Museum of Oporto before hundreds of school students and tourists.

The Jewish Community of Oporto filed a complaint at the European Public Prosecutor’s Office (with the support of the European Jewish Association) with the primary objective of documenting the very serious antisemitic conspiracy. The complaint, bound in a book, was also sent to the UN, EU, UNESCO and to governments and libraries around the world.

The President of Israel, Isaac Herzog, was impressed by the facts narrated by CIP/CJP to the European Public Prosecutor’s Office:

There is no question that antisemitism, in any form, is a phenomenon that no just society can come to terms with and we in the State of Israel are roundly committed to the safety and wellbeing of our Jewish brethren around the world as well as to a global reality in which hatred and prejudice are afforded no place. I look forward to the ongoing dialogue between the Jewish Community of Oporto and my office, as a reflection of the deep bonds that connect the Jewish people around the globe with Israel.

The following episode will be narrated in the exact terms contained in the introductory part of this book, to be duly memorized by the reader. In Portugal, the Assembly of the Portuguese Republic challenged the young people of this country to come up with interesting ideas to commemorate the 50th anniversary of democracy. In Oporto, 44 French Jewish students wrote to Parliament suggesting an exhibition on “Operation Open Door”, urging the State never again to commit such serious atrocities as to arrest and abuse a Rabbi and invade a Synagogue, involving the forging of anonymous denunciations and the use of thieves, lunatics, slanderers and more. They also asked for the “Portuguese Dreyfus” to be reintegrated in the Army.

The Jewish News Syndicate published an item about this petition on 29 November. That same evening, outside a *kosher* restaurant in Oporto, the car belonging to the first signatory of this petition, Ilan Cohen, had its tyre slashed and in danger of bursting. After dinner, the young man took the motorway (where the top speed is 120 km/h) and *“miraculously the tyre did not burst”*, he told the Portuguese Jewish News. *“As I got onto the VCI, I had problems with the steering, which was lucky, because I stopped the car and saw the tyre”*.

Ilan recalled that he had been studying in Oporto for the last five years and that this was the first time something of the sort had happened. He then submitted a complaint to the police and mentioned that *“this occurrence is highly suspicious”* and could be the work of *“a criminal network to silence me or even kill me in an accident, for in 2022 an antisemitic conspiracy against the Oporto Community used professional burglars to break into law offices and private homes, as well as people convicted of a number of crimes”*.

In short, in 2022 decadent Portuguese elites came together to destroy all the Jewish forces in the country, from the outset the Jewish Community of Oporto, which they wanted to accuse of corruption. However, in that year, the only bags of money known to

have served corrupt purposes were given to some socialists in the European Parliament to benefit certain Arab and Muslim countries, a sort of “Palestine cause” that likely involves damage to the Jewish and Israeli community in general and funding of national political parties.

In the meantime, the President of Parliament, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, the man of the “Palestine cause” that led to the destruction of the “Sephardic law”, lovingly received the Israeli ambassador in the “House of Democracy”, and the Minister of Justice met the diplomat more times throughout 2022 than during the entire history of diplomatic relations between Portugal and Israel. For the first time in history, she even attended the celebrations of *Rosh Hashanah* and *Hanukkah* to fraternize with the “good Jews” in Lisbon.

With regard to some Jews in Lisbon, there are facts of a different nature that also deserve to be recorded for posterity.

José Carp, the President of the Jewish Community of Lisbon for twenty years, was always a man of great honor, humility, kindness and completely devoid of vanity, envy, gossip and everything else that characterizes the mediocre men. Unfortunately, Carp fell seriously ill at the end of 2021 and throughout the following year he was unable to support the CIP/CJP, as he would have liked, when it was miserably persecuted.

In 2022, the Lisbon Jewish Community (which two years earlier, when it had also been the victim of attacks, albeit much milder, by the conspirators, had spoken, in the person of its President José Carp, of a “*Dreyfus case*” and, in the person of its former President Joshua Ruah, in a “*religious antisemitism reminiscent of the book ‘The invasion of Jews’ by Mário Saa*”) completely distanced itself from the situation of the Jewish Community of Oporto and tried to trample on it. Joshua Ruah publicly stated that for CIP/CJP approval a “*certificate from a rabbi from some remote corner of the world stating that someone attended a Synagogue*” was sufficient. This statement was an aberration.

The President of the Republic, who is a true friend of the Jews, all of them, granted an honour to that old member of the Lisbon Jewish Community, something he could have done years ago, but which unbelievably would happen at a time when the “bad Jews” from Oporto were being trampled and spat on throughout the country. On 23 June, the President of the Portuguese Republic invited Joshua Ruah to visit the Palace of Belém and distinguished him with the highest state insignia, the Grand Cross of the Order of Infante D. Henrique. Proudly present was Joshua’s son, José, one of the signatories of the certificates issued by CIL, who wasted no time in writing a letter to international Jewish organizations (with the knowledge of the President of the Republic, the Portuguese Government and Parliament), saying that everything was normal in Portugal, that a mere criminal process was under way in democratic State, and that antisemitism was too serious a matter to be invoked lightly. Another aberration.

According to the newspaper “Mundo Lusíada”, after the CIP/CJP voluntarily abandoned the certification process, the Jewish Community of Lisbon turned its back on non-Jews in Latin America (its core clientele since 2015), began demanding proof that they were Jews (which they obviously did not have and CIL had never demanded before) and gave absolute priority to the processes of Jews of Sephardic origin, charging 500 euros for each one before even producing a decision. (Non-Jews evaluating Jews.) In the space of a few months, that institution tripled the number of cases it had received and charged for in seven years, from 40,000 to 140,000. Any comments could only jeopardize the conclusion that is immediately reached.

The CIP/CJP had already severed relations with that institution, which was very reverent of established power, as evidenced by much of its history. A display case of resigned people, at various levels of decadence, waiting to die a natural death, treated antisemitism with “kid gloves of interest”, in the words of Miriam Assor, author of the book “Os Judeus Ilustres de Portugal”¹²⁹.

2023

The year of the centenary of CIP/CJP. There will be a celebration with a gathering of true friends, Jews and non-Jews alike, who never left the Community in its hour of need, like the Mayor of Oporto and the Bishop of the city, which represent, in the best sense, the “Old Oporto”, a city and a population with ethical values that lived with the Jews before and after Portugal came into existence.

One of the milestones of the centenary year is the publication of this book and its distribution in various countries: governments, libraries, universities, courts, supranational political and judicial institutions, and many other organizations and individuals. It is not an exceptional book, nor is it exquisitely written, but it is an interesting particular story that has been repeated for centuries and deserves to be taken into account by Jewish scholars and communities around the world. The difficulty in preparing this book stems from the scarcity of historical sources.

An international campaign will be launched with a view to posthumous reintegration into the army of “the Portuguese Dreyfus”, and efforts will be made to publicize the feature film “Sefarad”, which is dedicated to him. This is a Portuguese production that reconstructs the history of the Jewish Community of Oporto, especially in the 1920s and 1930s. It explores the experiences of Sephardim and *Ashkenazim* Jews, as well as the particular situation of Portuguese Marranos.

Thanks to a signed protocol between the Jewish Community of Oporto and the city’s Military Hospital, members of the Community start to receive medical care at the hospital, which is not open to the general public. The protocol brings many benefits to the Jewish community, as the Military Hospital is a national reference par excellence and is able to offer medical care at affordable prices, for appointments, exams and surgeries.

The cemetery of the Jewish Community of Oporto will be inaugurated. It will be called the Isaac Aboab Field of Equality. Aboab, the Rabbi of Oporto, was called the last Gaon of Castile. The word Gaon refers to the great intellectual leaders of the Jewish community exiled to Babylon, before and after the time of the Exilarchs. The word was brought to Europe in the 8th century with the arrival in Septimania of the “Gaon” and Exilarch Makhir Natronai David, who would marry a European princess and give rise to Davidic branches within the monarchy of the Old Continent.

In a partnership between the Jewish Community of Oporto and the European Jewish Association, the annual meeting of this important organization that represents the Jewish communities from Portugal to Ukraine will be held in Oporto, with a view to discussing the challenges that the Jewish people face in the Old Continent and all over the world. The meeting will take place in a hotel belonging to a Jew of Sephardic origin who has already invested 400 million euros in a bankrupt and ungrateful country. High dignitaries

¹²⁹ "Times of Israel", 1 July 2022.

from European and world politics will attend this event, which will take place over three days under high security and will include conferences and guided tours of the Holocaust Museum, Jewish Museum and Kadoorie Synagogue.

On January 27, the International Day in Remembrance of Holocaust Victims, March 31, the National Day of Remembrance for the Victims of the Inquisition, September 3, the Day of European Jewish Culture, and November 9, the International Day Against Antisemitism, special commemorative ceremonies will be held.

The Oporto City Council will be asked to help exhibit the paintings of the CIP/CJP in an appropriate space. These twelve paintings show two millennia of the history of the Jewish community of Oporto, during the times of the Romans, the Germanic tribes, the Muslims, and the Catholics.

Before the centenary, the CIP/CJP has experienced the highest point in its history in terms of religious, cultural and organizational life. The pain inflicted on Portugal's strongest organized Jewish community by antisemitism is not an accident in history. It is a predictable continuation of past events and must be recorded, with facts, dates, and names of protagonists.

*

The alternation of good and bad periods in the history of the Jews of Oporto was constant in the struggles pagans, Catholics, Aryans and Muslims, in the times of the Christian reconquest, in the dynamics of the Portuguese Empire and throughout the two-hundred-year history of the modern Jewish community of Oporto. Maintaining discretion and a low profile has always been a necessity. *"Here, if the Jews raise their head, they cut it off"*, said Nathan Beigel, who was President of the Jewish Community of Oporto throughout the 1950s and who, before that, witnessed the entire case involving Captain Barros Basto.

Considering the economic irrelevance of the country in whose language the word "judiaria" (Jewish), qualifying an act, means evil, the anti-Jewish events already reported and the challenges typical of a time that rejects spirituality, the Jewish Community of Oporto, like its national counterparts, will probably never have a bright future, nor will it attract a large number of brothers-in-faith, safer, integrated and comfortable elsewhere. It will get by, perhaps for a long time, with rare periods of joy and greatness, quickly repressed by the public authorities. It has always been so. Some newly arrived families have already started to leave. It is really a sadness.

Sooner or later, a time will come when the Community's prayer rooms, of which today there are three, will be empty, and the museums, which are full today, will die. The sound of Jewish rituals now sung in unison by hundreds of people and the friendly and free welcome of thousands of school classes will have sunk into oblivion. The population throughout the country will continue to point to the large Kadoorie Synagogue building as a symbol of materialism, money and bad feelings.

This book was finished on January 1, 2023, the centenary year of the Comunidade Judaica do Porto / Jewish Community of Oporto. It was produced by the Jewish History Research Center of Oporto, a department of the organisation.



Medieval fair in Oporto, from the movie “The Light of Judah”.
Feira medieval no Porto, do filme “A Luz de Judá”.



Beit Midrash before the Manueline Edict, from the film “The Light of Judah”.
Beit Midrash antes do Édito manuelino, do filme “A Luz de Judá”.



“New Christian” community in inquisitorial times, scene from the film “1618”.
Comunidade Cristã-Nova em tempos inquisitoriais, cena do filme “1618”.



An inquisitorial visitation is announced at the Cathedral, scene from the movie “1618”.
Uma visitação inquisitorial é anunciada na Sé, cena do filme “1618”.



In 1929, the first stone of the Synagogue is laid.
Em 1929, é colocada a primeira pedra da Sinagoga.



The dazzling new Oporto Synagogue (1938). | A Sinagoga do Porto ergue-se deslumbrante (1938).



The community in the 1930's. | A comunidade na década de 1930.



Official opening of the Synagogue. | Inauguração oficial da Sinagoga.



Holocaust refugees (1940).
Refugiados do Holocausto (1940).



Refugees gather on the steps of the Synagogue (1941).
Refugiados concentram-se nas escadas da Sinagoga (1941).



Wedding of
Eta Pressman and
Donald Wright (1948).

Casamento de
Eta Pressman e
Donald Wright (1948).



Wedding of Rénia Finkelstein and Paltiel Cymerman (1948).

Casamento de Rénia Finkelstein e Paltiel Cymerman (1948).



The temple in the 1960s.
O templo na década de 1960.



Fascists and communists attack the Community in 1978.
Fascistas e comunistas atacam a Comunidade em 1978.



The Synagogue in the 1980s.
A Sinagoga na década de 1980.



The temple restored in 1995.
A reabilitação do templo em 1995.



The state of the Synagogue in June 2012.
O estado da Sinagoga em junho de 2012.



The building restored in December 2012 | Reabilitação do edifício em Dezembro de 2012
([SYNAGOGUES360.org/Louis Davidson](http://SYNAGOGUES360.org/Louis%20Davidson))



Celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Synagogue in 2013.
Celebração dos 75 anos da Sinagoga em 2013.



The first Kosher Hotel in Portugal (2014).
O primeiro Hotel Kosher em Portugal (2014).



Cultural Activities (2014). | Atividades Culturais (2014).



Talmudic study session (2015). | Sessão de estudo talmúdico (2015).



Shabbat meal on the 2nd floor of the Synagogue building (2016).
Refeição de Shabbat no 2.º piso do edifício da Sinagoga (2016).



The New Mikveh (2016). | Uma nova Mikvé (2016).



Shabbaton (2017).



Shabbaton (2018).



Decoration of the Synagogue for Shavuot (2018).

Decoração da Sinagoga para a festa de Shavuot (2018).



Community offers Shabbat meals in over a dozen countries (2018)

Comunidade oferece Shabbat meals em mais de uma dezena de países (2018)



Community offers Chanukiot to Portugal, the USA and Russia (2018).
 Comunidade oferece Chanukiot a Portugal, EUA e Rússia (2018).



President of the Republic visits the Oporto Synagogue (2019).
 Presidente da República visita a Sinagoga do Porto (2019).



The Jewish Museum of Oporto (2019).

O Museu Judaico do Porto (2019).



The Community contributes to the building of Synagogues, schools and *mikvaot* (2019).

A Comunidade contribui para a criação de Sinagogas, escolas e *mikvaot* (2019).



Festivals and events of the congregation, Sefarad 2020.

Festas e eventos da congregação, Sefarad 2020.



Sephardic Certification Archives (2020).

Arquivos de Certificação de Sefardismo (2020).



Kashrut at the city (2021). | Cashrut na cidade (2021).



The largest Jewish library in Iberian Peninsula (2021). | A maior biblioteca judaica da Península Ibérica (2021).



Concert by Portuguese-Israeli David D'Or at Oporto Synagogue (2021)
 Concerto do luso-israelita David D'Or na Sinagoga do Porto (2021)



Mekor Haim Choir | Coro Mekor Haim



The Jewish Museum receives the D. Pedro, the Liberator commendation (2022).
O Museu Judaico recebe a comenda D. Pedro, o Libertador (2022).



The Holocaust Museum of Oporto (2022). | O Museu do Holocausto do Porto (2022).



In the “Room of Names” the names of relatives of Oporto Community members are displayed.
Na “Sala de Nomes” estão expostos os nomes de familiares de membros da Comunidade.



Kristallnacht commemorated at the Oporto Holocaust Museum (2022).

Noite dos Cristais comemorada no Museu do Holocausto do Porto (2022).

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The three Community Synagogues (2022). | As três Sinagogas da Comunidade (2022).



Congregation in the year 2022, just before the centenary.
 Congregação no ano de 2022, à entrada do centenário.



Photos of the new Jewish Cemetery of Oporto (1st January, 2023).
Imagens do novo Cemitério Judaico do Porto (1 de Janeiro de 2023).



The Cemetery is called the “Isaac Aboab Field of Equality”.
“Campo da Igualdade Isaac Aboab” é o nome do Cemitério.

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The Jewish community of Porto, Portugal, celebrates Shabbat at the main synagogue. Credit: Jewish Community of Porto.

FEATURE

Jews of Portugal and their recent rebirth

They enjoy strong communal infrastructure, such as youth centers, kosher restaurants and hotel arrangements, a mikvah and museums.

BY **ELIANA RUDEE**

(April 26, 2021 / JNS) *Experts in global Jewish history believe that highlighting minority voices within the Jewish community has the power to honor its nuances and interconnectedness. JNS's new series highlighting Jewish ethnic minorities aims to elevate their voices, and in turn, celebrate the beautiful mosaic that is the Jewish people.*

The history of Jews in Portugal predates the country's official founding in 1143, as Jews lived in the kingdom for millennia, even prior to the Roman Empire. The Jewish people have thrived in the land, been expelled from the land, returned, and have, in the past six years, experienced a rebirth.

Through the 12th to 15th centuries, the small Jewish community in Portugal, numbering about 70,000 people, thrived and were well-regarded, occupying prominent positions in the kingdom. As the Spanish edict of expulsion was given in 1492, around 120,000 Spanish Jews fled to Portugal, though the Portuguese issued its own edict of expulsion in 1496, causing Jews to flee to Turkey, Morocco, Syria, Amsterdam and other countries. Some remained as practicing Jews and hid; in fact, a community of "secret Jews" continued to practice in the mountains of Portugal but weren't discovered until the 20th century. Others converted, and thousands were killed. The edict of expulsion was not extinguished until the 19th century, and as a result, there has been very little opportunity for a flourishing Jewish community until lately.

At the end of the 19th century, Jewish settlers from Morocco and Gibraltar, as well as Ashkenazi merchants from Poland, Russia and Germany, began to arrive, founding a

congregation in Lisbon, and later Porto, so that by the start of the 20th century, Jewish practice returned to Portugal.

Today, Portugal is home to between 5,000 and 6,000 Jews with the majority in Lisbon and Porto, whose communities have around 500 formal members each. The majority of Jews are scattered throughout Portugal and not affiliated with religious communities. There is also a small community of Belmonte—85 people from the area converted to Judaism before a *beit din* (rabbinical court) in 1991. “They were the last **Portuguese Crypto-Jews**,” said Dara Jeffries, a leader of the Jewish community of Porto.

The overwhelming majority of Jewish community members in Portugal are descended from traditional Sephardic families who for centuries lived in Balkan countries such as Macedonia, Greece, Bulgaria and the former Yugoslavia, as well as in Arab or Muslim countries, including Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia and Libya. In these places, marriages between Jews of Portuguese origin and Jews of Spanish origin were common for many generations. The community is therefore a mixed one, with Orthodox, liberal, Ashkenazi and Sephardic backgrounds integrated into one community.



Portugal is home to between 5,000 and 6,000 Jews with the majority in Lisbon and Porto, whose communities have around 500 formal members each. Credit: Jewish Community of Porto.

Jeffries splits her time between Portugal and Miami, where she practices law. She was born in Spain to American ex-pat parents who moved to Portugal when she was 8 years old. As a member of the board of the Jewish community, and with her husband, a former president of the board, her family is intimately involved in the community and leads documentation and research efforts at the cultural department there.

“Portugal is a top destination in Europe and the world, as it has a great deal of history, and is a very friendly and welcoming country, and for Jews, it is very safe. Even under fascism, Jews were able to make their way through,” Jeffries told JNS, noting that “refugees from Nazi Germany found their way to freedom through Portugal.”

A boon in tourism and kosher facilities

Portuguese Jews are “very welcoming,” said Jeffries, and enjoy strong Jewish infrastructure, such as youth centers, kosher restaurants and hotel arrangements, a *mikvah* and museums. In 2019, a Jewish museum was inaugurated in Porto by the president of B’nai B’rith International. This year, a Holocaust museum, in cooperation with B’nai B’rith International and Holocaust museums around the world, was founded in Porto—a first in the Iberian Peninsula.

According to Jeffries, Porto’s Jewish community has members from more than 30 countries, its own rabbinical court and a cemetery. The community has an “ecumenical approach” to relating to their non-Jewish neighbors, said Jeffries, and focuses on education and outreach, cooperating and working on joint projects with the Catholic diocese and Muslim communities, and projecting a “good image of inter-religious harmony.”

Still, there is no high-quality education for children on Judaism and the Jewish people in Portugal, and anti-Semitism has begun “cropping up, like in Europe as a whole. So that is something we are very focused on and our reason for opening the Holocaust museum,” explained Jeffries. “Few knew about the Holocaust in Portugal when I grew up, and there were subtle conspiracy theories in public opinion and in the press.” Those untruths have further spread today, she continued, as anti-Semitic political cartoons and comments about Jews, the global coronavirus pandemic and vaccines have proliferated in the press.

Overall, however, the community is flourishing, according to those familiar with it, and has recently experienced a rebirth. In 2012 and 2013, the main synagogue building in Porto was rehabilitated; the first festivities were held with hundreds of people, and a kosher hotel was opened to serve Jewish tourists. In 2015, legislation was approved allowing descendants of Sephardic Jews expelled from Portugal to acquire Portuguese nationality.



In 2019, a Jewish museum was inaugurated in Porto by the president of B’nai B’rith International. This year, a Holocaust museum, in cooperation with B’nai B’rith International and Holocaust museums around the world, was founded in Porto—a first in the Iberian Peninsula. Credit: Jewish Community of Porto.

Over the past six years, said Jeffries, the law has seen overwhelmingly positive effects. “There has been huge growth in the Portuguese Jewish community in general; investments of billions of euros by Sephardim in the national economy; the construction of new prayer rooms, *mikvahs*, Jewish cemeteries, *achdut* (“unity”) centers for youth, and kosher hotels, restaurants and supermarkets; Jewish museums; a Chabad center; a Holocaust museum; Jewish cinema and the production of four internationally awarded history films.”

The community has also hosted “numerous conferences, festivals, Ladino music concerts, Jewish cultural centers ... [is] funding of the recovery of archives from the Inquisition (which were rotting and in peril of being lost forever) ... [and encouraging] mass Jewish tourism, including tens of thousands of Sephardic tourists,” she reported.

As for the many thousands of descendants of Portuguese Jews living outside of Portugal, their identity has rarely been retained, although there is much to preserve, according to Jeffries. That includes the language of **Ladino**, as well as the memories of Portuguese Jews. Through the Porto museums, she hopes to spread knowledge about the Jews of Porto and their history.



Portugal is home to between 5,000 and 6,000 Jews with the majority in Lisbon and Porto, whose communities have around 500 formal members each. Credit: Jewish Community of Porto.

FEATURE

Portuguese Jewish community 'slandered' in campaign against 'Sephardic law'

Portugal's Jews have been targeted by anti-Semitic campaign seeking to abolish a 2015 law granting citizenship to descendants of Jews expelled in the 15th century, says Oporto Jewish community president.

BY DAVID ISAAC

(June 30, 2022 / JNS) The Jewish community of Oporto, Portugal's second-largest city, says it has been the victim of an anti-Semitic campaign orchestrated by "agents of the state" seeking to abolish the Nationality Law for Portuguese Sephardic Jews. Also known as the "Sephardic Law," the 2015 legislation grants Portuguese citizenship to descendants of Jews expelled from the country in the 15th century.

Writing to the Portuguese Parliament's Committee on Constitutional Affairs, Rights, Freedoms and Guarantees on June 22, community president Gabriel Senderowicz detailed the abuse he said the community had endured. State actors, Senderowicz wrote, had "gathered together anonymous denunciations from the scum of society ... and created an atmosphere of terror and hostile news through the agency of half a dozen handpicked journalists."

The alleged campaign bore bitter fruit, as the government has announced revisions to the Sephardic Law that members of Portugal's Jewish community say create demands that are impossible to fulfill.

"No Sephardi [Jew] in the world has made hundreds of trips to Portugal since childhood, let alone owns properties inherited from ancestors who lived in the country at the time of the Inquisition," Senderowicz told JNS.

The new requirements will go into effect starting Sept. 1, 2022.

In 2015, the Oporto Jewish community's involvement with the Sephardic Law began on a high note as Portugal's government asked for help in vetting potential candidates. The law required certification from the Portuguese Jewish community "proving Sephardic Jewish lineage of Portuguese origin."

Then, in early 2020, opponents of the law targeted the community, said Senderowicz.

"They were a group of anti-Semitic politicians, journalists and influencers," he told JNS. "They launched a slanderous campaign against the law, saying 'candidates only want passports of convenience,' 'there are tens of millions of candidates' [57,000 have in fact received citizenship] and 'applicants need only pay thousands of euros to genealogists, lawyers and the Portuguese Jewish communities.' "

The accusations sharpened in December 2021, focusing on the fees charged by the Jewish community to issue certificates and leveling charges of corruption. Opponents of the law alleged that the community was making millions in profits through certifications, he said, noting that the fees charged by "certifying communities in Portugal are exactly the same as the fees charged by the Portuguese Registry Office, whom no one accuses of making millions in profits." The fee is 250 euros per certificate, or about \$260.

Police opened a criminal investigation into the matter in February 2022.

Senderowicz described how the Portuguese authorities "invaded" Oporto's Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue, the largest synagogue in the Iberian Peninsula "as if it were a brothel," searched the home of the synagogue's vice president, Isabel Ferreira Lopes, "looking for bags stuffed with cash," and arrested and detained the community's chief rabbi, Daniel Litvak, on suspicion of fraud.

Among the specific accusations was the rabbi's certification of Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich. Senderowicz told JNS this was a falsehood; that Abramovich had been certified by the Russian rabbinate, which confirmed the family memory of the applicant and last names of Sephardic origin in his genealogy, both of which are criteria under the law.

Abramovich, who along with other Russian oligarchs, has become persona non grata in western countries in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, has been held up by opponents of the Sephardic Law as a poster child for why it should be repealed or revised, said Senderowicz.

Although Rabbi Litvak was released after 24 hours and was not prevented from continuing to issue certificates, Senderowicz wrote the Portuguese parliament committee that "the Board of Directors of the Jewish Community of Oporto decided to suspend this activity, as it refuses to cooperate with a state that with the aim of destroying a law, has started an anti-Semitic and terrorist action against an organized Jewish community."

Also in protest, the Jewish community inaugurated a new hall at the Jewish Museum of Oporto that chronicles anti-Semitism in Portugal from 2015 to 2022. Senderowicz said that as part of the exhibit, the community plans to expose the state actors who were involved in maligning it.

Senderowicz noted that anti-Semitism has been on the rise in Portugal, but that the authorities have yet to take it seriously.

The Israeli Embassy in Portugal, in a statement of support, said, it "appreciates the important activities of Portugal's Jewish community—including all communities and institutions—and will continue to support and work shoulder to shoulder with it to ensure its growth and prosperity, as Israel does with all Jewish communities around the world. The embassy is maintaining constant contact with the Jewish community in Porto."

<https://www.jns.org/portuguese-jewish-community-slandered-in-campaign-against-sephardic-law/>

Oporto Jewish Community accuses Portugal of waging anti-Semitic campaign

"It's just painful to see state representatives retreat hundreds of years, pursue powerful people in Portugal just because of their Jewishness," says community president Gabriel Senderowicz.



Members of the Jewish congregation stand outside the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue in Oporto, Portugal. Credit: CIP/Bizarro

(July 19, 2022 / JNS) The Oporto Jewish Community on Monday **again** accused the Portuguese state of conducting an "ongoing anti-Semitic campaign," after police raided the offices of several law firms and the home of the curator of the city's Jewish Museum in connection with alleged corruption surrounding Portugal's so-called "Spanish Law."

According to a statement from the Jewish community leadership, the campaign is being orchestrated by "agents of the state" seeking to abolish the 2015 Nationality Law for Portuguese Sephardic Jews, which grants Portuguese citizenship to descendants of Jews expelled from the country in the 15th century.

"The lawyers [whose offices were raided] were presented with a list of about 20 names of well-known and powerful Jews who are at the center of a criminal investigation on suspicion of having obtained their Portuguese citizenship illegally," said Oporto Jewish Community President Gabriel Senderowicz.

Among those whose names were presented to the lawyers were Patrick Drahi, a French-Israeli businessman who received his Portuguese citizenship from the Lisbon Jewish

community in 2015; Michael Kadoorie, a British-Portuguese citizen whose family built the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue in Oporto; and Jewish philanthropist Andrei Rappoport, who received Portuguese citizenship in 2016, according to the Jewish community president.

"All the names mentioned, with the exception of Mr. Kadoorie, paid a fee of €250 legally, as is charged to anyone applying for Portuguese citizenship," said Senderowicz. "The community decided not to charge Mr. Kadoorie and offered him the certificate as a token of appreciation for his family's contribution to the Jewish Community of Oporto.

"I regret that the 'Spanish Law' has become an anti-Semitic weapon against wealthy Portuguese citizens," Senderowicz said. "This is nothing more than deception by some powerful state officials in the country who seek to disguise their anti-Semitic attitudes [with the claim] that these businessmen received their citizenship insincerely."

The police raids come just weeks after the Oporto Jewish Community submitted a statement to a Portuguese parliament committee detailing the anti-Semitic abuse it claims to have already suffered.

The statement, which accused Portugal of persecuting Jews and engaging in anti-Semitism, was a response to the state's announced intention to abolish the 2015 legislation.

The Oporto Jewish Community's involvement with the Spanish Law began on a high note as Portugal's government asked for its help in vetting Jews seeking citizenship. The law required certification from the Portuguese Jewish community "proving Sephardic Jewish lineage of Portuguese origin."

Things took a turn for the worse when, in early 2020, opponents of the law began targeting the community, Senderowicz told JNS.

"They were a group of anti-Semitic politicians, journalists and influencers. They launched a slanderous campaign against the law, saying 'candidates only want passports of convenience,' 'there are tens of millions of candidates' [57,000 have in fact received citizenship] and 'applicants need only pay thousands of euros to genealogists, lawyers and the Portuguese Jewish communities,'" he said.

The Oporto community then announced its intention to expose the anti-Semitic officials in a new exhibit at the Jewish Museum of Oporto.

Shortly afterward, said Senderowicz, the curator of the Jewish Museum received a visit from the police that lasted five hours, during which he was asked to hand over to police information about these officials and their actions.

"It's just painful to see state representatives retreat hundreds of years, pursu[e] powerful people in Portugal just because of their Jewishness, try to destroy the leaders of our community, and turn their arrows of hatred against the richest people in Portugal, who applied for citizenship lawfully and now find themselves persecuted though innocent of any crime," said Senderowicz.

<https://www.jns.org/oporto-jewish-community-claims-wealthiest-members-targeted-in-anti-semitic-campaign/>

15/06/2022

A new room dedicated to antisemitism in Portugal between 2015 and 2022 was inaugurated at the Jewish Museum of Oporto



Hundreds of students from schools were the first to visit the new hall of the Jewish Museum of Oporto which presents the chronology of antisemitism in Portugal between 2015–2022. It has also some statues on display representing modern antisemites, incorporating their ideas, publications, and other forms of expression.

The exhibition begins with a study by the Anti-Defamation League in 2014, which concluded that there were at least 1.8 million Portuguese with antisemitic feelings.

However, at that time there were no antisemitic offences for nothing justified them: the national Jewish community, then numbering some 600 people, was practically invisible.

As a result of the 2015 legislation promoting the return of Sephardic Jews, the Jewish community grew significantly. This was immediately followed by exponential growth in antisemitism.

To begin with, there were a number of negative posts online and malicious shares which were highly aggressive against “the Jews” as a religious and social group. “It’s the worst race on Earth”, “they are foreigners”, “they wish to divide the Portuguese”, “go to Israel!”.

The Jewish community of Oporto informed the Portuguese Government about the growth of antisemitism and added that if nothing were done, sooner or later the Portuguese Jews would be subject to violence by antisemites – small in number but angry. The Community expressed its willingness to contribute to the development of a national strategy to fight antisemitism and protect the Portuguese Jewish communities.

The Oporto Jewish community created an Antisemitism Observatory to observe and monitor antisemitism on Portuguese territory in real time, choose ways to reduce or eliminate the prejudice against Jews and the Jewish communities, draw up scientific opinions and reports for information and action, if necessary, by the relevant supervisory authorities, raising political parties’ awareness of the need to improve the existing legislation and promote suitable school curricula.

The Community inaugurated the Jewish Museum of Oporto to create the image of an open religious community. However, the Public Security Police (PSP) was opposed to placing any police officer at the Museum, for in their opinion there were no security risks. For security reasons, the Jewish community of Oporto decided not to open the Jewish museum to the general public. It serves exclusively the Portuguese and international Jewish community, schools and teachers.

A group belonging to the German antifascist “Anti Faschistishche Aktion” pasted their organisation's stickers on the Oporto synagogue, linking it to fascism. The group is also suspected of preparing to vandalize the Holocaust Museum in this city. Indeed, some of its members were identified inside the museum the day before the action against the synagogue.

The construction of the Chabad Centre in Cascais and of the Jewish Museum of Alfama in Lisbon were opposed by some outspoken residents. It was claimed that the new buildings would break with the tradition of the neighbourhoods. In the meantime, in Oporto there were many individual cases of antisemitism, fortunately without physical violence. The façade of a Jewish family's home was vandalised in red paint, including the mezuzah. The head of that family had complained at his daughter's school that a young boy had complained because “the Jews are killing children in Palestine”.

The State neither prevents nor punishes the spread of such stereotypes which in the past led to the genocide of the world Jewish population and in the present jeopardises the respectability and security of Jews in general and Jewish communities, that in addition have to provide and pay for the protection of members, properties, synagogues, museums and cemeteries.

In 2020, a group of influential people in Portugal tried to put an end to the provisions of the Nationality Law for Portuguese Sephardic Jews by means of a defamation campaign against the Jewish communities involved in the certification process. Without being able to single out one wrongly decided case and ignoring all the positive effects of the law, these people spread hate on social media, using their journalist friends, media agents, columnists and professional slanderers to launch the worst stereotypes against the Jewish communities.

In 2022, people within the Portuguese State apparatus used journalists, influencers, anonymous accusers, anonymous sources and police to end the Sephardic law and bring down the leaders of the Jewish Community of Oporto, the strongest in Portugal.

No one has escaped this kind of inquisition-style “purification”. From religious to secular leaders – presidents, ex-presidents, vice-presidents, treasurers, members and secretaries, not forgetting the museologist and the doorkeeper – and many more the victims, books of minutes were seized, as were confidential documents and communications between the Jewish Community of Oporto and the Jewish world at large: B'nai B'rith International, Anti-Defamation League, Keren Hayesod, CEJI, Anti-Semitism Movement and hundreds of other Jewish organizations.

The new room presents an explanation of the genesis of the present criminal proceedings and soon there will also be a brightly lit display case containing all the accusations that led to these proceedings and photographs of all the characters who made, spread and took advantage of these charges for malign purposes.

The Jewish Museum of Oporto was inaugurated in 2019. In his address at the Museum's opening ceremony, the President of B'nai B'rith International said: “This Jewish Museum will punctuate the awakening of Jewish life in Portugal and should serve as a beacon of light for the rest of Europe, a land now obscured by resurgent antisemitism.”

Before the Second World War, an estimated 9.5 million Jewish people lived in Europe. Nowadays, the Jewish population in the EU is estimated to be up to 1.5 million people. In recent years, the Jewish population in the EU has been declining, in particular to security concerns, as well as to the perceived lack of determination of some governments to address antisemitism.

<https://portuguesejewishnews.com/news/a-new-room-dedicated-to-antisemitism-in-portugal-between-2015-and-2022-was-inaugurated-at-the-jewish-museum-of-oporto/>

Oporto Jewish community files complaint with EU over ‘anti-Semitic abuse’

According to the complaint, the immediate aim of an ongoing investigation of the Portuguese Jewish community is to take control of Portuguese telecom giant MEO, owned by Jewish businessman Patrick Drahi.

BY DAVID ISAAC



Oporto's Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue. Credit: CIP/CJP/Bizarro.

(August 30, 2022 / JNS) The Jewish community of Oporto, Portugal, which claims it has endured an anti-Semitic smear campaign of national proportions, filed a complaint with the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) on Aug. 26. The complaint details what the community claims are false accusations against it aimed at undermining a 2015 law granting citizenship to descendants of Portuguese Jews.

The campaign will “destroy the credibility of a law, and harms community leaders and people whose Sephardic origin had been certified in compliance with the law,” Gabriel Senderowicz, president of the Oporto Jewish community, told JNS.

A new stipulation to the 2015 Nationality Law for Portuguese Sephardic Jews, aka the “Sephardic Law,” has made it impossible for candidates to meet the law's requirements, he said. Descendants must now show certificates proving inherited real estate in Portugal, something which is “logically impossible,” the complaint notes, as Sephardic Jews had their assets confiscated centuries ago. The new requirement goes into effect on Sept. 1.

According to the complaint, the campaign against the Sephardic Law began in April 2020 with a parliamentary debate initiated by three politicians: Foreign Minister Augusto Santos Silva, Justice Minister Francisca Van Dunem and Socialist Party Parliamentary group vice president Constança Urbano de Sousa.

The complaint attributes anti-Semitic motives to Sousa, noting she “compared the exponential reproduction of the Sephardim to the coronavirus.” It also suggests Santos Silva may be motivated by his anti-Israel attitudes. “Santos Silva is a politician closely linked to extreme leftist theories about Israel and Palestine,” said Sederowicz, noting that Portugal’s President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa has said of the affair that “it is a ‘Palestinian issue’ of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.”

Sousa, in coordination with Santos Silva and Van Dunem, attempted to derail the Sephardic Law by imposing a two-year mandatory residence period in Portugal before a candidate could apply for nationality, according to Senderowicz. The Jewish community objected and offered ways to improve the law. Sousa then began a smear campaign with help from media and influencers, the complaint states.

“Week after week, entire families were subject to libelous exposure in the newspapers, and slander on television, all based on anonymous denunciations and anonymous sources,” it continues.

The campaign accused citizenship candidates of only wanting “passports of convenience,” of paying lawyers and genealogists to sign off that they met the criteria, and of claiming that “tens of millions of candidates” were waiting for passports, giving the false impression that Portugal would be inundated by a Jewish influx.

The story sharpened into a slander specifically of the Oporto Jewish community, which was accused of running a racket by rubber-stamping citizenship certificates, said Senderowicz. “It was presented to the world as the sale of passports by a rabbinate who acted for money,” he said.

The community asserts that it charges a nominal fee of €250 per certificate, and only 57,000 applicants have received Portuguese citizenship out of an estimated pool of 1 million. The community applies “rigorous criteria,” he said.

The campaign had two main goals, said Senderowicz. First, to end the practice of providing Jews of Sephardic origin a path to Portuguese citizenship. Second, to blacken the name of French business mogul Patrick Drahi by falsely charging him with corruption in relation to his acquisition of Portuguese nationality in 2016.

Senderowicz told JNS that the reason Drahi figures so prominently is that the conspirators wanted to strip him of his Portuguese properties. Drahi’s telecom company Altice Europe purchased Portugal Telecom in 2015 (now Altice Portugal). Altice Portugal operates the Portuguese telecom service and brand MEO. Altice is also the biggest private partner in SIRESP, Portugal’s state communications network that handles emergency and security operations. The government decided to turn SIRESP into an entirely public company last year.

Senderowicz claimed that accusations against Drahi of corruption in his legal efforts to acquire Portuguese nationality will “deprive him of the moral force necessary to contest the allegedly flawed public contest of SIRESP” and to deliver telecom brand MEO to other, non-Jewish owners.

The complaint quotes a political scientist, João Lemos Esteves, who wrote that “the immediate aim of the persecution of the Portuguese Jewish community is to break the Jewish businessman Patrick Drahi in order to hand over a Portuguese telecommunications corporation (MEO) to a fund of ‘eminent Portuguese.’ ”

They want “to prevent other rich Jews of Portuguese nationality from investing in strategic sectors in Portugal, i.e., to avoid more ‘Patrick Drahis’ in Portugal, that is, to make false charges of corruption against the richest men in Portugal—all Jews,” said Senderowicz.

It was the Drahi connection that led the community to file its complaint with the EPPO. While the body can’t look into claims of anti-Semitism, it can investigate fraud and corruption when E.U. money is involved. The community hopes the EPPO will probe for possible financial impropriety.

The complaint calls into question a criminal investigation, “Operation Open Door,” opened by police in Feb. 2021. As part of the investigation, Oporto’s Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue, the second largest in Europe, was searched and the community’s chief rabbi, Daniel Litvak, was arrested on suspicion of fraud. The complaint said Litvak was mistreated in prison, placed in a cell with a murderer and denied kosher food, forcing him to go more than 24 hours without eating.

“Operation Open Door” has a list of about 20 suspects, said Senderowicz, of which the Oporto community was privy to 15. He noted that it included all the richest men in Portugal and number one on the list was Drahi.

He noted that Drahi’s name was buried by the press in favor of another wealthy Jew on the list, Roman Abramovich.

“The strategy of the conspirators included not mentioning the name of Patrick Drahi in the media. The idea was to raise a great cloud with a convenient actor [Roman Abramovich] and a convenient country [the Russian Federation] to sully and destroy Drahi,” he said.

Even though the aim of creating an impossibly high bar for the Sephardic Law has already been enacted, Senderowicz said he expects “Operation Open Door” to continue for another 10 years, “like every big case in Portugal. It’s ridiculous.”

Lisbon appeals court throws out restrictions on Portugal rabbi

The judges also said there was no evidence that Daniel Litvak received kickbacks for issuing certificates of Sephardic descent.

BY **DAVID ISAAC**



Rabbi Daniel Litvak of Oporto (left) with the former Israeli Ambassador to Portugal Raphael Gamzou. Credit: CIP/CJP

(September 29, 2022 / JNS) The Lisbon Court of Appeal on Tuesday revoked “coercive measures” against Daniel Litvak, the rabbi of the Portuguese city of Oporto. The restrictions were part of a campaign of anti-Semitic harassment against the community, its leaders claim.

The restrictive measures required Litvak to report three times a week to the Judicial Police and prevented him from leaving Portugal. The rabbi still must inform the police of his residence in Portugal and abroad.

“In summary, the Court says that the rabbi was arrested and insulted worldwide without any evidence,” Gabriel Senderowicz, president of the Jewish Community of Oporto, told JNS. “And the same happened concerning the incredible invasion of the Oporto synagogue, the community documents theft, the searches in the house of the directors, and the complete insult of the community during nine months.”

Senderowicz referred to actions taken by Portuguese authorities against the Oporto community, including invading Oporto’s Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue, the largest synagogue in the Iberian Peninsula “as if it were a brothel;” searching the home of the

synagogue's vice president, Isabel Ferreira Lopes, "looking for bags stuffed with cash;" and arresting and detaining Litvak on suspicion of fraud.

Litvak was mistreated in prison, placed in a cell with a murderer and denied kosher food, forcing him to go more than 24 hours without eating, according to a complaint filed by the community with the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) on Aug. 26.

Police actions were the culmination of an anti-Semitic smear campaign by public figures and members of the press against the community orchestrated by "agents of the state" opposed to the 2015 Nationality Law for Portuguese Sephardic Jews, Senderowicz said. The law grants citizenship to descendants of Jews expelled from the country in the 15th century.

The Oporto Jewish community was accused of running a racket by rubber-stamping citizenship certificates, said Senderowicz. "It was presented to the world as the sale of passports by a rabbinate who acted for money," he said.

Senderowicz said the community has been subject to "anonymous denunciations made by state agents, professional slanderers and individuals" combined with a "murderous media campaign carried out by half a dozen journalists and influencers to destroy the credibility of a law, community leaders and people whose Sephardic origin had been certified in compliance with the law."

The community denies any accusation of wrongdoing. Litvak received a degree of support from the Lisbon Court of Appeal. In its decision, it rebuked the Public Prosecutor's Office.

The judges said the criminal intent attributed to the defendant's conduct was based "on nothing." It questioned the accusation that Litvak received kickbacks for issuing certificates of Sephardic descent, a necessary step to receiving Portuguese citizenship under the law, and the charge that he upheld false claims of Sephardic descent on behalf of applicants.

"What amounts, who paid, when, regarding which naturalization process?" the judges asked. "In which naturalization processes did the appellant falsely attest that an applicant was a descendant of Portuguese Sephardic Jews?"

They referred to the charge as "a generalization without factual basis."

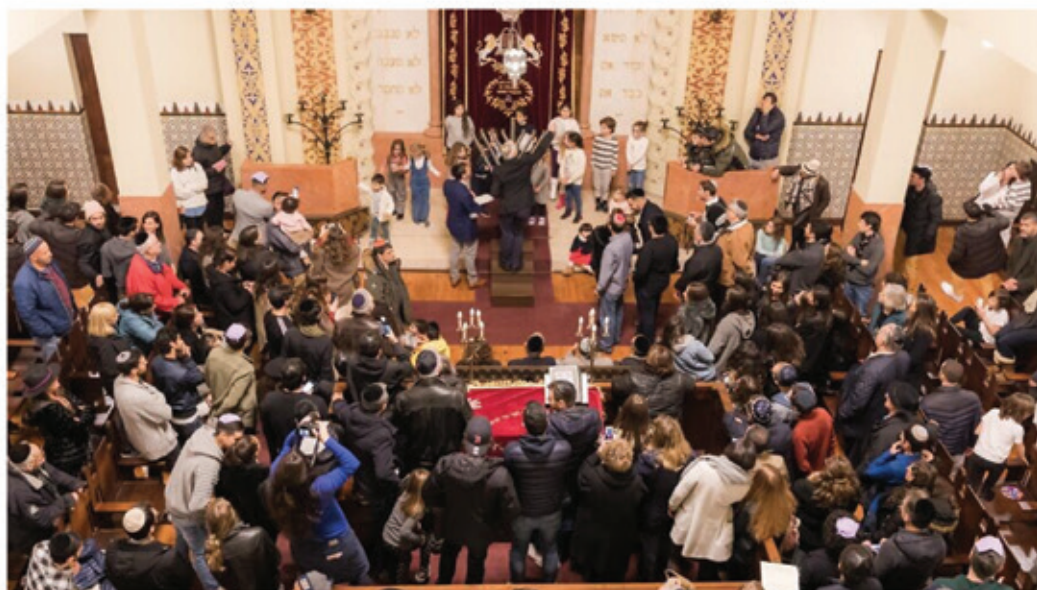
The Public Prosecutor's Office also failed to provide a "reference to a specific case, a false document, an undue payment or receipt, [or] an indication of the criminal scheme," the judges said.

"How can someone defend themselves only from generalities?" the judges wrote.

"In light of the foregoing, it is clear that it is not even possible to get to the facts even by means of the evidence. It cannot be concluded ... that the appellant has committed any of the acts that are attributed to him," they concluded.

Jewish students demand Portugal 'never again' harass Oporto community

The students urged the country's parliament to never again allow a chief rabbi to be unlawfully detained or a synagogue to be invaded.



Oporto's Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue. Credit: CIP/CJP/Bizarro.

(November 29, 2022 / JNS) Forty-four French Jewish students attending university in Oporto, Portugal, sent a petition on Monday to the Portuguese parliament asking the state to "never again unlawfully detain a chief rabbi or illegally invade a synagogue."

The letter to the unicameral Assembly of the Republic urges the state of Portugal to never again "cooperate with nocturnal burglars [and] anonymous whistle-blowers" in order to "incriminate people and build a legal proceeding that in fact is 'based on nothing,' in the words of the Lisbon Court of Appeal."

Ilan Cohen, the petition's first signatory, said, "The discrimination of the inquisition was not enough for them to stop there. Jews remain unprotected because unlike other minorities they are always associated with money, always."

Gabriel Senderowicz, president of the Oporto community, told JNS, "The young always represent the hope for a brighter future. Our young French members say that there is a difference between France and Portugal. In France they are protected by the state and persecuted by parts of the population. Here they live in safety among the population but they find that there are elites who persecute the Jewish community."

"In this year, our community has not only watched historical antisemitism repeating itself but also has written history in real time, with its own hands. The letter of our young members aims at laying the new chapter of the antisemitic narrative to rest."

The letter referred to actions taken by the Portuguese police against the Jewish community of Oporto, including **searching** the city's Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue, the largest shul in the Iberian Peninsula, and arresting and detaining Daniel Litvak, chief rabbi of the city's Jewish community, in March.

Litvak was mistreated in prison, placed in a cell with a murderer and denied kosher food, forcing him to go more than 24 hours without eating, according to a complaint filed by the community with the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO), an independent body of the European Union, on Aug. 26.

The rabbi then was required to report three times a week to the Judicial Police and barred from leaving Portugal. Those restrictive measures were **removed** on Sept. 27 by the Lisbon Court of Appeals.

The judges questioned the accusation that Litvak received kickbacks for issuing certificates of Sephardic descent, a necessary step to receiving Portuguese citizenship under a 2015 law granting such citizenship to descendants of Jews expelled from the country in the 15th century.

The rabbi had been accused of fraud—of rubber-stamping citizenship certificates, Senderowicz said. "It was presented to the world as the sale of passports by a rabbinate who acted for money."

According to Oporto's Jewish community, the harassment was part of an organized **campaign** by "agents of the state" seeking to abolish the Nationality Law for Portuguese Sephardic Jews, also known as the "Sephardic Law."

Antisemitic politicians, journalists and social media influencers launched a "slandorous campaign" claiming that the law would lead to a flood of new citizens and alleged that the Oporto community was making millions in profits through the certification process, Senderowicz said.

The campaign against the law was ultimately successful as the government revised the Sephardic Law to include demands that Portugal's Jewish community says are impossible to fulfill.

The students' letter concluded with a request that Portugal "posthumously reintegrate the 'Portuguese Dreyfus,' " referring to Capt. Artur Carlos de Barros Basto, who was drummed out of the army in 1937 for his Jewish roots.

Barros Basto helped to establish the Jewish community in Porto and the Kadoorie Synagogue. He also aided the return of Crypto-Jews to the Jewish people and, during World War II, helped hundreds of Jews escape the Holocaust.

La Communauté juive de Porto dénonce devant le Parlement, via une pétition, un risque d'antisémitisme d'état

1 décembre 2022 Tribune Juive Antisémitisme 4



La synagogue Kadoorie Mekor Haim de Porto a été fouillée. Credit: CIP/CJP/Bizarro

Des étudiants français juifs de Porto évoquent moult humiliations et exigent via une Lettre que le Portugal ne harcèle plus jamais la communauté de Porto: ils exhortent le Parlement du pays à ne plus jamais autoriser la détention illégale d'un grand rabbin ou l'invasion d'une synagogue.

44 étudiants juifs français des universités de Porto ont envoyé une Lettre à l'Assemblée de la République portugaise demandant à l'État de promettre "qu'il ne procédera plus jamais à la détention illégale d'un grand rabbin et à la fouille illégale d'une synagogue, d'un musée juif et des résidences de dirigeants communautaires".

Les étudiants se réfèrent à l'affaire qui en mars avait conduit à l'arrestation du rabbin de Porto, Daniel Litvak, accusé d'appartenir à une association criminelle vouée à la contrefaçon et à la corruption, avec la participation de fonctionnaires des Conservatoires et à travers des détournements et blanchiments d'argent non déclaré au Trésor.

En septembre, le tribunal a estimé que les multiples soupçons n'étaient "fondés sur rien" et a rendu au rabbin ses passeports.

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Ilan Cohen, étudiant en 5^e année de médecine dentaire, évoque une discrimination d'état

Dans la nuit du 29, après que JNS ait évoqué "l'affaire", un pneu de la voiture d'Ilan a été soigneusement volontairement tailladé, risquant de causer un accident mortel: "J'ai eu beaucoup de chance, je me suis arrêté et j'ai vu des coups de couteau dans mes pneus", déclare-t-il, soupçonnant que la paternité de la malveillance revienne au réseau antisémite pour le faire taire ou même le tuer. Il en réfère au "complot antisémite contre la communauté de Porto qui fit appel en 2022 à des voleurs professionnels pour pénétrer dans des cabinets d'avocats et des maisons privées et à des personnes condamnées pour de nombreux crimes. (<https://firstmajorconspiracy.com/>)

Premier signataire de la pétition, il ajoute: "La discrimination de l'Inquisition ne leur a pas suffi pour s'arrêter là ! Les Juifs restent sans protection car contrairement aux autres minorités ils sont toujours associés à l'argent, toujours !"

Gabriel Senderowicz, Président de la Communauté de Porto, a déclaré à JNS : "Les jeunes représentent toujours l'espoir d'un avenir meilleur. Nos jeunes adhérents français disent qu'il y a une différence entre la France et le Portugal: en France, ils sont protégés par l'État et persécutés par une partie de la population, et ici, ils vivent en sécurité parmi la population mais ils constatent qu'il y a des élites qui persécutent la communauté juive: **"Cette année, notre communauté a non seulement vu l'antisémitisme historique se répéter, mais a également vécu l'histoire en temps réel. La lettre de nos jeunes membres vise à mettre fin au nouveau chapitre du récit antisémite"**.

La lettre en question fait référence aux mesures prises par la police portugaise contre la communauté juive de Porto, notamment via la fouille de la synagogue Kadoorie Mekor Haim de la ville, la plus grande shul de la péninsule ibérique, et l'arrestation suivie de la détention de Daniel Litvak, grand rabbin de la communauté juive de la ville, en Mars.

Litvak a été maltraité en prison, placé dans une cellule avec un meurtrier, privé de nourriture casher, astreint donc à rester plus de 24 heures sans manger, selon une plainte déposée par la communauté auprès du Parquet européen (Parquet européen), un organisme indépendant. de l'Union européenne, le 26 août.

Le rabbin fut tenu de se présenter trois fois par semaine à la police judiciaire et interdit de quitter le Portugal. Ces mesures restrictives ont été levées le 27 septembre par la Cour d'appel de Lisbonne.

Les juges ont mis en doute l'accusation selon laquelle Litvak aurait reçu des pots-de-vin pour avoir délivré des certificats d'ascendance séfarde, une étape nécessaire pour obtenir la citoyenneté portugaise en vertu d'une loi de 2015 accordant cette citoyenneté aux descendants de Juifs expulsés du pays au XVe siècle.

Le rabbin avait été accusé de fraude – d'avoir tamponné des certificats de citoyenneté, a déclaré Gabriel Senderowicz, Président de la Communauté de Porto: "Cela a été présenté au monde comme la vente de passeports par un rabbinat qui a agi pour de l'argent."

Selon la communauté juive de Porto, le harcèlement faisait partie d'une campagne organisée par des "agents de l'État" cherchant à abolir la loi sur la nationalité pour les Juifs séfarades portugais, également connue sous le nom de "loi séfarde".

Des politiciens antisémites, des journalistes et des influenceurs des médias sociaux auraient lancé "une campagne diffamatoire" affirmant que ladite "loi séfarde" conduirait à un flot de nouveaux citoyens et allèguent que la Communauté de Porto "réalisait des millions de bénéfices grâce au processus de certification", a encore déclaré Gabriel Senderowicz.

La campagne contre la loi a finalement été couronnée de succès car le gouvernement a révisé la loi séfarde pour y inclure des exigences que la communauté juive du Portugal juge impossibles à satisfaire.

La lettre des étudiants se termine par une demande au Portugal de "réintégrer à titre posthume le "Dreyfus portugais", faisant référence au capitaine Artur Carlos de Barros Basto, qui fut chassé de l'armée en 1937 en raison de ses racines juives. Barros Basto avait aidé à établir la communauté juive de Porto et la synagogue Kadoorie. Il a également aidé le retour des crypto-juifs au peuple juif et, pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale, a aidé des centaines de Juifs à échapper à l'Holocauste.

<https://www.tribunejuive.info/2022/12/01/la-communaute-juive-de-porto-denonce-un-antisemitisme-detat/>

01/12/2022

Jewish student who sent a complaint to Portuguese Parliament suspects an attempt on his life



Ilan Cohen, one of the 44 French Jewish students from universities in Oporto who last Monday sent a letter to the Portuguese Assembly of the Republic asking the State to “never again” attack the Jewish Community, suspects an attempt on his life on Tuesday night. On the night of the 29th, a tire on Ilan’s car was carefully punctured so as to be on the verge of bursting while he was having dinner at a kosher restaurant in Oporto. After dinner Ilan went home on the highway, where speeds reached about 120km/h, and “miraculously the tire did not burst”, Cohen says. “Taking the VCI (highway), my car had trouble driving, and I was very lucky, I stopped and saw stab wounds in my tires.”

Now Ilan suspects that the authorship was “a criminal network to silence or even to kill me through a fatal accident, because in 2022 an antisemitic conspiracy against the Oporto community made use of professional robbers to break into law offices and private homes, and also people convicted of other crimes.” Cohen has been studying in Oporto for five years and it was the first time this happened. “That is why this occurrence is highly suspicious. I filed a complaint with the police, case number 002042/22.6PIPRT”, he adds.

On Monday, a group of French students from Oporto sent a letter to the Portuguese Parliament asking the State to promise that “never again will it unlawfully detain a Chief Rabbi or illegally invade a synagogue, a Jewish museum and the homes of community leaders in a case ‘without foundation in fact’ and ‘based on nothing’, in the words of the Lisbon Court of Appeal.”

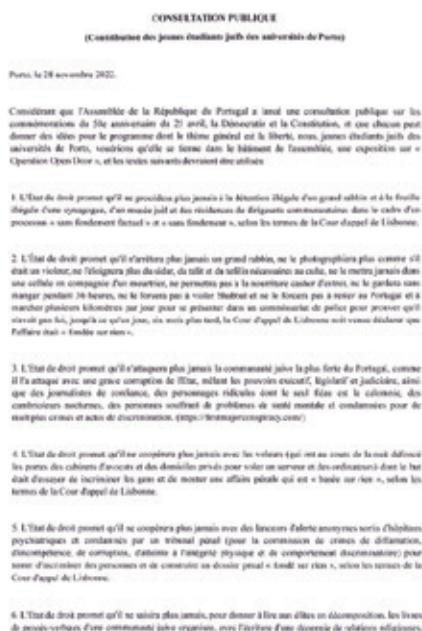


The students refer to the case that, in March, led to the arrest of the Chief Rabbi of Porto, Daniel Litvak, who was accused of being part of a criminal association linked to forgery and corruption involving officials of the registry offices and misappropriation of funds that were not declared to the tax authorities and were laundered. In September, the Lisbon Court ruled that the multiple suspicions were “based on nothing” and returned the Rabbi's passports.

Ilan Cohen, the petition's first signer, said to the Jewish News Syndicate that "The discrimination of the inquisition, was not enough for them to stop there! Jews remain unprotected because unlike other minorities they are always associated with money, always! . Whereas the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal has launched a public consultation on the Commemorations of the 50th anniversary of Democracy and the Constitution, university students have asked for texts suggested by them to be placed in the Parliament building. "The democratic state promises that never again will it arrest a Chief Rabbi, photograph him as if he were a rapist, remove the siddur, tallit and tefillin needed for prayer, place him in a cell with a murderer, not allow kosher food to be brought in, deprive him of food for 36 hours, force him to break the Sabbath and to remain in Portugal, while travelling several kilometres three times a week for a humiliating presentation at a police station to prove he has not run away, until one day, six months later, the Lisbon Court of Appeal stated that the case was 'based on nothing'".

In the letter, in French, sent to Parliament, the State is also urged never again to “cooperate with nocturnal burglars (who broke down the doors of law offices and private homes to steal a server and computers)” and “with anonymous whistle-blowers who have spent time in psychiatric hospitals and sentenced in the criminal courts (for crimes of slander and libel, common assault and discriminating behaviour), in an attempt to incriminate people and build a legal proceeding that in fact is ‘based on nothing’, in the words of the Lisbon Court of Appeal.”

The letter ends by asking the Portuguese State to “posthumously reintegrate the ‘Portuguese Dreyfus’ [Captain Barros Basto, founder of the Jewish Community of Porto] in the Army, from which he was separated in 1937 following a sordid case – yet another case! – of anonymous charges by the scum of society. Then, like now, the State seized this opportunity to try to destroy an organised Jewish community.”

[illegible]

Porto's religious revival

By Daniel Ben-Tal and Gabriela Cantergi

"I WROTE to several friends and family members afterward to tell them about how deeply moved I was emotionally. I don't think I've ever heard such passionate praying and singing before in a synagogue. It wasn't just the power of the voices praying in unison that moved me so deeply, it was also the symbolism of so many Jews gathering together in a synagogue in a country that was heavily impacted by the Inquisition."

This description of Yom Kippur in 2021 by the world traveler, author and polyglot Susanna Zaraysky, who has visited Jewish communities in over 50 countries, perfectly reflects what transpired again last week at Porto's historic Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue. Passionate voices from rabbis, cantors, men, women, old people, children and young people – many young people – resonated throughout the great edifice.

Yet only a decade ago, the dwindling Jewish community of Porto, the coastal city in north-west Portugal, comprised but a few dozen aging veterans. Even when they managed to raise a minyan, no children's voices were heard in the synagogue, which had become a ghostly gray building. Now the rapidly growing community numbers 700 members hailing from 30 countries (plus hundreds of foreign students), and is thriving religiously, culturally and educationally while also investing considerable resources in combating antisemitism.

Community members unabashedly say that Porto serves as a beacon for the rest of European Jewry, where small communities are dying out. What only 10 years ago was considered one of Europe's most insignificant communities is today one of its strongest in terms of religious life, Jewish culture and social philanthropy.

"The community was strongly rebuilt from 2012, with consistent secular and religious leaders and donations from the Jewish world that were used to promote Jewish religion and culture," notes its vice president, Isabel Barros, granddaughter of its founder Captain Barros Basto [see box].

In 2013, the synagogue was completely refurbished and became a magnet for newcomers. The following year, a kosher restaurant and kosher hotel opened, kick-starting a wave



Hundreds of people pray at the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue in Porto on Yom Kippur (photo taken from a surveillance camera).

of Jewish tourism that has increased exponentially. The community now boasts a museum documenting its history, and an innovative Holocaust museum that recounts how the city served as a safe haven for Jewish refugees during WWII, with regular Portuguese school visits aimed at allaying antisemitic prejudices. They have also produced three moving full-length movies about the community's history that have won awards at international film festivals. The film *1618*, about the Inquisition's effect on Porto, is Portugal's most internationally awarded movie, and has even been purchased by airlines from Arab countries to screen on their flights.

The community's greatest boost came in 2015, when the Portuguese parliament approved the Nationality Law for Sephardi Jews – commonly known as the "Sephardi Law" – that promoted the arrival of many Jewish families (especially Israelis, French and Brazilians). Close to 57,000 descendants of Sephardi Jews have been granted citizenship since the law was implemented in 2015, according to official data. Young foreign Jews studying at Porto's universities were warmly welcomed, and as more families chose Porto as their destination, community membership grew and with it came new ideas, greater religious practice, more Jewish culture and more Jewish life.

The Kadoorie synagogue building actually houses two synagogues: in the main chamber, about 350 men and 150 women (sitting and standing) prayed on Yom Kippur according to Sephardi ritual under Rabbi Yoel Zekri, while in the basement, about 60 men and 60 women (sitting and standing) led by Chief Rabbi Daniel Litvak followed Ashkenazi rituals.

Late arrivals stood in awe at the sight of hundreds of men draped in white tallitot (prayer shawls) deep in prayer. Most appeared familiar with the texts, while others nervously leafed through their prayer books to find the place. At times, five cantors sang the heartfelt prayers in perfect unison and harmony – sounds not heard in the Iberian Peninsula for many years.

Catia Silva, a local Catholic woman who was invited to the Kol Nidre service, looked astonished. "The thousands of churches in this country today are attended by an aging population and have a far more restrained religiosity," she said. "In this synagogue, we can see a participatory congregation both in prayers and songs, as if it were a single collective body."

To put the Porto Jewish community's growth in proportion: there were 9.5 million Jews in Europe before World War II, and slightly more than one million today. Large Jewish centers are siphoning off the young generation from smaller communities – and a not inconsiderable number are leaving Europe altogether. Porto (Oporto in Portuguese), Portugal's second-largest city, has a metropolitan population of 1.7 million.

On September 4, the European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture held its European Day of Jewish Culture across the continent, and Porto stood out with 5,000 visitors to its museums, cinema, art museums, restaurants and more.

The community and its rabbinate constantly upgrade their efforts to attract new members, introducing congregant-friendly prayer services; Achdut centers for absorbing foreign Jewish students enrolled at Porto's universities; kashrut services, kosher stores and restaurants; the Portuguese Jewish School – an on-line school providing basic courses in Jewish religion, culture and history; a new cemetery; a modern mikveh; charitable projects to help the needy, poor, elderly, children and sick; the

city's Holocaust Museum and Jewish Museum; and the largest Jewish library in the Iberian Peninsula. It has also produced historical films that won international awards, opened a historical research center, organized large concerts, and even created online Jewish newspapers.

Meanwhile, the Porto Jewish community is combating antisemitism through positive action. In the past decade, 130,000 school students have visited the Kadoorie Synagogue, Jewish Museum and Holocaust Museum, and training courses are regularly held for teachers. Community leaders have also signed cooperation protocols with the local Catholic Diocese and Muslim Community.

The European Union actively promotes the return of the Jewish people, their culture and religion. However, board member David Garrett offers "a note of warning. As soon as Jewish communities start making their mark in European territory, the influential antisemites in society will attempt to destroy Jewish life bit by bit, attacking the strong synagogues and sparing the weak ones (to avoid being accused of antisemitism), using the same methods once employed in the Soviet Union."

He outlines these methods citing the "use of the press and slanderers to associate synagogues with businesses, describing such businesses as amoral or illegal, negative reactions from some public opinion and straw Jews, and total destruction of the synagogues' respectability and the Jewish organizations as promoters of Jewish life and Jewish culture."

Ten years ago there was almost no antisemitism in Portugal, but as the Jewish community grows in visibility, Jew-hatred has returned, complete with conspiracy theories and anonymous tip-offs. The Portuguese press has claimed that the Porto Jewish Community made "various millions" of euros by processing nationality requests from Jews throughout the world, and berated the new kosher restaurants, Achdut centers, museums and movies as "opulence."

"Those who were scandalized by the 250-euro fee are ridiculous, especially since the Sephardim from our community have already invested more than one billion euros in the Porto area," Vice President Isabel Barros retorts.

It appears that the days when Portuguese passports were accessible to about a million Jews have passed. The parliament in Lisbon amended the Nationality Law beginning September 1, with tightened validity requirements effectively castrating the initiative.

In March, Rabbi Litvak was detained by

Portuguese police at Porto airport before boarding a flight to Munich en route to Israel, on suspicion of fraudulently certifying the Sephardi origins of applicants, including Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich (whose Sephardic origins were also attested to by the Moscow rabbinate and international Jewish organizations). Community-linked offices were also raided. Six months later, the charges were dropped after an Appeals Court ruled that

the prosecutors had no evidence.

"We will never forgive the antisemites who mounted this shameful police operation to destroy the Sephardi Law," says the Community's president, Gabriel Senderowicz. "The chief rabbi was arrested without any evidence, and the synagogue was trampled underfoot as if it were a brothel. No religious temple has been treated this way in Portugal in the last 500 years." ■

The Portuguese Dreyfus

It is never too late for justice. Captain Arthur Carlos de Barros Basto (1887-1961) is said to have discovered at an early age from his dying grandfather that he belonged to a Jewish dynasty, and converted to Judaism in 1920. Three years later, together with a group of Ashkenazi Jews from Central and Eastern Europe living in the city, he reestablished the Porto Jewish community that had practically disappeared since 1497.

In 1926, he embarked on a bold project (with the help of the Sephardi Jewish community in London) to convert back to Judaism several hundred Marranos – Jews who were forced during the Spanish Inquisition to choose between conversion and expulsion or even death. They established a Jewish school, a local Jewish newspaper, and the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue, but the descendants of the Marranos preferred to remain a separate stream from Judaism.

Three of them – Adriano Lopes, Rebordao and Horta, instigated by Miguel Vaz and Cassutos – allegedly launched the false accusation against the captain: homosexuality, which was then outlawed in Portugal and much of the world. But this malicious accusation was sufficient to disperse the new Jewish community – the Marranos school closed its doors, and its students were sent home.

"The Portuguese army exploited these anonymous accusations to file a lawsuit against my grandfather, and in the absence of proof, sentenced him to expulsion from military service," says his granddaughter, Isabel Barros Basto, who worked for many years to clear his name.

Captain Barros Basto spent the rest of his days bitterly, sadly and in poverty. He died in 1961, and in accordance with his last request, was buried in his old military uni-



Captain Barros Basto in 1923, the year he founded the Jewish Community of Porto.

form. He never gave up hope that his name would be cleared.

Over the years, increasing voices were raised against the injustice of the man who came to be known as "the Portuguese Dreyfus," but Portugal tarried until its parliament recommended in 2012 to "return him to military service." The following year the Portuguese army decided to posthumously promote him to the rank of colonel beginning from 1945.

"For my grandfather, this is the justice he wished for throughout the years after his expulsion from the army until his sad death," says Isabel Barros Basto.

The community funded the filming and production of a full-length feature film, called *SEFARD*, which tells the story of the captain available for viewing on Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/sefarad>

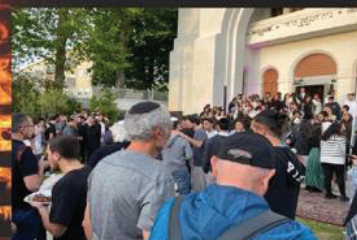
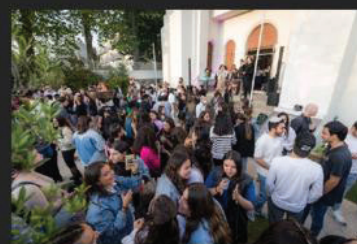
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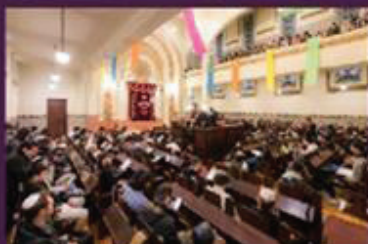
Jewish Community of Oporto inaugurates new Synagogue and shares images of activities in 2022



Oporto. Lag BaOmer, 2022



PURIM 2022



'Colar do Mérito Pedro, O Libertador' Commendation Award Ceremony

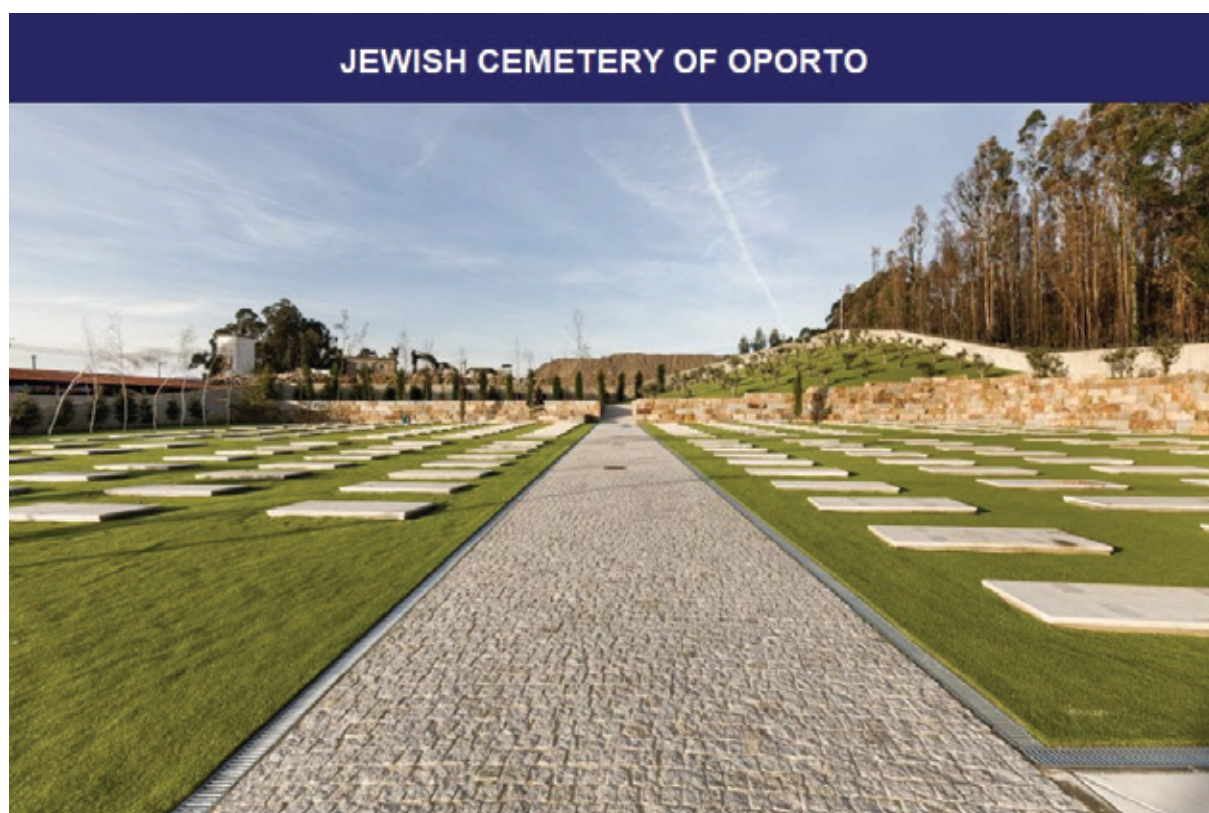


Museu do
Holocausto
Porto

"Kristallnacht" Commemorated With 1500 School Children

09-11-2022





<https://portuguesejewishnews.com/news/jewish-community-of-oporto-inaugurates-new-synagogue-and-shares-images-of-activities-in-2022/>

04/09/2022

The European Days of Jewish Culture: about 5,000 people visited the institutions of the Jewish community of Oporto



5000 visitors among general public and Ambassadors of Sweden, Germany and others

About 5,000 people and ambassadors from Sweden, Germany, Uruguay and other countries visited the institutions of the Jewish community in the city of Porto in northern Portugal today, Sunday, as part of the **European Union's Days of Jewish Culture**, organized together with the European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture, the European Council of Jewish Communities, B'nai B'rith Europe, European Jewish Association and the National Library of Israel.

To mark the festive day, the Jewish Community in Porto opened the doors of community institutions to the public, including the Jewish Museum and the Holocaust Museum in the city.

The choir of the active Meor Haim Synagogue in the city, a magnificent synagogue that is often filled with hundreds of people from thirty countries, sang for the visitors some of the best traditional Jewish songs and the visitors were even invited to an exhibition of paintings and a kosher Israeli meal at the local Iberia restaurant.

In addition, hundreds of people were watching the film "Sefarad" that tells the story of the modern Jewish community in the city, founded in 1923 by Jews of Ashkenazi origin and one army man, Captain Barros Basto, who became "the Portuguese Dreyfus" because he was expelled from the Army to be Jewish.

V

"My grandfather would have been very happy to be here today," added Isabel Barros, the granddaughter of Captain Barros Basto, "my grandfather was not only a community leader but also a student, a writer and a follower of Jewish culture. Today, not only is the synagogue that he built is full of people and life, the community also has a museum that tells the story of the Jewish community here and educates new generations of students, a gallery and a Holocaust museum - all serve as a daily reminder that Jews must not leave their security to anyone but themselves," added Barros, who currently serves as the vice president of the Jewish community in Porto.

The Jewish community of Oporto is composed of about 700 Jews and hundreds of foreigner students who are also part of the community and its achdut centers.

"It is a great pride to see the full Jewish life taking place in the city and a sense of an important mission achieving its goal. Teenagers and families come here from all over Europe, to get to know and witness the wonder of the revival of Jewish life, especially in the city where the persecution of the Jews was great and terrible. We are happy to repair and renew the days of the community as before," said Jacob Levi, a member of Bnai Brit Portugal.

The new gallery of paintings shows the history of the 1000 years of Jewish community in Oporto.

"As a Sephardic born in Venezuela who dreamed her entire life of what the Jewish life of the Sepharadim could have looked like here, I am proud to see the city of Porto and its residents appreciating an exhibition of paintings collected over many years in an attempt to trace and document the history of the Jewish people here for a thousand years. A story of victory, prosperity but also of persecution, expulsion, and now again of growing anti-Semitism," said Flor Mizrahi, one of the organizers of the event and a member of the local Jewish community.

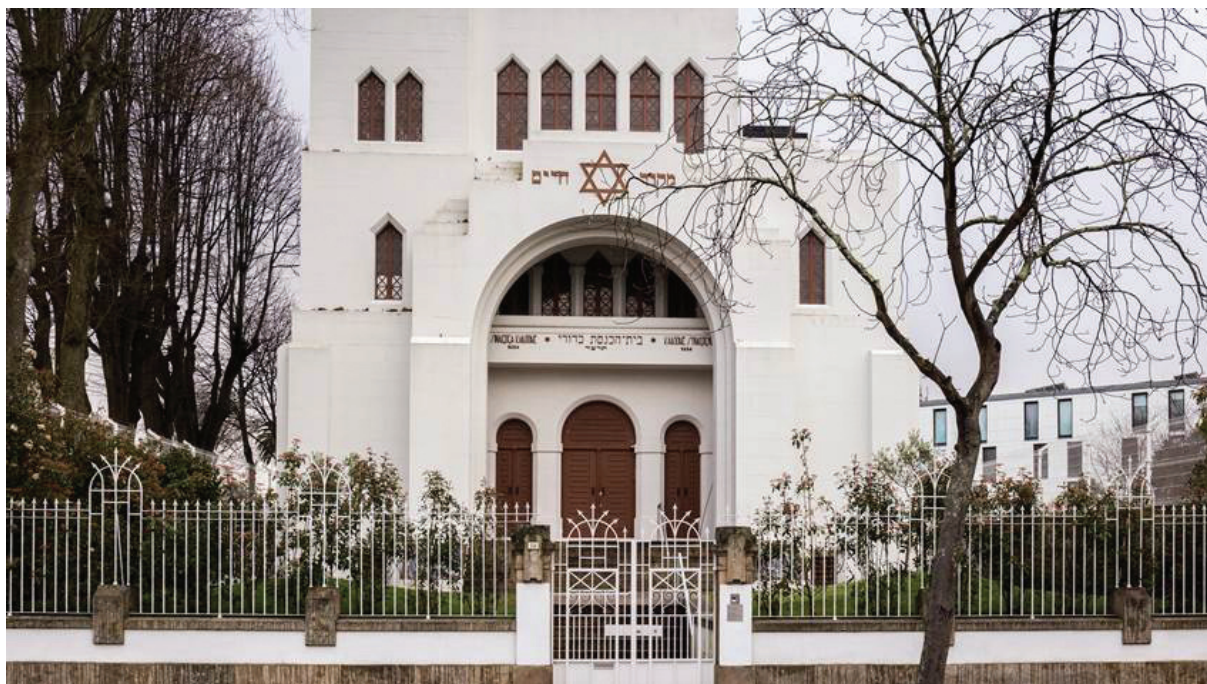


The Holocaust Museum crowded

<https://portuguesejewishnews.com/news/the-european-days-of-jewish-culture-about-5-000-people-visited-the-institutions-of-the-jewish-community-of-oporto/>

14/10/2022

750 thousand people saw the videography of the Jewish Community of Oporto in the last decade



Between 2012 and 2022, the videography of the Jewish Community of Porto, composed of 15 videos, was seen by around 750 thousand people. The project forms part of the Community's cultural activities which also include museums, feature films, a library, a painting gallery, and other. Click to watch the video:

[European Day of Jewish Culture in Oporto](#)

[Brief history of the Jews of Sepharad](#)

[The Holocaust Museum of Oporto](#)

[The Jewish Museum of Oporto](#)

[The Jewish Museum – Entebbe Operation Room](#)

[The Jewish Museum – Chain of Merit of the king Peter VI](#)

[The Holocaust Museum – Statements](#)

[The Holocaust Museum – Testimony of a survivor](#)

[David D'Or in Oporto, Portugal](#)

[Course of the Jewish Education Center of Oporto](#)

[The Nun's Kaddish](#)

[Oporto Mekor Haim Choir](#)

[Concert of Sephardic Memory – "Tradition and Modernity"](#)

[75th Anniversary of Kadoorie Synagogue \(2013\)](#)

[Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue \(2012\)](#)

Besides the videography, the main cultural instruments of the Oporto Jewish Community are the following:

1. The Jewish Museum

The Jewish Museum of Oporto was created by the Jewish Community of Oporto in partnership with B'nai B'rith International. In his inaugural speech, the president of this Jewish organisation said: "This Jewish Museum will mark the awakening of Jewish life in Portugal and serve as a beacon for the rest of Europe, now darkened by resurging antisemitism".

The museum is located on Rua de Guerra Junqueiro opposite the synagogue. It tells the story of the Jewish community in the city of Oporto, a history of over a thousand years, with its many joys and sorrows, the expulsion and the Inquisition, and the return of the Jews to Portugal after the Inquisition.

2. The Holocaust Museum

The Holocaust Museum of Oporto was created by the Jewish Community of Oporto in partnership with B'nai B'rith International and Holocaust museums around the world.

In 2021, this museum was the most visited museum in Portugal, with around 40,000 visitors. It is run by members of the Jewish Community of Oporto whose parents, grandparents and other relatives lost their lives in the Holocaust.

The Museum focuses on the general public, particularly on the young, and invests in teaching, in career training for educators, promoting exhibitions and supporting research.

3. Historical Films

To honour its thousand-year old history in the city of Oporto, the community produced a series of films to highlight the important Jewish presence here. The film scripts were first shown to the Bishop of Oporto. The films have received international awards in more than fifty countries and have received praise from Pope Francis, who was delighted to hear of the close relationship between the Jewish and Catholic communities of Oporto. The Community also produced that extensive videography.

4. Centre for Historical Research and painting gallery

The Centre for Historical Research of the Jewish Community of Oporto is responsible for the production of written and audio-visual content on the history of the community and seeks to reconstruct the entire history of the community to the present day, including a painting gallery with 1000 years of story of the Jewish Community in Oporto.

5. The Largest Library in Iberia

The Synagogue of Oporto today has most impressive Jewish library in Europe. The three rooms of the library, which are used for Beit Midrash, include books on Jewish law, books on Jewish history, books on Jewish culture and on many other subjects. The principal languages of the thousands of books in the library are Hebrew, French, Portuguese, English and Spanish.

6. Male choir and other Concerts

The Mekor Haim male choir of the Jewish Community of Oporto sings liturgical music. Other concerts are often organised by the Community at the Jewish Museum and Casa da Música, sometimes in the presence of more than 1000 guests.

7. Online Jewish Newspapers

The newspaper Mazal News is an initiative of the Jewish community of Oporto to share inspiring actions, based on kindness, solidarity and love, and that encourage the construction of a more just and positive world.

The Portuguese Jewish News is a newspaper of the Portuguese Jewish community for the Jewish community, sharing news, reportage, opinions and reviews regarding the Jewish community in general.

<https://portuguesejewishnews.com/news/750-thousand-people-saw-the-videography-of-the-jewish-community-of-oporto-in-the-last-decade/>

02/02/2022

The Holocaust Museum of Oporto



The Holocaust Museum of Porto (MHP) was created in 2021 by the Jewish Community of Porto (CIP/CJP) in partnership with B'nai B'rith International and Holocaust museums of Washington, Moscow, Hong Kong and others. The new museum received 40,000 visitors until December.

The Oporto Holocaust Museum invests in teaching, professional training of educators, as well as in the promotion of exhibitions, encouraging and supporting research. "It is important to teach the Holocaust in Portugal. At school my brother and I were the only Jews. The Holocaust was never taught or addressed, and few people knew anything about it" – Dara Jeffries, a board member of the Jewish Community of Oporto.

The Oporto Holocaust Museum portrays Jewish life before the Holocaust, Nazism, Nazi expansion in Europe, the Ghettos, refugees, concentration, labour and extermination camps, the Final Solution, the Death Marches, Liberation, the Jewish population in the post-war period, the Foundation of the State of Israel, Winning or dying of hunger, The Righteous among Nations.

In this Museum visitors have the opportunity to visit the reproduction of the Auschwitz dormitories, as well as a name room, a flame memorial, cinema, conference room, study centre, corridors with the complete narrative and photographs and screens showing real footage about the before, during and after the tragedy.

The Holocaust Museum of Oporto is the materialization of the challenge launched to civil society by the government project "Nunca Esquecer, em torno da memória do Holocausto" [Never Forget, around the memory of the Holocaust] and intends to honor the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance of which Portugal is a member, as well as sharing with society in general documents and objects left by refugees in the Porto Synagogue during World War II.



The Training Courses organised by the Centre for Jewish Education of Oporto aim to provide the tools needed for teachers of public and private schools to communicate about, reflect on and bring awareness to their students about topics such as Jewish History, the Holocaust and Antisemitism. The courses includes testimonies from Holocaust survivors. Teachers are offered copies of the book "Ten Myths Against the Jews". The content and importance of these myths in the historical context of the Holocaust and the present are explained at the beginning of the events.

The space is supervised by members of the Jewish Community of Porto whose parents, grandparents and relatives were victims of the Holocaust and is part of a strategy to combat antisemitism that already includes the Jewish Museum of Porto, school visits to the Porto Synagogue, courses for teachers, history films and charity actions in partnership with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Porto.

Testimonies of members of the Oporto Jewish community:

– **Luísa Cymerman Finkelstein:** "For some members of my family life ended in the extermination camps, and others were shot by firing squads after being forced to dig a mass grave."

– **Josef Lassman:** "My father never said a word about what happened during the Shoah. He preferred to move on, without looking back. He was then 19 years old and all his family members had been killed. Regarding my mother, she was in Auschwitz, in the experimentation block. She described what happened to her, her sister, parents and family before, during and after the Shoah. I don't know if there is any testimony so complete and so moving."

– **Eta Rabinowicz Pressman Wright:** "My mother's sister and brothers were all killed, their children too. In one case, the porter of the building wanted to save the children but they refused and said they wanted to go with their parents. They also died. The only surviving brother was imprisoned by the Soviets in a gulag in Siberia."

– **Michael Leo Rothwell:** "My grandparents were good German patriots and loved their country. Two of my great-uncles gave their lives for the Fatherland during the First World War. When the Nazis came to power, my grandparents became unwanted aliens. In 1943 they were transported like cattle to Auschwitz, split up, subject to every possible abuse and murdered".

– **Deborah Lieberman Walfrid Elijah:** "The Holocaust must be recounted by the victims. My mother was an orphan when she reached Argentina and my father was forced to play

the violin in Theresienstadt propaganda camp. I had no grandparents when I was born. They were all executed in Poland, after their heads were shaved, numbers were tattooed on their arms and they were used as slave labour."

– **Jonathan Lackman:** "My grandfather escaped from Treblinka and my grandmother, who had typhus, was rescued from Bergen-Belsen camp in northern Germany, where Anne Frank died. I will always share their stories."

In November 2021, a special ceremony was held in Oporto, Portugal honoring the victims of the Nazi genocide of the Jews, according to the International Observatory of Human Rights (IOHR), which initiated the event. The ceremony took place at the Oporto Holocaust Museum and was attended by 200 teenagers from the city's schools.



"The event is part of a world cordon of solidarity for universal peace and for a better world for all humanity," said IOHR president Luis Andrade, adding, "This appalling mass assassination took the lives of millions of Jews, as well as an untold number of other human beings."

As part of the ceremony, Andrade presented a certificate of tribute to Oporto Holocaust Museum director Michael Rothwell.

The Holocaust Museum of Porto is a Memorial to the Victims of the Holocaust, so the use of mobile phones is prohibited and the visitors must respect the sanctity of the place in terms of dress, language, behavior and public displays of affection. It is not allowed to photograph or film inside the Museum, as well as to eat, drink or smoke in the Museum spaces. Young people under 14 years old are not allowed to enter if they are not accompanied by their parents, guardians or teachers. Entry is subject to security procedures.

Charles Kaufman, President of human rights organisation B'nai B'rith International, underlines the important role of the new Museum: "This impressive Holocaust Museum is a testimony to Jewish heritage and resilience."

<https://portuguesejewishnews.com/museums/the-holocaust-museum-of-oporto/>

02/02/2022

The Jewish Museum of Oporto



The Jewish Museum of Oporto is included in a strategy of the local Jewish community to fight antisemitism. This strategy includes school visits to Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue, films about the history of the Jews in Portugal; courses for secondary school teachers and others who are interested in themes relating to Judaism and the history of the Jews, and visits to the city's Holocaust Museum.

The Jewish Museum of Oporto is located on Rua de Guerra Junqueiro, opposite the Kadoorie Synagogue. The garden has a stone epigraph in memory of Chief Rabbi Isaac Aboab, the greatest religious authority of the 15th century, who when the Jews were expelled from Spain went to live in Oporto. Here he died and was interred by Abraham Zacuto, mathematician and astronomer.

Ahead, a large display case contains a prison-carriage of the Inquisition, used in the film "1618", and at the entrance to the building is a message in Hebrew, which can be translated as follows: "Around the world, where a Jew encounters a Portuguese, he must help him; and where a Portuguese encounters a Jew, he must also help him."

The first room has many important objects for the Jewish religion – the Torah scrolls, a replica of the Temple of Jerusalem, the volumes of the Talmud, the work Mishné Torá by Moshe Maimonides, a shofar and even a gold candelabrum.

We are taken on a plurisecular voyage, which starts with Abraham, who obeyed what are known as the Seven Laws of Noah, and continues with the story of his successors, the arrival in Egypt, the saga of the Hebrews arriving on Mount Sinai and the conquest of Canaan, the kingdom of David, the ten lost tribes, the destruction of the first Temple, the destruction of the second and the Jews' departure into exile, which included the Iberian Peninsula. Here, for centuries the Jews lived side by side with the Romans, Germans, Muslims and Catholics.



Moving on from the first room, the voyage is accompanied by film shots of all ages, showing visitors the environment of the medieval Jewish community, the surnames of Jews who then lived in what is now Portugal, the epigraph of Monchique Synagogue, the Edict of Expulsion decreed by King D. Manuel, the migration waves of the Portuguese Jews to all continents and three centuries of the Inquisition.

Another room is dedicated to return of the Jews to Oporto occurred in the 19th century, a few years prior to the official abolition of the Inquisition in 1821. These were Sephardic Jews who came mostly from Morocco and Gibraltar who played a very important role in commerce and education in the city. They were basically the same families that lived in Lisbon, Faro, Azores and Madeira.

The museum shows that by the end of the 19th century, there are few Sephardic Jews living in Oporto. The Jewish community is mainly Ashkenazi now, particularly from Germany. It grew considerably during and immediately after the First World War, with the coming of Jews from Belarus, Ukraine, Russia, Poland and Lithuania.

In 1923, the Ashkenazi families took in a Portuguese Jewish couple, both converted to Judaism, the husband a vigorous and intelligent army officer who, overcoming the introverted nature of seventeen of his brothers in faith of Central and Eastern Europe, successfully convinced them to set up an association called "Comunidade Israelita do Porto" (CIP - Jewish Community of Oporto) similar to the "Comunidade Israelita de Lisboa" (CIL - Jewish Community of Lisbon).

The Jewish Community of Oporto (CIP) was created in the shadow of the foreign community of Jews in this city and it was headed by the only person who was really fit to do so: the Portuguese army officer. From 1926 onwards, the only Portuguese in the community headed a personal project, with the aid of the London Sephardic community, to try and convert Marranos as a whole to Judaism, for were thousands around the country at the time. This attempt resulted in the construction of the large Kadoorie Mekor Haim synagogue paid for by the Sephardic diaspora, but not a single official Jew in the light of Jewish law.



During and after its construction, the synagogue building was placed in the hands of the city's few Ashkenazi families. In the end, it played a key role in sheltering refugees during the Second World War, which was followed by decades of depletion and desolation.

In the 21st century, largely as a result of the 2013/2015 legislation that gave Portuguese nationality to Sephardic Jews, the reality changed: the community rapidly grew to comprise hundreds of Jews from thirty countries.

That part of the museum covering the 21st century shows many religious and cultural activities, and letters received from prominent people around the world.

Another room displays the many awards won at film festivals for the films which the community produced in a unique project worldwide, with Oporto Diocese, which involves the following activities: the Production of four films – "The Nun's Kaddish", "Sefarad", "1618" and "The Light of Judah" – covering events that have occurred over the centuries in the Portuguese Jewish community; the promotion of the Jewish Museum and the Episcopal Palace Museum; and social causes, helping children, the elderly and the sick.

The Kosher Port Wine Cellar is one of the most beautiful rooms of the Jewish Museum of Oporto. Around the world, Port wine is a brand of the city. The Jewish Community of Oporto is also a brand of the city. The history of the community is very old, older than the foundation of Portugal.

The "Antisemite Room" is dedicated to modern antisemitism. It is important that students in Portuguese schools do not associate antisemites only with skin-heads and jihadists. Antisemites belong to all political and religious factions and have a negative perception of Jews, Judaism or Israel, which they always perceive as a threat to other peoples. The central area of the museum have huge statues on display representing modern antisemites, incorporating their ideas, publications, and other forms of expression.



The Entebbe Operation room aims to bring young Jews closer to Israel. It is dedicated to young Jews who have no memories of the many counter-terrorist actions that the IDF and Mossad have faced in the past and certainly are prepared to face in the future as well.

The Museum has a movie theater with a capacity of fifty people. Many cultural events are held at these facilities, particularly film screenings, lectures and conferences on topics related to the Jewish community.

Jonathan Greenblatt, the National Director of Anti Defamation League, said "The Jewish museum of Oporto will add to the respect and admiration many have for the Jewish people and the Holocaust museum will impart the lessons that all must heed: Don't be silent in the face of evil. The more people know about the Jewish people, the less susceptible they are to hateful conspiracy theories and malign stereotypes."

Charles Kaufman, President of B'nai B'rith International stated that: "For the growing Jewish community of Portugal, we urge you to teach future generations the glory of our past and the Holocaust as they repel attempts to disparage us in the future. May the Museums serve as a beacon of light for all of Portugal and the rest of Europe. Yasher koach (May your strength be firm)."

<https://portuguesejewishnews.com/museums/the-jewish-museum-of-oporto/>

Gabriela Cantergi 04/02/2022

Jewish Cemetery of Oporto



Its name is Campo da Igualdade Isaac Aboab, or the Isaac Aboab Field of Equality. It is set in a quiet location on the outskirts of the city of Oporto. There are no high-rise buildings, no streets, no traffic lights, no sound of cars passing or people's loud and constant chatter. It is as peaceful as it can possibly be. There are trees, grass, a lake, the chirping of carefree birds. And silence.

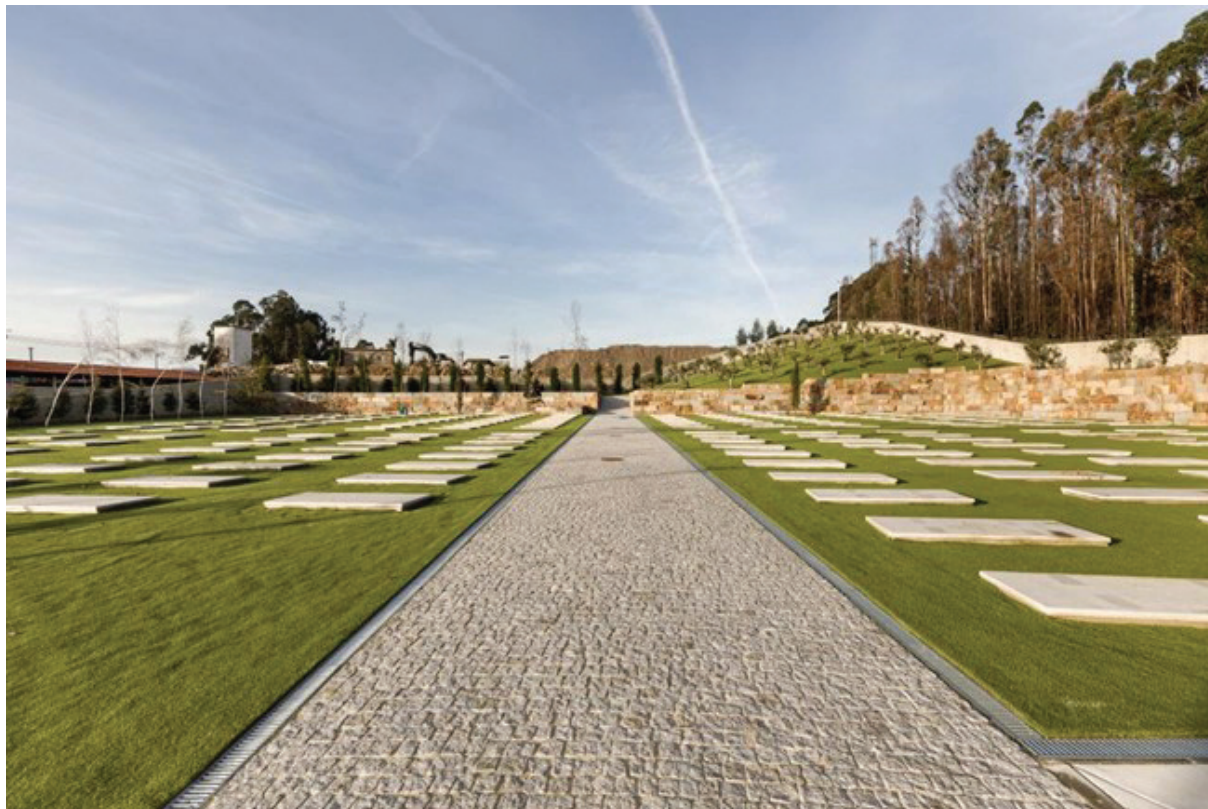
Oporto's Chief Rabbi Daniel Litvak says that "It would be impossible in Oporto to build a private cemetery in a quiet, discreet location. The few available spaces are inside municipal cemeteries and it would be unfeasible to purchase and fence off such areas. Having considered the limitations, the Jewish community of Oporto decided to buy land outside the city."

To avoid acts of vandalism the Jewish community of Oporto does not publicly reveal the address of the cemetery. The space is surrounded by a very high wall, there is an armed guard and it is equipped with surveillance cameras. However, the community knows that the graffiti is done by people in hoodies who live on the margins of society and usually make a quick getaway after carrying out their crimes.



The name of the cemetery is a reference to Chief Rabbi Isaac Aboab, who lived and died in Oporto following the expulsion of the Jews from Castile. “Unfortunately, we do not even know where the Chief Rabbi is buried because the Edict and the Inquisition destroyed all traces of the Jewish community of the time”, says Rabbi Yoel Zekri of the Jewish community of Oporto.

The new cemetery has about 300 individual graves as well as family vaults and the final details of the purification house are being completed. The Chevra Kadisha of the community is a professional London team headed by Rabbi Assaf Portal, who is also a member of the Jewish community of Oporto. Members of the team include volunteers from Golders Green, an Orthodox neighborhood of London, who will travel at once to Oporto when someone dies.



Rabbi Portal told PJN that “the cemetery is a sign of Jewish life. Before, the Jews of Oporto were robbed of all their assets, houses, even their cemetery was destroyed. The new cemetery of the Jewish community is proof that the Jews always regenerate, even in the most unexpected places”, he adds.

Five Sephardic Jews – Elad Dror, Nir Shalom, Eyal Sheni, Segev Danino and Eli Omer – are honorary members of the Jewish cemetery of Oporto. The families of these men fled Portugal a long time ago and today they have returned to develop and enrich this country with their wisdom, wealth and talent. Life.

<https://portuguesejewishnews.com/communities/jewish-cemetery-of-oporto/>

10/11/2022

“Kristallnacht” – Shoah Museum of Oporto (Nov 9, 2022)



<https://portuguesejewishnews.com/news/kristallnacht-shoah-museum-of-oporto-nov-9-2022/>

09/11/2022

“Kristallnacht” commemorated in Oporto with 1500 school children



In partnership with European Jewish Association, the Holocaust Museum of Oporto commemorated the International Day against Antisemitism on November 9th. The date corresponds to the 84th Anniversary of Kristallnacht (“Night of Broken Glass”), a pogrom organized by the Nazis on the night of November 9, 1938.

At the Holocaust Museum of Oporto, an exhibition related to the “Night of Broken Glass” was presented by Dr. Michael Rothwell, director of the Museum, whose family was victimized that night, as every window in his grandfather’s shoe shop was violently smashed.

In addition, a flame was lit in the Museum’s Memorial Room with the names of tens of thousands of people murdered. The lighting of the flame was carried out by students from the schools present.

Also the Jewish Museum of Oporto presented a program that included a guided tour of the Modern Antisemitism Room, which shows the growth of the phenomenon in Portugal between 2015 and 2022 and the screening of the film “Sefarad”, which tells the story of the Portuguese Dreyfus – Captain Barros Basto –, who was expelled from the army to be Jew.

Gabriel Senderowicz, the president of Jewish community of Oporto said “In many countries, Jews don’t count. they are not among the minorities to be protected, because they are seen as “white”, rich and plutocrats with their own state in Israel. Currently anti-Semitism is the rejection of Jewish people, the Jewish principles, synagogue Jews, business Jews, and all Jews who are not fully converted to modernism and its values.”



Generations after the end of the Shoah, antisemitism is worryingly on the rise, in Europe and beyond. The European Union is determined to put an end to it. The EU strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life (2021-2030) is a very ambitious strategy that faces much resistance not only in the general societies but also in national governments and parliaments.

"European Union will certainly manage to promote the return of the Jewish people, their culture and religion. This is more than possible. However, as soon as Jewish communities start making a strong mark in European territory, the influential antisemites in society will attempt to destroy Jewish life bit by bit, using the same myths and methods employed in the past", Senderowicz adds.

<https://portuguesejewishnews.com/news/kristallnacht-commemorated-in-oporto-with-1500-school-children/>

02/11/2022

Jewish Community of Oporto invites Netanyahu to visit the "Yonathan Room" at the Museum



In a brief message sent to Benjamin Netanyahu congratulating him on the victory in Israel's elections, the Board of Directors of the Jewish Community of Oporto invited him to visit the "Yonathan Room" at the Jewish Museum of the city.

"When you're traveling to Europe, please make an effort to visit the "Yonathan Room" at the Jewish Museum of Oporto, where all the strength of Am and Eretz Israel is deposited", wrote Gabriel Senderowicz, the President of the Jewish Community of Oporto.

In partnership with B'nai B'rith International, the Jewish Museum of Oporto dedicated a room to the Thunderbolt Operation. The initiative aims to bring young Jews closer to Israel.

Senderowicz remembers that "Lieutenant Colonel Yonathan Netanyahu teaches us that the Jews must never leave their security in anyone else's hands but their own. A new pogrom, a new Inquisition or a new Holocaust are impossible as long as the state of Israel exists."

"The Jewish Community of Oporto will continue to cooperate with Eretz Israel, with Keren Hayesod and with religious, cultural, educational and social institutions in the small-big state, regardless of whether or not there is reciprocity", he adds.

<https://portuguesejewishnews.com/news/jewish-community-of-oporto-invites-netanyahu-to-visit-the-yonathan-room-at-the-museum/>



21/05/2022

This week the Portuguese Jewish School will be inaugurated



The Portuguese Jewish School is an online project free of charge for all Jewish families living in Portugal that aims to provide basic courses in Jewish religion, culture and history in accordance with Jewish tradition.

The project consists of short lessons, 15 minutes each, with simple and condensed messages. Classes will be available online in video format in different languages (Hebrew, English and French) to meet the needs of the growing and international Jewish population.

The Portuguese Jewish School will be directed by Rabbi Eli Rosenfeld, Rabbi Haim Chetrit, Rebbetzin Raizel Rosenfeld and Rebbetzin Hanna Chetrit, from Chabad Portugal.

Message from Rabbi Eli Rosenfeld about the project:

- The idea of bringing Jewish learning to every Jewish family wherever they may be in Portugal is groundbreaking. The classes are geared to students of all ages, from pre-Bar and Bat Mitzvah as well as for adults. In Jewish tradition we never stop learning!;
- The challenge today is of location and timing. Children today have more after school activities than ever before, and are very spread apart. Classes can be viewed on the days and times convenient for the student, using a computer or mobile phone. With the ability to learn on their own schedule and own location we can revolutionize Jewish education;
- The first three classes will cover, Passover, the counting of the Omer and Lag Baomer, as well as Shavuot. In the following weeks, each week an additional class will be added;
- We are now in the midst of a special time of year, the period of counting the Omer, the link between the holidays of Pesach and Shavuot. Passover, is the birth of the Jewish People as a nation, the moment we became a united family, Am Yisrael. While Pesach gave us our identity, it is the holiday of Shavuot, which we are now approaching that gave us our way of life, the Torah. It is on this day, we commemorate receiving the Torah at Sinai, the day which gave us our guide to everything in life;
- Studying the Torah is not at all like studying another subject, when we study Torah, we connect to our core essence of who we are, allowing our soul to grow and flourish;
- With this goal in mind, each week we will add a new class, full of Torah ideas, with all aspects of Judaism.

For any questions, please contact pjs@portuguesejewishschool.com

<https://portuguesejewishnews.com/news/this-week-the-portuguese-jewish-school-will-be-inaugurated/>

11/10/2022

The Jewish Community of Oporto shared the meaning of Jewish holidays with the Portuguese population



For almost a year, the Jewish Community of Oporto, through its President, Gabriel Senderowicz, **published a set of 10 opinion articles** in the Portuguese press on relevant dates of the Hebrew calendar, namely Chanukah, Tu B'Shevat, Purim, Pessach, Lag BaOmer, Shavuot, Tisha B'Av, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkot.

The opinion articles (in Portuguese):

[A Comunidade Judaica celebra Chanuká](#)

[Tu B'Shevat, o ano novo das árvores](#)

[Os Judeus comemoram Purim](#)

[Pessach, da escravidão à Terra Prometida](#)

[Comunidade judaica celebra Lag BaÔmer](#)

[Os judeus comemoram Shavuot](#)

[Tisha B'Av: o dia mais triste do calendário hebraico](#)

[Rosh Hashaná: o ano novo judaico](#)

[Yom Kippur: o dia mais sagrado do calendário judaico](#)

[Sucot, a festa judaica das cabanas](#)

The intention was constructive. It aimed to spread knowledge about Jewish religion, culture and history, share the Jewish way of life, establish a new way of communication between the national Jewish community and society in general, and combat prejudice arising from ignorance. Judaism is part of the intrinsic values of Portugal, as well as of the Portuguese culture itself. The Jewish presence in the country predates the founding of the nationality.

In the last decade, the Jewish Community of Oporto has tried to combat antisemitism through positive action. In ten years, the community has been visited by more than 130 thousand school students, at the Kadoorie Synagogue, the Jewish Museum and the Holocaust Museum (the Portuguese museum with the largest number of visitors in 2021), organised training courses for teachers, signed cooperation protocols of international scope with the Catholic Diocese and the Muslim Community, and created an observatory to monitor the evolution of antisemitism in Portuguese society.

Since 2012, the Educational Services of the Jewish Community of Porto have received well over 130,000 visitors, the overwhelming majority of which are young people attending school on study visits promoted by public and private education institutions, from primary school to higher education. This was the biggest and most fruitful national project to combat antisemitism and to promote Jewish history and culture.

School visits to the Jewish Museum

The visits cover topics as diverse as Jewish religion, culture and history. From the origins of Judaism and the Jewish people, through its diasporas and persecutions, special emphasis has always been given to the relationship between this old, important but minority group of our society and the history of Portugal.

School visits to the Holocaust Museum

At the Holocaust Museum of Oporto, it is possible to conclude that every moment of the hundreds of hours spent exploring, answering questions, creating analogies with realities known to students and teachers, basically, every moment spent educating, was and still is worthwhile.

Training courses for teachers

The Jewish community of Oporto organizes training courses for secondary school teachers, which are held at the Kadoorie Synagogue, at the Holocaust Museum and at the Jewish Museum of Oporto. The courses cover many themes relating to Jewish religion and culture as well as the Holocaust. Holocaust survivors and family members of survivors have attended these courses and each teacher has been given a copy of the book: "Os Dez Mitos Contra os Judeus" (Ten Myths against the Jews)

Inter-faith actions with the Catholic Diocese

The Jewish Community of Oporto has devised a global project involving close cooperation with Oporto Roman Catholic Diocese, with the following activities: social causes, helping children, the elderly and the sick; promotion of the Jewish Museum and the Episcopal Palace Museum; and the production of four films - "The Nun's Kaddish", "Sefarad", "1618" and "The Light of Judah" - covering events that have occurred over the centuries in Portuguese society.

Inter-faith actions with the Muslim Community

The Jewish Community of Oporto is one of the founding members of a global project that aims to rebuild bridges between Jews and Muslims. Named after a rabbi who gave his life defending the Prophet Muhammad, the Mukhayriq Initiative celebrates the great moments of historical brotherhood between Muslims and Jews. The story of Rabbi Mukhayriq shows that Muslims and Jews are not destined to be enemies. The need to discuss this history and source inspiration from it in today's political context becomes all the more evident.

Department to Combat Antisemitism

The department to combat antisemitism aims to observe and follow in real time the antisemitic phenomenon on Portuguese territory, choose ways to mitigate or eliminate biases against Jews and Jewish communities, prepare scientific opinions and reports for dissemination and for action by the formal and competent control instances, raising the political forces' awareness to the need to improve the existing legislation and promote school programmes to combat the "material image" of the Jew (synonymous with foreign, money, business and interest) which has been disseminated in Portugal for centuries, the collective guilt of "the Jews" as a social and religious group and the traditional myths against this people of forced migration.

<https://portuguesejewishnews.com/news/the-jewish-community-of-oporto-shared-the-meaning-of-jewish-holidays-with-the-portuguese-population/>

18/09/2022

Board Member of the Jewish Community of Porto participates in a meeting of Keren Hayesod leaders



BOD member Prof. Debora Elijah represented the Jewish Community of Oporto at Keren Hayesod Annual Leadership Conference

Board member **Prof. Debora Elijah** represented the **Jewish Community of Oporto** at the **Keren Hayesod Annual Leadership Conference**, which took place between the 5th and 8th of July, in Israel.

The event was attended by **around 80 people from 35 countries**, who make up Keren Hayesod's global leadership team. During the conference, participants were able to interact with their colleagues and visit some of the projects supported by Keren Hayesod, such as the **Ra'anana Absorption Center**, where they heard accounts of Ukrainian and Russian immigrants who went a long way to flee the war and reach Israel.



Arriving of Ethiopian Olim

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The leaders were also at Ben Gurion Airport, accompanied by Israel's Minister of Immigration and Absorption, MK Prina Tamano-Shata, to receive a plane with the Ethiopian olim who arrived in Israel in Operation Rock of Israel. The action was supported by Pastor Larry and Pastor Tiz Huch, and New Beginnings Church and Larry Huch Ministries, the Jewish Agency for Israel and the Aliyah and Absorption Ministry.

"As a member of the board in the Jewish community of Porto, participating in such a unique project is really special to me. This makes me honored that we are continuing with our story in collaboration to make a difference in people's lives. This is a new historical moment, we will continue to support the activities Keren Hayesod", declares Prof. Deborah Elijah.



Friends of Israel from several religious backgrounds and nationalities

<https://portuguesejewishnews.com/news/board-member-of-the-jewish-community-of-porto-participates-in-a-meeting-of-keren-hayesod-leaders/>

03/10/2022

Bishop of Oporto is received at the Jewish Museum to watch the film "1618"



The Bishop of Oporto, D. Manuel Linda, with the president of the Jewish Community of Oporto, Gabriel Senderowicz

Last Friday, the president of the Jewish Community of Oporto, Gabriel Senderowicz, received Bishop D. Manuel Linda at the Jewish Museum of Oporto to watch the film "1618". The third feature film produced by the Jewish Community, with the support of the Diocese of Oporto, has been on display in cinemas in Portugal since the 29th of September.

Based on the Inquisition's visit to the city of Porto in 1618, the film has already been shown at major film festivals around the world and has won more than 70 awards, which are displayed in a room at the Jewish Museum.

As part of an effort to combat anti-semitism, "1618" is also shown by airlines in more than 10 Arab countries. The film lasts 90 minutes and is directed by Luís Ismael and distributed by Cinemundo. Revenues obtained in Portugal will be used for social solidarity purposes.

<https://portuguesejewishnews.com/news/bishop-of-oporto-is-received-at-the-jewish-museum-to-watch-the-film-1618/>

22/09/2022

Jewish Museum of Oporto received an important distinction in the presence of the Mayor of the city



The Mayor of Oporto, Rui Moreira, at the Jewish Museum

In front of an audience of about one hundred and fifty people, the Jewish Museum of Oporto received the **Commendation of the Chain of Merit of the king Peter I of Brazil and IV of Portugal**.

The award was made by the Minerva Council of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (previously the University of Brazil). The President of the organization, **Sebastião Amoêdo de Barros** explained that "the choice of the Jewish Museum of Oporto for the Commendation is due to its educational role for freedom and the support of the Jewish community for liberal causes".

The commendation now received by the Jewish Museum of Oporto has as a reference the work of Dom Pedro in favor of the independence of Brazil and in favor of the liberal struggles in Portugal, where he is revered as "Soldier King" and "Liberator".

The Mayor of Oporto, **Rui Moreira**, himself a descendant of Jews, spoke during the event, saying that "The Kadoorie Synagogue, the Jewish Museum and the Holocaust Museum of Oporto are three symbols of freedom that this city has always stood for. This community, with its immense religious and cultural activities, shows the strength of the Jews". Rui Moreira used a kippah while speaking.



The Jewish Museum of Oporto received about one hundred and fifty people



Michael Rothwell, director of the Jewish Museum of Oporto, **Sebastião Amoêdo de Barros**, president of the Minerva Council, and **Rui Moreira**, the Mayor of Oporto

The ceremony was toasted with kosher Port wine. The Museum opened the doors of a fantastic wine room with a wine that is symbolic of the city, as it is produced in accordance with Jewish law from a community that has existed in the city for at least a thousand years.

Michael Rothwell, director of the Jewish Museum strongly recalled that "the city of Oporto – a city of Freedom – was also founded by the Jewish population who lived in the city even before Portugal existed".



The Mayor of Oporto with the oldest member of the community, Mrs. Marilyn Flitterman. Two old friends

With the edict of Dom Manuel I in 1496, the Jewish Community in Oporto disappeared. It was only officially refounded in 1923.

The Vice President of the Jewish community of Oporto, **Isabel Ferreira Lopes**, granddaughter of its founder, Captain Barros Basto, recalls that her grandfather was "a liberal par excellence, having raised the flag of the First Republic in the City Hall of Porto. He had incredible strength and was only shot down by slanderous anonymous denunciations that the Portuguese dictatorship took advantage of to attempt to destroy him and the Community. He was a great scholar of Portuguese and Jewish history."

<https://portuguesejewishnews.com/news/jewish-museum-of-oporto-received-an-important-distinction-in-the-presence-of-the-mayor-of-the-city/>

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MIRIAM ASSOR

Can Portugal be Europe's model for fostering Jewish life?

The Jewish Community of Oporto has built and developed new Jewish centers, prayer rooms, kosher restaurants, a Jewish Museum, a Holocaust museum and a library. It also organizes conferences and concerts and has established a newspaper.



October 28, 2021

The European Commission announced in early October that Jewish life will be fostered in a Europe that was home to 9.5 million Jews before the Second World War and whose remaining 1.5 million are abandoning the Old Continent.

"We want to see Jewish life thriving again in the heart of our communities," said E.C. President Ursula von der Leyen. "This is how it should be."

In recent years, Portugal has become home to thousands of Jews. The choice of this country may provide the inspiration and serve as a model for what the European Union does, in fact, need.

Once again, Portugal is on the Jewish map. Small Jewish communities, mainly consisting of recently arrived Sephardim, are growing and strengthening throughout the country, even in less populated areas than the capital.

Cascais, a town in the district and metropolitan area of Lisbon, is home to the largest Chabad center in Europe, and two families in the organization work together to aid the whole country. Their enthusiasm is unmistakable. They believe that Portuguese Judaism will be a serious matter in the future. The most recent Chabad couple is Sephardic, not Ashkenazi, which is unusual in that New York-based organization.

The best example of the revitalization of Jewish life in Portugal is the Jewish Community of Oporto (CIP/CJP). According to Gabriela Cantergi, an official at CIP/CJP, "Our Community does not exist to please everyone, but rather to honor the Jewish community that was expelled from this city in the late 15th century, and to be a strong religious, cultural and social organization in Portugal and abroad."

Led by Israeli rabbis, the main synagogue of the city—the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue, although there are others—has seven hundred official members originating from more than 30 countries. These congregants are engaged in the arts, sciences, medicine, music, law, banking and sports. The overwhelming majority, however, are business people who have invested billions of euros in Portugal in recent years.



The Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue in Porto. Credit: Courtesy of CIP/CJP.

The community also strives to welcome foreign Jewish students enrolled at the universities of Oporto, including them in community activities and creating meeting centers for them.

“Our aim is to foster friendship and possibly future marriages between students who come on their own to this country, mainly from France,” said Noemie Amar, of CIP/CJP’s department of religion.

Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa paid a visit to the Oporto community in 2019 and was visibly impressed by the Jewish ambience of “Portugality” he found there. This was also the case recently with a much-traveled Jewish author who commented about the last Yom Kippur ceremony that she had never heard search passionate prayers and songs in a synagogue. That is the result of six years of non-stop minyanim on Shabbat and holidays.

In 2012, the synagogue building looked to be on the verge of collapse. It was extensively refurbished the following year, and important religious ceremonies were held there. In 2014, the Community inaugurated a kosher hotel and Jewish tourists poured into the city. After 2015, the law granting Portuguese nationality to Sephardic Jews increased both the number of community members and Jewish cultural events.

The Jewish community of Oporto has built and developed new Jewish centers, prayer rooms, kosher restaurants, a Jewish museum, a Holocaust museum and a library. It also organizes conferences and concerts and has established a newspaper.



The Jewish education center in Porto. Credit: Courtesy of CIP/CJP.

It will soon be opening an art gallery with the millennial story of the Jews in Oporto. Flor Mizrahi, a professional painter and longstanding member of CIP/CJP, is the project coordinator and eager to see it completed

“I won’t live forever,” she said. “And, as a Sephardic Jew, I wish to leave my personal mark. In early 2022, the group of artists coordinated by me will have the gallery museum ready.”

The Jewish Museum of Oporto, created by CIP/CJP in partnership with B’nai B’rith International, recounts the millennial history of the city’s Jewish community, its expulsion, the return of Moroccan, Gibraltarian and Venetian Sephardic Jews in the 19th century, the failed attempt to convert the Bnei Anousim to Judaism in the 1920s and 1930s and German, Russian and Polish Ashkenazi Jews in the 20th century, as well as the “major Sephardic influx of the 21st century,” basically motivated—said Rose

Mousovich of CIP/CJP's department of culture—"by the nationality that Portugal grants to Jews of Portuguese origin."

In 2014, the Jewish Community of Oporto contacted the Justice Ministry to request that a foreign-based commission issue certificates of Sephardic heritage for those seeking Portuguese nationality. The ministry, however, put its faith in the communities of Oporto and Lisbon.

The former's archives, located in a set of rooms measuring about 150 square meters (492 feet), contain thousands of documents on Sephardic Jews, mainly those from North Africa and the former Ottoman Empire. These people requested certificates of Sephardic heritage from the Oporto Rabbinate in order to request Portuguese nationality.

"A little of Portugal's promising future passes through this office. Jewish Sephardic immigration is highly skilled," said Vivian Groisman, who together with Mousovich, runs the CIP/CJP Sephardic archive.

The organization helps hospitals, children, the elderly and the infirm in Portugal. It made a donation to the Torre do Tombo National Archive to treat and digitize Inquisition processes in danger of rotting. It signed a protocol of cooperation with Sociedade Histórica da Independência de Portugal (the Historical Society of the Independence of Portugal), considering the friendship between the first king of Portugal, D. Afonso Henriques, and Yaish ben Yahia, Great Rabbi of the Realm, who died in battle at the service of the king.

Despite the Jewish community's many valuable contributions to Portuguese culture, inter-religious cooperation and the economy, this Jewish renaissance has opened the doors to anti-Semitism.

"We are sorry to see that the millenary and material image of the Jews is spreading, not linked to good feelings and worthy causes, but to trickery and business, in addition describing them as plutocrats with their own state in Israel," explains Dara Jeffries, a CIP/CJP leader. "There was no anti-Semitism because the Jewish presence was small."

The Holocaust Museum of Oporto was created in partnership with the Holocaust museums of Washington, Moscow and Hong Kong. It is run by members of the Jewish Community of Oporto who lost family members in the Shoah.

"Since its inauguration in May 2021, this musicological space is the one in Portugal that has had the most visitors. As there is no admission charge, the museum is mainly visited by young people and has also welcomed important Portuguese and foreign politicians, as well as the ambassadors of the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, Belgium and others," says Holocaust Museum board member Debora Elijah, whose maternal and paternal grandparents died in Auschwitz.

The Jewish Community of Oporto has important national and international partners, including the government project Never Forget, the Anti-Defamation League and the Combat Anti-Semitism Movement. It has a strategy to fight anti-Semitism in areas ranging from charity and religion to culture, while also promoting courses for secondary-school teachers. This strategy has already "drawn the attention of relevant European politicians, such as Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, who met with the board of the community to prepare the Malmö Forum on Combating Anti-Semitism," CIP/CJP board member Isabel Lopes disclosed.

Combating anti-Semitism was one impetus that led to the signing of protocols with the country's Muslims and Catholics. CIP/CJP is on excellent terms with the Muslim community of Oporto and is one of the founding organizations of the world project "Mukhayriq," aimed at relaunching relations between Jews and Muslims worldwide. Mukhayriq was a rabbi who gave his life defending the Prophet Muhammad during an epic battle in the seventh century.

Another important project was the protocol signed with Oporto Diocese. It covers charitable and educational projects involving the Museum of the Episcopal Palace and the Jewish Museum of Oporto, and has produced four films on the history of the Jews in the city. "1618," about the Inquisition, garnered the most prizes that a Portuguese film ever won in international festivals.

Meetings between the Jewish and Catholic communities of Oporto also gave rise to another film, "The Nun's Kaddish," and was praised by Pope Francis, who applauded the friendship and cooperation between the two religious communities as a good example for the world.

Marilyn Flitterman, a CIP/CJP institutional representative, recalled that when she arrived in Portugal from Brooklyn 50 years ago, "only a handful of Ashkenazi families tried to provide some sort of Jewish presence in the city."

The Jewish community was still suffering the aftereffects of the 1496 expulsion and very few of its members, most hailing from Central and Eastern Europe, were proud of their roots.

Eta Rabinovich was married in the Kadoorie synagogue in 1948 and is always moved when she visits the Jewish Museum of Oporto and sees photographs of her family.

“As I recall, we were very few back then, but we all did what we could to observe Jewish law,” she said.

Oporto-born Luísa Finkelstein echoed that sentiment.

“Before the war, my grandparents left the Polish community with its 3 million people, to join about 30 Jews in the city of Oporto. They liked many things in life, but what they liked most was being Jewish.”

For decades, my mother, Rebeca Assor, accompanied my father, Abraham Assor, then rabbi of the Israeli community of Lisbon, on his frequent visits to the Jewish Community of Oporto. What she says corresponds to the historic core of the congregation: “It always respected Judaism, signaling something positive for a future that was more or less in the distance.”

The present Jewish Community of Oporto supports Keren Hayesod projects for the development of Israel and donates food for Shabbat meals in communities of a number of countries. The Hebrew words that the community fosters most are *achdut* (“union”), *simcha* (“joy”) and *kadima* (“forward”), but the teachings of Jewish history are just as emphasized.

The official website explains it better: “The history of the Jews in Europe teaches us that where there are many Jews today there may be none tomorrow. Accordingly, the laws of the community have established that if it should end one day, all its properties and assets revert to the Jewish Agency for Israel.”

Miriam Assor, a writer and journalist, is a member of the Jewish community of Lisbon.

GABRIEL SENDEROWICZ

The Jewish community of Oporto's criteria for Sephardic certification over a seven-year period



The first step of the Oporto Rabbinate, recognized by the Grand Rabbinate of Israel, was to decide in accordance with halachah—the only consensual criterion in the Jewish world—as to who is Jewish.

April 4, 2022

The Portuguese State would not have needed the Jewish communities had it not been for their privileged knowledge of the Jewish world. Ever since the publication of Executive Act 30-A/2015 of Feb. 27, the Jewish Community of Oporto has understood that the legislation currently under scrutiny aimed to reconnect Portugal to the approximately 1 million Jews descended from Portuguese Sephardic Jews. If the legislator's objective were to grant nationality to 100 million descendants of so-called new Christians, there is no doubt that the certification could have been carried out by professionals attached to universities and foreign to such communities.

The preamble of the above-mentioned Executive Act approved by the PSD/CDS government, which is key to interpreting the diploma, confirmed the understanding of the Jewish Community of Oporto. The Central Registry Office has always affirmed the legality of this understanding, as has the justice minister, in the Assembly of the Republic in June 2020.

For years, groups of genealogists announced Portuguese nationality through Sephardism when, in fact, they were not seeking the ancestors of the candidates from the Jewish communities of Turkey, Tunisia or Morocco but only from Portugal, where formerly there were only Catholics.

To facilitate what is at stake, let us consider a hypothetical case. Manuel da Silva, a member of a Catholic family in Brazil for 15 generations, hired a genealogist who was able to identify an 18th-century Portuguese ancestor of his, Tiago Silva, an unfortunate victim of the Spanish Inquisition. It is a moving case, but Manuel is not Jewish in the light of any current of the Jewish world, however liberal; he is not Sephardic (the quality of the Jews who fled Sepharad), and he invokes a Catholic ancestor who was never a member of a "Sephardic community of Portuguese origin" abroad and whose Jewish matrilineal genealogy is not known (so that one cannot clearly state that he is Jewish). Furthermore, Tiago's persecution during the Inquisition was similar in every respect to and indistinguishable from that of many old Christians. Was he, in fact, descended from a Jewish family?

Comunidade Israelita do Porto (CIP)/Comunidade Judaica do Porto (CJP) never certified that type of case. Is Manuel entitled to Portuguese nationality? Yes, but this right does not arise from Article 6 (7) of the Law of Portuguese Nationality, which is specifically addressed to descendants of Sephardic Jews, but from Article 6 (6) of that same Law, which exists for descendants of Portuguese in general.

The Jewish Sephardic or Ashkenazi world depends solely on the reliable criterion of tradition and not on the lineages of communities that were persecuted for centuries. How could such lineages even exist? Migration to Israel is itself conditioned by an opinion of the local chief rabbi (who, in turn, is connected

with Orthodox rabbinate all over the world) and not by long lineages that from a Jewish point of view are merely diagrams.

Discounting rare cases of conversion, to be Jewish is not defined as practicing the Jewish religion. It is a lineage: to be the child of a Jewish mother, who is herself the child of a Jewish mother, and so on. The first step of the Oporto Rabbinate, recognized by the Grand Rabbinate of Israel, was always to decide in accordance with *halachah* (Jewish law)—the only consensual criterion in the Jewish world—as to who is Jewish.

As regards the certification criteria of CIP/CJP, it is important to make some legal observations on the subject, such as they have been presented to the successive governments of Portugal between 2015 and 2021.

Article 6 (7) of the Law of Portuguese Nationality establishes: “The government may grant nationality by naturalization, waiving the requirements set out in paragraph 1 sub-paragraphs b) and c) for the descendants of Portuguese Sephardic Jews, provided they prove the tradition of belonging to a Sephardic community of Portuguese origin, based on proven objective criteria of connection to Portugal, namely surnames, family language, direct or collateral descent.”

On the other hand, Article 24-A (3)(c) of the Nationality Law Regulation states the following: “The application must be accompanied by a certificate issued by a Jewish community incorporated as a legal religious entity established in Portugal, under the terms of the law, on the date this article comes into force, attesting to the tradition of belonging to a Sephardic community of Portuguese origin, materialized in particular (exemplificative expression) in the applicant’s surname, family language, genealogy and family memory.”

The proven objective criteria of connection to Portugal should be found in the “Sephardic community of Portuguese origin,” an expression repeated many times in Article 6(7) of the Nationality Act and in Executive Act 30-A/2015 of Feb. 27, which by nature has not taken refuge on Portuguese territory, but as aptly laid out in the preamble to said Executive Act “in some regions of the Mediterranean (Gibraltar, Morocco, Southern France, Italy, Croatia, Greece, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Algiers), northern Europe (London, Nantes, Paris, Antwerp, Brussels, Rotterdam and Amsterdam), Brazil, Antilles and the U.S., among others.”

In accordance with Article 6(7) of the Nationality Act and Article 24-A (2),(3)(c), (4) and (5)(b) of the Nationality Act Regulation, references to the “tradition of belonging to a Sephardic community of Portuguese origin” or “based on the Sephardic community of Portuguese origin” are always linked to “the proven objective criteria of connection to Portugal,” which under the exemplificative and repeated words “in particular,” emanate from factors such as “family surnames,” “family language,” “family memory,” “genealogy,” “synagogue records,” “Jewish cemetery records,” “residence permits,” “property titles,” “wills” and others.

A bilingual Hebrew and English book published in March 2017—*The Jewish Sephardic Diaspora, Through the Archives of the Jewish Community of Oporto*—was distributed to libraries in capital cities around the world as an early response by CIP/CJP in its own defense. It contains several lists of surnames of (some) Jews of Sephardic communities of Portuguese origin, as well as a list of (some) surnames of Jews who lived in Portugal before the Edict of King D. Manuel. The last list shows that the surnames were generally Hebrew (Portuguese at the time). The question of the surnames is not simple, nor is the question of the family language.

A video of someone who has learned a little Ladino today but does not descend from Sephardic Jews from Sepharad is of little value. Likewise, a Benveniste from Turkey may not speak a word of Ladino, but it is inevitable (and not a matter of opinion) that as far as his family is concerned, Ladino was for centuries the “family language.” Ladino in its many forms, including Haketia from North Africa, is almost dead as a language, fallen into disuse and spoken only by the grandparents’ generation.

Another important criterion enshrined by the law is that of family memory. In principle, all applicants invoke a family memory of belonging to a Jewish community of Portuguese origin. Memory alone is not sufficient in itself. It must be proven by credible testimony, generally by the local chief rabbinate with *halachic* credibility in the Jewish world and before the Chief Rabbinate of Israel.

In the light of this materiality, the CIP/CJP certificates of Sephardism set out that they are issued “based on evidence provided by the applicant—regarding among others his known lineage, the territories where their ancestors settled and the names, memories and traditions of the family—critically articulated with our knowledge and understanding of the reality, culture, religious law and Jewish communities in general and with other materiality investigated during the evaluation process, having made use of the work tools at our disposal.”

Having worked for seven years on the process of certifying Jews descended from Sephardic Jews of Portuguese origin, all the certificates of Sephardism issued by CIP/CJP (with very few exceptions) were granted to traditional Sephardic families who lived for centuries in countries in the Balkans—Macedonia, Greece, Bulgaria and the former Yugoslavia—and in Arab or Muslim countries—Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia and Libya—where marriages between Jews of Portuguese origin and Jews of Spanish origin were common.

Let us suppose that the Central Registry Office stated that the former president of the Republic, Dr. Jorge Sampaio, was descended from Moroccan Bedouins with no Portuguese origin; in this case, the Jewish community could do nothing except invoke Jewish tradition. The Registry Office might reject that argument. The government might refuse to grant nationality. The community would stand by its opinion, and this could not be labeled as fraud.

For three months, disparaging remarks were made concerning the certificate of Sephardic origin of Roman Abramovich, as if that certificate had been issued under false intellectual pretenses by the Chief Rabbi of the Jewish Community of Oporto. The fact is that the certificate is based on the family memory of the applicant, his family surnames, the opinions of informed persons within the Jewish world, the financial support provided for decades to the Chabad-Lubavitch movement of Portuguese origin and the applicant’s lack of any material need, for he is entitled to Lithuanian nationality.

What is false about this certification process for which an emolument of €250 (about \$275) was charged and which was conveyed to the government and to the Central Registry Office long before the applicant obtained Portuguese nationality?

The law is clear. The government has the power to grant or deny nationality to a candidate. The Registry Office must verify the documents regarding his Sephardism. The Jewish Community’s mission is to issue a certificate based on legal criteria, and its knowledge of the Jewish world and its traditions. It is almost a question of an expert opinion, but not of attributing nationality, which is granted at the government’s discretion.

The Jewish Community of Oporto believes that it produced good work during the seven years it operated the certification process—an overwhelming task undertaken in good faith. The chief rabbi satisfied a huge universe of candidates, seriously jeopardizing his family, his studies, his rest. He was paid for this. The Jewish Community of Oporto paid his fees transparently, year after year, through bank transfers to an account in Portugal against receipts issued from Israel, his place of residence, his tax home. Stating that there is a large bank account with money from illegal deeds is unacceptable and is the start of a stream of unending charges.

Considering the size of the Jewish community at the time of King D. Manuel—in the region of 10% of the population—if the 2013-15 legislation were to continue indefinitely, then approximately 1 million Jews of Sephardic origin could have been certified. The lawmaker considered otherwise. In April 2020, the law was set to end in early 2022. It was considered a transitory period. And the intention continues.

On Dec. 6, 2021, addressing the justice ministry, which was drawing up a very restrictive draft law, the Jewish Community of Oporto explained that there was full justification for an online platform so that the Registry Office could monitor the certification process in real-time. Three reasons were given:

1: In Portugal, there are many false anonymous claims made leading to useless criminal proceedings that are front-page news, and destroy the good name of people and institutions. The president of the Council for the Oversight of the Intelligence System of the Portuguese Republic complained of a “Dreyfus case” created by an anonymous denunciation; immediately, this was printed in the press, stating that the members of that council had breached state secrets, were corrupt and had influenced traffickers. Such charges cast intolerable suspicions on the honesty of the members of a body that must be above all suspicion to be able to comply fully with its duties. (*Expresso*, Nov. 6, 2020).

2: The former president of the Supreme Court of Justice declared that a huge lawsuit—known as the “Case of the Golden Visas”—constituted an example of “manipulation of a criminal investigation used as a concealed weapon to influence, condition or reverse society’s political tendencies, in the manner best suited to those who use, or make use of, it.” (*Público*, Oct. 22, 2020).

3: In Lviv, Kharkiv, Chernivtsi, Babruysk, Smolensk and hundreds of other cities in the Soviet Union, synagogues-communities did not all close at the same time, but one by one, and always followed the same pattern: (i) the use of the press and slanderers to associate synagogues with business dealings; (ii) describing such business dealings as being immoral or illegal; (iii) negative reactions from certain quarters of public opinion and straw Jews; and (iv) total destruction of the respectability of synagogues and corresponding Jewish organizations that promote Jewish life.

Anonymous claims, anonymous sources and other backstage games marked the end of the legislation granting Portuguese nationality to Jews descended from Portuguese Sephardim. It is a pity that it all had to end this way. Meanwhile, the law’s positive effects in terms of Jewish culture, religion and the rise in numbers of the Portuguese Jewish community are undeniable, however much they may have been silenced. They will not be described here. Anyone interested in this matter will no doubt find a way of finding them.

Gabriel Senderowicz is a board member of the Oporto Jewish community.

<https://www.jns.org/opinion/the-jewish-community-of-oportos-criteria-for-sephardic-certification-over-a-seven-year-period/>

P

Do not follow in the footsteps of Great Britain: a rebuttal to Constança Urbano de Sousa

Blaise Baquiche

22/05/2020



On April 16th, I published an article in The New European, discussing how I got Portuguese citizenship and what it means for me as a British citizen. Urbano de Sousa not only truncated what I wrote, but used the article to play on people's prejudices towards migrants at a time when a pandemic has multiplied xenophobia in Europe.

To impose the thesis that I asked for Portuguese nationality solely to obtain a European Union passport, after Brexit, the author says that before this moment I had never identified myself as a Sephardic Jew. She clearly ignored the context of the article. Before Brexit I felt English, British and European and I didn't believe that my origins had anything to do with it. It was a forgotten subject. The antisemitic abuse I received at Anglican school made my Judaism seem all too real.

Regardless of my will, I am considered a Jew by the State of Israel and by all but the most orthodox strains of Judaism. It is a matter of genealogy, not religion. My tradition of belonging to a Portuguese Sephardic community was objectively established by official entities and by the Portuguese and Spanish community in London, where my father, a Sephardic Jew from a Bulgarian and Egyptian family who had lived in London since the mid-twentieth century, was affiliated.

When expelled from Egypt, some of our cousins preferred to settle in Porto, Portugal, where the Kadoorie synagogue already existed. Everyone was looking for a better life. Fortunately, they prospered and provided, and continue to provide, employment for many people. Henry Tillo, now deceased, became one of the greatest entrepreneurs ever in the north of the country. He was President of Exponor, Associação Industrial Porto, President of the General Assembly of the Jewish Community of Porto and many other organizations. He was close to Rui Moreira, Rui Rio and Fernando Gomes and was named Commander, against his will as a humble man, by the President of the Republic Mário Soares.

I would never apply for citizenship in Spain, a nightmare of bureaucratic obstacles that made that law a meaningless gesture, as Leon Amiras of the Israel Bar Association demonstrated. When three years ago I decided to apply for citizenship in Portugal, my relatives in Oporto requested my certificate from the local rabbinate. They have been part of the Jewish Community of that city since 1960.

On April 7, Boris Johnson was taken to intensive care for having contracted the Covid-19 virus. He later paid homage to the Portuguese nurse Luis Pitarma, from Oporto, who saved his life and who was commended by the President of the Portuguese Republic Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, himself of Jewish heritage. Pitarma lives in Great Britain as a citizen of the European Union, just as I now have the opportunity to do the same in Portugal. By chasing Brexit, my prime minister made life more difficult for Luís, putting up barriers for him to live and work in the UK.

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I ask Constança Urbano de Sousa not to stoop to the level of Great Britain to remove citizens' opportunities and rights. Portugal should be proud to offer refuge, as it has since 2015, to the descendants of victims of the darkest period in its history, who have the same rights as everyone else, no questions asked. This includes the freedoms to work, study, live and love in the 27 nations of the European Union, which I personally lost with Brexit and which Urbano de Sousa wants to remove again.

<https://www.publico.pt/2020/05/22/opiniao/noticia/nao-siga-passos-grabretanha-refutacao-constanca-urbano-sousa-1917549> (Translated).

DAVID GARRETT

Opponents of Portugal's Sephardic citizenship law have declared war on the Jewish community

A campaign of slander, insinuation and lies has had a devastating effect.

June 28, 2022



In recent years, an influential group of Portuguese who oppose a law that grants citizenship to descendants of Sephardic Jews have pursued accusations of corruption against the Jewish community. On June 24, their campaign broke out again. This time, the targets were the Jewish Community of the Portuguese city of Oporto and American influencer Nathaniel Drew, who allegedly received Portuguese citizenship under the law by making a donation to the Oporto community, even though he has no Sephardic roots.

This accusation was immediately disseminated via television, newspapers and social networks. The news stories made much of a supposed “sale” of Portuguese passports and a law that has allegedly become a “passport shop” due to the actions of a community that “negotiated” Sephardic identity for large sums of money.

Let's examine the actual facts.

Nathaniel Drew received certification from the chief rabbi of Oporto based on three types of evidence: Cemetery records, genealogy and last names.

Nathaniel's grandmother, Liliana De Pas, was born on Aug. 10, 1942, to a traditional family of Portuguese and Spanish origin living in Egypt. Liliana's father, Yakov de Paz, was born in Egypt on September 5, 1917. He was the son of David De Paz, who born in Turkey in the 19th century and later moved to Egypt.

The last names De Pas, Pas and Paz were common in North Africa among descendants of Sephardic Jews expelled from Portugal and Spain. They appear not only among members of the Sephardic community of Egypt, but also those of Libya and Tunisia. The last name De Pas is found on lists of ketubot held by the Portuguese Jewish community of Tunis. It was also one of the names condemned by the Portuguese Inquisition. All of this is confirmed by archival evidence examined by the Jewish Community of Oporto.

Liliana's family was confirmed as Sephardic by a certificate from Rabbi Baruch Garzon, the former Chief Rabbi of Madrid, which Nathaniel Drew submitted along with other documentation. Drew's Sephardic identity was duly approved by the Oporto rabbinate. He paid the fee of 250 euros and began proceedings to obtain Portuguese citizenship. Drew is now a citizen of Portugal, and the law does not require him to live in Portugal, speak Portuguese or practice Sephardic rites.

Accusations against the Jewish Community of Oporto on this issue began in early 2020, when a group of politicians, journalists and influencers launched a slanderous campaign against the citizenship law. They used talking points like “candidates only want passports of convenience,” “there are tens of millions of candidates,” “Sephardic applicants have children and spouses,” “to obtain citizenship, all applicants have to do is pay thousands of euros to genealogists, lawyers and the Portuguese Jewish communities” and so on.

Along with this, the positive effects of the citizenship law, including a 1,000% growth of the Portuguese Jewish community, were deliberately silenced by government agents and their partners. Centers for young Jews; kosher restaurants, shops and other establishments; the Jewish cemetery; the Holocaust Museum; the Jewish Museum of Oporto; the Jewish Cinema of Oporto; the largest Chabad Centre in Europe; and other signs of growth and vitality were not seen as positive developments by opponents of the law.

Starting in December 2021, those state agents doubled down, spreading the claim that the leaders of the Jewish Community of Oporto embezzled funds, which created suspicions of corruption and an atmosphere of terror and hostile media attention. Week after week, entire families were subject to exposure in the newspapers and on television, all based on anonymous denunciations. No one escaped this Inquisition-style campaign of “purification.” It encompassed religious and secular leaders, rabbis, presidents, former presidents, vice presidents, treasurers, members, secretaries, all the way down to museum curators and the doorkeeper.

Then the police were brought on stage. They invaded the Oporto synagogue, the Jewish Museum and the houses of the main leaders of the Jewish community while detaining the chief rabbi at the airport. He was humiliated worldwide for certifying two candidates—Patrick Drahi and Roman Abramovich—and accused of corrupting registry offices and embezzling money from fees paid to the community. Such charges can take a decade to resolve under Portuguese law.

I have some questions for the Portuguese authorities, none of which have been answered: Where is the evidence that the chief rabbi or anyone else stole money from the Jewish Community of Oporto? It is technically impossible. Where is the evidence that the Chief Rabbi corrupted the registry offices? He knows nothing about them. Where is the evidence of Patrick Drahi’s corruption? He was certified by the Jewish Community of Lisbon and paid them 500 euros. Where is the evidence of Roman Abramovich’s corruption? He was certified by the Jewish Community of Oporto and paid them 250 euros.

The aim of this manufactured atmosphere of terror was to put an end to the Sephardic citizenship law and silence any opposition to doing so. Indeed, the government has enacted a regulation that de facto repealed the law, as its requirements are impossible to fulfill. No Sephardic Jew in the world has made hundreds of trips to Portugal since childhood, let alone owns property inherited from ancestors who lived in the country at the time of the Inquisition, as the regulation requires.

Similar to the USSR’s 20th-century campaign against its Jewish communities, in Portugal a strong Jewish community and a law favorable to Jews have been destroyed by slanderous denunciations, the press and the police. It is important to remember that in Lviv, Kharkiv, Chernivtsi, Babruysk, Smolensk and hundreds of other cities in the Soviet Union, synagogues and communities were not closed all at the same time, but one by one. This always followed the same pattern: 1) the use of the press to associate synagogues with business dealings, 2) describing such business dealings as amoral or illegal, 3) negative reactions from certain quarters of public opinion and convenient Jews and 4) the total devastation of the reputation of synagogues and corresponding Jewish organizations that promote Jewish life.

On June 22, the Portuguese parliament asked the opinion of the Jewish Community of Oporto on possible changes to the citizenship law. The community replied that it does not cooperate with a state that has taken anti-Semitic action against the community on the basis of anonymous complaints, insinuations and defamation.

In the meantime, the Jewish Community of Oporto is quite prepared to hand over the 250 euros paid by Roman Abramovich for his certification, as well as the small fee paid by Nathaniel Drew, to the Portuguese government. As for the fee paid by Patrick Drahi, let the government ask the Jewish Community of Lisbon for it.

David Garrett is a board member of the Jewish Community of Oporto, Portugal.

<https://www.jns.org/opinion/opponents-of-portugals-sephardic-citizenship-law-have-declared-war-on-the-jewish-community/>



THE BLOGS

Miriam Assor

Antisemitism persists in Portugal

Antisemitism is a sad reality older than time, and Portugal is not immune to this horror – you only have to see the comments regarding Portuguese media articles in which Jews, Judaism or Israel are at the core, columnists brandishing an antisemitic lens or journalists who only see one angle. And the idea of money is always attached to Jews.

Antisemitism is a battlefield reflected in the Jewish holidays of Purim and Hanukkah: Haman wanted to kill Jews, Antiochus wanted to kill Judaism.

Hatred of Jews is deeply rooted in Europe. The image of the Jew as the killer of Jesus led to hatred and suspicion. From the Inquisition to Nazi Germany, the path of the vultures was made easier. We should not quake – nor should we attribute metaphorical speeches marked with symbolism, which in this case are as useful as a fur coat in the desert at noon.

The rabbi of the Jewish Community of Porto, Daniel Litvak, had his wrists handcuffed at Francisco Sá Carneiro Airport on Thursday, March 10. It was believed that he was fleeing to Israel via Germany with millions inside his suitcases. The home of the vice-president of Porto's Jewish community was searched with a fine-tooth comb with the aim of finding bags of money allegedly belonging to Russian oligarchs. Nor was the synagogue immune from the searches. The aim was the same: imaginary banknotes.

Anonymous denunciations were made in sufficient numbers to enable this operation to be mounted – nameless, faceless denunciations, devoid of character such as those that in the 1930s destroyed the honor of Captain Barros Basto, founder of the Porto Jewish Community and its current vice-president's

grandfather. History repeats itself. It is our duty to take actions in response to antisemitism, for that is what it is: antisemitism.

We all know what comes next, something that makes the antisemites slobber – the intense exposure of people linked to the community: the rabbi, president, vice-president, museum curator and friends of the community such as myself.

Those millions of euros or dollars failed to materialize, yet Rabbi Litvak has still not regained his passport. Having certified millionaires such as Patrick Drahi and Roman Abramovich, the once historic Nationality Law was jeopardized and died painfully.

But some pillars do not fall. Activities at the Mekor Haim Synagogue continue in full swing. It is full, with a minyan for eight consecutive years, young people, a kosher restaurant, tourists, a Jewish museum, a cinema, Tzedakah for the whole world, and queues outside the community's Holocaust Museum.

Although history and the truth do not always go hand in hand, there comes a moment when the page turns and you find out what really happened.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Miriam Assor is a journalist, member of the Jewish community of Lisbon and author of the book "Famous Jews of Portugal".

<https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/antisemitism-persists-in-portugal/>

GABRIELA TURKENITCH CANTERGI

Categorizing anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism today is politically correct in the West because it attacks the power of so-called exploiters who have the so-called unfair power. This theory puts into the same boat millions of atheists, agnostics, religious fanatics, progressives, democrats, communists and neo-Nazis.



December 23, 2021

As can be seen from the definition of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), anti-Semitism is “a certain perception of Jews” that can be actively or passively expressed against them or their institutions, property and interests. Racism regards those who are different as inferior. But anti-Semitism attacks or censures Jews, or allows attacks or censure of Jews, not because they are inferior but because they are allegedly dangerous, selfish and greedy – the banker, the rabbi, the communist, the plutocrat afflicting humanity.

In a way, anti-Semitism today is politically correct in the West because it attacks the power of so-called exploiters who have the so-called unfair power. This theory is almost two millennia old and puts into the same boat millions of atheists, agnostics, religious fanatics, progressives, democrats, communists and neo-Nazis.

Consider the following categorization of anti-Semitism:

1. Anti-Semitism based on the material image that has plagued the Jews for centuries, above all in Portugal, in which they are never linked to positive actions but rather to money, ugliness and sin. In some cities of Europe, the steps taken by the USSR are being revived to close the synagogues of Lvov, Jarkov, Tshernovitz, Bobruisk, Smolensk and hundreds of others throughout that large empire. These synagogue-communities were not closed at the same time but one by one, employing the same method: using the press and slanderers to link synagogues to business, describing such business as being amoral or illegal, negative reactions from certain corners of public opinion and by straw Jews, and totally destroying the respectability of the synagogues and corresponding Jewish organizations, making them incapable of defending Jewish life.
2. Anti-Semitism based on myths about the Jews' collective guilt. It was always this way throughout history. The typical claims include that the Jews are a race, are foreigners, conspire to rule the world, are rich and killed Jesus. These myths are still being repeated today, with some modern additions. The most recent conspiracy theories are that the Jews created coronavirus, monopolized the vaccines, made money from the vaccines, want to alter the human DNA and so on.
3. Anti-Semitism that identifies the State of Israel as a Nazi and genocidal state. This type of anti-Semitism is caused by ideological blindness and ignorance about the Holocaust and the Israeli-Palestinian reality. Only teaching will combat the false logic of David (supposedly “Palestine”) against Goliath (supposedly Israel), despite the fact that 400 million Arabs and 6 million Jews live in the Middle East. Furthermore, in 1948, 1967 and 1973, a coalition of about 10 Arab countries tried to assassinate Israeli Jews, who are people that to this day do not destroy churches and mosques, do not kill the infidel,

hijack airplanes, blow themselves up in restaurants, stab lonely old people or promote the brainwashing of children.

4. Anti-Semitism that denies the Holocaust and incites hatred against the Jewish population, accused of creating a myth to extort money from Germany. First by denying the link between Nazism and the concentration camps to the persecution of the Jews and then by deliberately destroying their lives (a denial based on formal issues or details regarding the precise numbers and the forms of execution) is the same as not seriously addressing comprehensively proven historical facts (by direct witnesses, comprehensive documentation, historical research over a period of 70 years and many trials). This is likely to lead the general public to act against the alleged falsifiers of history.
5. Anti-Semitism based on the idea that the Jews want to be the “privileged victims” of the Holocaust and desire special treatment with regard to the other victims, the other minorities. In many countries, such as Sweden, this has led schools to stop inviting Holocaust survivors if they are Jewish. This type of anti-Semitism is linked to the falsification of the Holocaust, which glosses over the fact that the Final Solution was addressed exclusively to the “Jewish race,” that nine-tenths of the victims at Auschwitz were Jewish and that the Nazis wanted to exterminate Jews even outside the occupied territories — indeed, in the whole world — including the “gang of 4 million Jews in the USSR,” an invasion which caused them to lose the Second World War.
6. Ideological anti-Semitism that by omission falls on the professional classes who have the moral and political obligation to denounce and persecute it, which they do with generic works or when anti-Semitic actions are carried out by the extreme right or religious fanatics, but who say or do nothing when the Jews are subject to humiliation from other sources. Anti-Semitism is not put on the same level as other types of discrimination: against Black people, gypsies, women, migrants, LGBTQ individuals, prisoners and others. If the Jews are plutocrats linked to obscurantist culture and with their own criminal state in Israel, they are only deemed to be victims if they are attacked by someone even worse than they are: skinheads and jihadists.
7. Anti-Semitism that refuses to individualize Jews in a positive way, in particular praising their contributions to the world. While it is true that all peoples have extraordinary value and are complemented in terms of deeds, philosophies, cultures, arts and sciences, it has never been politically incorrect to exhort the singular nature of each people. There is one exception: the Jews. It is politically incorrect to say that 0.2 percent of humanity has garnered almost 200 Nobel Prizes in physics, economics, medicine, literature and building peace, except when such comments are linked to the belief that the Jews also control the granting of such prizes.

At the end of the Second World War, when the Red Army entered the West, thousands of Jews on the frontline met with other Jews. Some had survived the Holocaust, others were American, English and French soldiers. Many were related. These meetings were so highly dramatic and sentimental – often taking place next to the mortal remains of murdered relatives – that Stalin forbade any mention of the role of the Jews. This was considered “far too cosmopolitan” in the Red Army, created by Leon Trotsky. Russians, Ukrainians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Belarusians and others are still praised to this day. The Jews have been forgotten. Even today in Russia and Ukraine, simple folk say that the Jews did not fight but ran away from the frontline. The first Jews who displayed their medals after the war were asked the famous question, “Where did you buy those medals?”

Gabriela Turkenitch Cantergi is president of B’nai B’rith International Portugal.

<https://www.jns.org/opinion/categorizing-anti-semitism/>

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N.º 1

PORTO — NISSAN DE 5687 (ABRIL DE 1927)

Tudo se ilumina para aquele que busca a luz.

BEM-ROSH

HA-LAPÍD

(O FACHO)

...alumia-vos e e aponta-vos o caminho.

BEN-ROSH

Orgão da Comunidade Israelita do Porto

Modelo n.º 42

EDITOR — A. C. DE BARROS BASTO (BEN-ROSH)

Avenida da Boavista, 854—Porto

RESPONDENCIA DEVE SER DIRIGIDA AO DIRECTOR)

PORTO CENTRAL

N.º 28291

PORTUGAL

O NOSSO FACHO

28.4.27

28.4.27

A Comunidade Israelita do Porto numa das suas primeiras reuniões, apoz a sua legalização no Governo Civil deste distrito em 1923, escolheu para seu brasão de armas o seguinte emblema: sobre campo de sangue emerge dumas chamas uma torre de prata tendo no seu eirado um candieiro de ouro com 7 lumes.

Na escolha do seu escudo se concretisa o seu desejo de que esta comunidade seja uma fortaleza de Israel, de onde emane perenemente a luz espiritual da Fé de Abraham, servindo de farol bemdito para aqueles que, reconditamente, pelos vales e pelos montes do norte de Portugal, ainda elevam, em espirito e verdade, os seus louvores e as suas preces a Adonai, Deus Bemdito de Israel.

Acaba esta Comunidade de acender este pequeno facho, que, com o favor de Deus, há-de iluminar o caminho a muitos transviados da Unica Verdade.

A nossa divisa é Adonai li ve-lo irá (O Senhor comigo e nada receio) e por isso se Deus Bendito concordar com a nossa Obra, nós com o nosso esforço faremos, dentro em breve, o resgate redentor de milhares de portugueses que, ao norte do Tejo, vivem espiritualmente com umas vagas remniscencias da religião dos seus antepassados.

Uma das encomendações israelitas era o resgate dos cativos e hoje tambem ha, na nossa terra, cativos a resgatar. Contamos pois convosco, filhos de Israel, para que a luz deste pequeno facho chegue até ao mais humilde lar cripto-judeu das terras portuguesas, e desta forma cooperareis na grande Obra do Resgate.

I thought one day of carrying out the following plan: to reconnect the Jewish communities of the Portuguese rite from all over the world with Portugal, which would be useful for Portugal, and, for this, to reestablish the old Chief Rabbinate of the country. The Jewish Community of Oporto was poor, but this plan would give it financial means and help achieve this great purpose. Revealing to the Jewish world of Portuguese origin the existence of individuals descended from the martyrs of the Inquisition, faithful to the religious traditions of their ancestors, would cause an emotional response in these Jews, linked by bonds of blood and faith to the crypto-Jews.

Captain Arthur Carlos de Barros Basto

Oporto, 15 July 1936

Pensei um dia em realizar
o seguinte plano: ligar nova-
mente com Portugal essas
comunidades do rito portu-
guês do mundo inteiro (o que
seria útil para Portugal) e para
isso reestabelecer o antigo Rabinato
novo de Portugal.

A Comunidade do Porto também
era pobre, mas um segundo
plano me daria meios financeiros
e ajudaria ao grande fim acima.

Revelando ao mundo judaico a
origem portuguesa a existência
de indivíduos descendentes
dos mártires da Inquisição,
fidelis às tradições religiosas
dos seus antepassados, havia
forçosamente de causar emoção
nuns meios judaicos ligados
por laços de sangue e de fé
a estes crypto-judeus.

Porto 15 Julho 1936
a) Arthur Carlos de Barros Basto
Capitão

Minute nº 129

On the twenty-seventh day of the month of Nissan in the Hebrew Era and on the fifth of May, nineteen forty in the Common Era, in this city of Oporto and in the Building of the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue, Headquarters of the Jewish Community (Sacred Congregation Source of Life), at Rua Guerra Junqueiro, number three hundred and forty, the members of the Mahamad met and took the following decisions:

I. Monthly Accounts – Resolved to approve the accounts for the month of April ended.

II. Support for the Displaced - Due to the serious international situation, many of our co-religionists are forced to leave their homeland and seek a new existence in other lands, and as many have turned to our community asking for assistance, and the partial or total solution is not in accordance with the purpose of any of our sections, at the proposal of the President, a new section called Somekh HaGolim (Support of the Exiles) is created, destined to give moral assistance and, as much as possible, material assistance to these exiled Jews. A private archive of this section should be created, where documents referring to this subject will be collected, even for cases already resolved before the creation of this section.

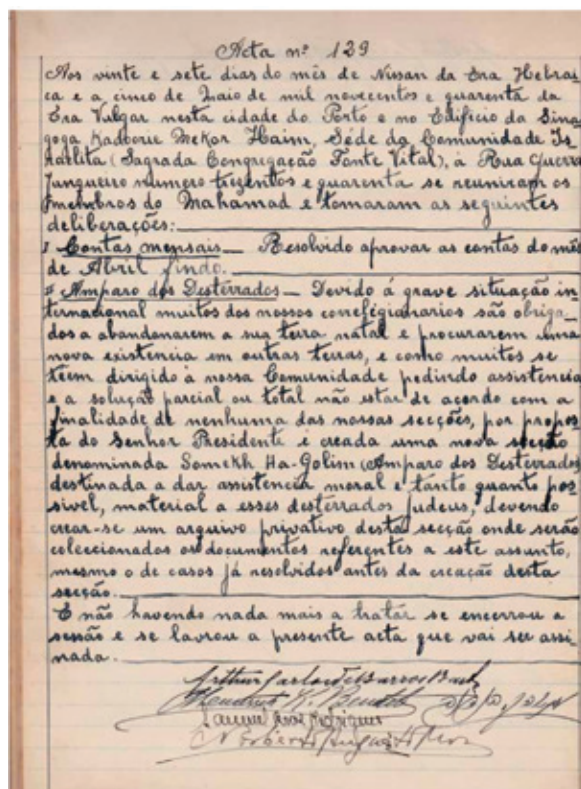
There being nothing further to discuss, the session was closed and these minutes were drawn up and signed.

Arthur Barros Basto

Menasseh Bendov

Samuel Rodrigues

Norberto Moreno



Minute nº 42

On February 2, 1970, in this city of Oporto and at the Mekor Haim Synagogue, the Board of this Community met to deal with the following matters:

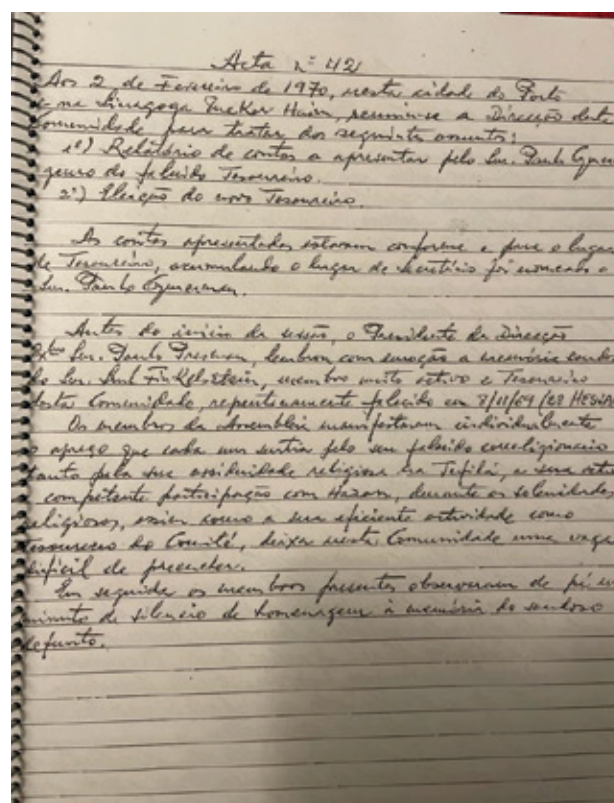
- 1º) Report of accounts to be presented by Mr. Paulo Cymerman of the late Treasurer.
- 2º) Election of the new Treasurer.

The accounts presented were in compliance. And for the place of Treasurer, accumulating the place of Secretary, Mr. Paul Cymerman was declared.

Before the beginning of the session, the President of the Board Mr. Paulo Pressman, recalled with emotion the memory of Mr. Srul Finkelstein, a very active member and Treasurer of this Community that died suddenly on November 8th, 1969 (28 Cheshvan).

The members of the Assembly individually expressed the appreciation that each one felt for their deceased co-religionist, both for his religious attendance at Tefillah, his active and competent participation as Chazan, during religious festivities, as well as his efficient activity as Treasurer of the Committee, leaves in this Community a vacancy that is difficult to fill.

Then, the members present observed a minute of silence in homage to the memory of the late deceased.



Lawrence Kadoorie, 94, Is Dead; A Leader in Hong Kong's Growth

- Aug. 26, 1993

Lawrence Kadoorie, one of the industrialists who transformed the British colony of Hong Kong from a barren island to an economic jewel, died today. He was 94.

Lord Kadoorie's company, China Light and Power, made possible Hong Kong's post-World War II industrial boom, and he became known as a "taipan," one of the immigrant dynamos who built up Hong Kong.

The Kadoorie family fortune is estimated at \$3 billion. Its holdings include a 35 percent stake in China Light and a similar stake in Hong Kong and Shanghai Hotels, which is headed by Lord Kadoorie's son, Michael.

The son of a Jewish immigrant from Iraq, Lawrence Kadoorie was born at the peak of the British Empire's power. He was the first man born in Hong Kong to be named to the British House of Lords.

The acting Governor of Hong Kong, Sir David Ford, described him as "a businessman of extraordinary vision" and "the driving force behind massive investment projects which will serve Hong Kong's interests well into the next century."

The Kadoorie family had to struggle to keep its fortune, first built by Lord Kadoorie's father, Elly.

After Japan seized Hong Kong in 1942, the family was kept in a prison camp, where the father died. The family's sumptuous Peninsula Hotel in Kowloon became Japanese headquarters.

Four years after the war, Mao Zedong's Chinese Communists seized the family's Shanghai holdings.

But the younger Kadoorie put the remaining family fortune to work, investing in postwar reconstruction.

Lord Kadoorie served in the colony's legislature and policy-making Executive Council from 1951 to 1954. He was an unabashed conservative who once said he saw "quite a lot of good in colonialism."

Last year he told The International Herald Tribune he was "still a Victorian, one of the very few around."

He was reported to have close ties with Chinese leaders, including Deng Xiaoping, and was believed to be involved in preparations for Hong Kong's transfer of power to China in 1997.

Before retiring as chairman in December 1992, Lord Kadoorie steered China Light and Power into a joint venture with China to build a nuclear power plant at Daya Bay, about 30 miles north of the border with Hong Kong.

He is survived by his wife, Muriel; his son, Michael; a daughter, Rita, and a younger brother, Horace.

Assembleia da República reabilita capitão judeu

BARROS BASTO

O PARLAMENTO reabilitou ontem, por unanimidade, o nome do capitão Barros Basto, um oficial judeu separado do Exército em 1937 por alegada "imoralidade". O "crime" foi a participação nas cerimónias de circuncisão dos alunos do instituto israelita do Porto. No parecer da Comissão, a que o JN teve acesso, a decisão de 1937 foi tomada em "manifesta violação da liberdade de religião e de culto" e terá tido origem na "intolerância religiosa e

um preconceito antissemita" que reinava na época. A tal ponto que o Exército considerou a circuncisão, tradição religiosa dos judeus, como atentatória à "moralidade" do oficial Barros Basto mas, pior ainda, do "prestígio e decoro da sua farda".

Descendente de judeus convertidos coercivamente ao Cristianismo, Barros Basto retornou à fé dos seus antepassados e criou um instituto teológico israelita na cidade Porto. A partir daí lançou-se numa campanha para persuadir outros, como ele, a regressarem, sem medo, ao



Barros Basto foi separado do Exército em 1937

judaísmo. Esta conduta foi muito mal encarada pelas autoridades da época pelo que, sem grande surpresa, Barros Basto foi afastado do exército. Sem direito a nada.

Setenta e cinco anos depois o Parlamento reconhece que "Barros Basto foi separado do exército devido a um clima genérico de animosidade contra si motivado pelo facto de ser judeu, de não o encobrir e, pelo contrário, de ostentar um proselitismo enérgico convertendo judeus portugueses marranos e seus descendentes". E reabilita-o, embora postumamente. Feliz com "esta boa nova", "há muito esperada", mostra-se a neta de Barros Basto, Isabel Ferreira Lopes, dirigente da comunidade israelita do Porto, que o avô fundou.

ÓSCAR QUEIRÓS

Parliament recommends reintegration into the Army (2012)

Resolution of the Assembly of the Portuguese Republic No. 119/2012, of August 10

Diário da República n.º 155/2012, Series I of 2012-08-10, page 4313

Resolution of the Assembly of the Portuguese Republic No. 119/2012

Rehabilitation and reintegration into the Army of Infantry Captain Artur Carlos Barros Basto, who was discharged for political and religious reasons in 1937

The Assembly of the Republic, pursuant to paragraph 5 of article 166 of the Constitution, resolves to recommend to the Government:

- 1 - To rehabilitate and reintegrate into the Army the infantry Captain Artur Carlos Barros Basto, who was discharged for political and religious reasons in 1937.
- 2 - That the said reintegration is to be carried out in a category not inferior to that to which the military officer in question would have been entitled if the process that led to his removal from the Army had not occurred.
- 3 - To take the appropriate measures to ensure that this reinstatement does not involve any indemnity or compensatory liability for the State.

Approved on July 25, 2012.

The President of the Assembly of the Portuguese Republic,
Maria da Assunção A. Esteves.

Resolução da Assembleia da República n.º 119/2012

Reabilitação e reintegração no Exército do capitão de infantaria Artur Carlos Barros Basto, que foi alvo de segregação político-religiosa no ano de 1937

A Assembleia da República resolve, nos termos do n.º 5 do artigo 166.º da Constituição, recomendar ao Governo que:

1 — Proceda à reabilitação e reintegração no Exército do capitão de infantaria Artur Carlos Barros Basto, que foi alvo de segregação político-religiosa no ano de 1937.

2 — A referida reintegração seja feita em categoria nunca inferior àquela a que o militar em causa teria direito se sobre o mesmo não tivesse sido instaurado o processo que levou ao seu afastamento do Exército.

3 — Tome as medidas adequadas para que fique salvaguardado que esta reintegração não envolve, para o Estado, qualquer responsabilidade indemnizatória ou compensatória.

Aprovada em 25 de julho de 2012.

A Presidente da Assembleia da República, Maria da Assunção A. Esteves.

**MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
ARMY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARMY**

Your Excellency
Chief of Staff to His Excellency the
Minister of National Defense

26-07-2013

Subject: RESOLUTION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC No. 119/2012, OF AUGUST 10 - INFANTRY CAPTAIN ARTUR CARLOS BARROS BASTO

My General,

With regard to the above mentioned matter, and in response to what was requested in your letter in reference, His Excellency the General Chief of Staff of the Army instructs me to inform Your Excellency of the following:

11. Thus, and considering the careers of these Officers, the eventual reconstitution of the career of Captain Barros Basto may take place in the following terms:

RANK	DATE
Alferes	15-11-1912
Lieutenant	01-12-1916
Captain	17-08-1918
Major	05-09-1938
Lieutenant Colonel	28-01-1943
Colonel	22-11-1945
Reserve	26-03-1947

With best regards, high regard, and personal esteem,

The Chief of Cabinet

Rui Davide Guerra Pereira
Major General

30/8

**MINISTÉRIO DA DEFESA NACIONAL
EXERCITO
GABINETE DO CEME**

Exm.º Senhor
Chefe do Gabinete de Sua Excelência o
Ministro da Defesa Nacional

Viz.º: 07281 26-07-13
N.º: P.º 80-4300 Data: 26-07-13
(53.26.130/18.8)

Assunto: RESOLUÇÃO DA ASSEMBLEIA DA REPÚBLICA N.º 119/2012, DE 10 DE AGOSTO
- CAPITÃO INF ARTUR CARLOS BARROS BASTO

Ref.º: V/Officio n.º 883/CG, de 04-03-2013.

Meu General,

Relativamente ao assunto indicado em epígrafe, e em resposta ao solicitado no V/Officio em referência, encargo-me Sua Excelência o General Chefe do Estado-Maior do Exército de informar V. Exa. do seguinte:

11. Assim, e considerando as carreiras destes Oficiais, a eventual reconstituição da carreira do Capitão Barros Basto poderá concretizar-se nos seguintes termos:

POSTO	DATA
Alferes	15/11/1912
Tenente	01/12/1916
Captão	17/08/1918
Major	05/09/1938
Tenente-Coronel	28/01/1943
Coronel	22/11/1945
Tit. de Reserva	26/03/1947

Cum os melhores cumprimentos, atenciosamente e muito pessoal,

O Chefe do Gabinete
Rui Davide Guerra Pereira
Rui Davide Guerra Pereira
Major-General
(84.47.847)

87 218 042 487 / 421 047 487 / 218 042 487 / 421 047 487
110-mat. (defesa.durante@defesa.mil.pt)
Rua do Museu da Armada
1100-001 LISBOA

18 //

JORNAL DE NOTÍCIAS
SEGUNDA-FEIRA 28/11/13

//Porto

PORTO //13-22
NORTE/SUL //23-28



"Sente-se uma grande força na comunidade israelita do Porto, o que me provoca uma grande emoção"
Ehud Gol
Embaixador de Israel em Lisboa



"Atividades fortalecem a vida da nossa comunidade, que tem membros de 10 países diferentes"
Daniel Litvak
Rabino no Porto



Celebração dos 75 anos da construção da Sinagoga do Porto, que tem 39 elementos, contou com 280 convidados, entre os quais Marinho e Pinto, da Ordem dos Advogados




Porto Cerimónia teve 280 convidados de vários cantos do Mundo • **Ocasão** serviu para reforçar reabilitação de fundador

SEGURANÇA MARCOU FESTA DOS 75 ANOS DA SINAGOGA

Oscar Queirós
locais@jn.pt

A cerimónia dos 75 anos da Sinagoga do Porto foi marcada pela presença do embaixador de Israel em Portugal e de altos dignitários judeus vindos expressamente de Londres, Israel, Argentina e Estados Unidos da América.

Discretos, porque à civil, elementos de forças de segurança portuguesa e israelita não despegavam os olhos perante qualquer movimento. Um carro da PSP acentuado, também, o clima de segurança que rodeou, ontem, a celebração dos 75 anos da fundação da Sinagoga Kadoorie-Mekor Haim.

As razões eram muitas: foram 280 os convidados de vários cantos do Mundo para a cerimónia, aberta pelo presidente da Comunidade Israelita do Porto, o norte-americano Dale Jeffries. No templo, estavam o embaixador de Israel, Ehud Gol, Marinho e Pinto, bastonário da Ordem dos Advogados e o deputado

Carlos Abreu Amorim, estes dois elogiados pelo "destacado envolvimento" no processo que culminou com a recente reabilitação do fundador da sinagoga, capitão Barros Basto, pelo Parlamento português. Dale Jeffries, após dissertar sobre a vida e obra de Barros Basto, salientou a presença de "rabinos de Londres, da Argentina, de Israel e dos Estados Unidos, que vieram porque acham a sinagoga um símbolo para os judeus do mundo inteiro".

Orações em hebraico
As comemorações, dirigidas pelo rabino da Comunidade Israelita do Porto (com 39 elementos), Daniel Litvak, foram seguidas de orações,

HOMENS E MULHERES SEPARADOS

Surpreendente foi a separação de homens e mulheres durante a cerimónia religiosa. Isto acontece sempre que o culto é dirigido por um rabino.

em hebraico, proferidas pelos rabinos convidados, bendizendo Portugal e as suas gentes, a comunidade israelita no país, o capitão Barros Basto e os 75 anos sobre a construção da sinagoga.

No final das intervenções religiosas, foi dada a palavra aos convidados, altura aproveitada por Marinho Pinto para, salientando o seu ateísmo, abordar as perseguições aos judeus em Portugal e concluindo que nem tudo é passado: "As fogueiras da Inquisição ainda não se apagaram totalmente e nem todas as religiões são tratadas da mesma maneira".

De salientar que a comemoração das bodas de diamante do templo judeu ocorre cerca de um ano depois de a Assembleia da República ter reabilitado formalmente o nome do seu fundador. A decisão foi tomada por uma comissão parlamentar que declarou, por unanimidade, que "Barros Basto foi separado do Exército devido a um clima genérico de animosidade contra si motivado pelo facto de ser judeu", em 1937, recomendando ao Governo a sua reintegração no Exército, a título póstumo. ●

Review Commission for purported Marranos or Bnei Anousim (January, 2013)

1. There are no longer any Bnei Anousim in Portugal.

The existence of the Bnei Anousim or Marranos in Portugal has for long been unknown and not credible, and those interested must prove the contrary. It is the opinion of the Religious Committee of the Jewish Community of Oporto, as well as of reputable scholars, that there are no longer any Bnei Anousim in Portugal, just as there are no longer any samurai warriors in Japan. It is misleading to imply that there are.

2. The last Portuguese Bnei Anousim lived in Belmonte and now are Jewish.

In the 1990s, 85 men and women from Belmonte converted to Judaism before a Beit Din and were officially inscribed in the “Book of Conversions”. The logbook does indeed include the word “conversion”. (*Judaísmo no Feminino*, Maria Antonieta Garcia, UNL, 2000, p. 286)

3. The Bnei Anousim had to convert formally to Judaism.

The Bnei Anousim had to convert formally to Judaism to dispel the terrible doubts about their individual genealogies and at the same time to rectify their link to Catholicism. (“Shulchan Arush”, *Anotações de Rama*, Yore Dea, Ch. 268, 12).

4. In Portugal, abstract terms like “Jewish roots” and “return to the religion of their ancestors” are misleading.

Proselytizing organizations love to talk about “Jewish roots” and “return to the religion of their ancestors”. All the Portuguese citizens have “Jewish roots” as well as “Christian or Islamic roots”, so by this logic if everyone were to convert to Christianity or to Islam they would also “return” to the religion of their ancestors.

Most of the nearly 200 thousand Jews living in Portugal in the late 15th century (the Jewish population born in Portugal, an estimated 75,000 people, according to historian Lúcio D’Azevedo, was increased by the enormous contingent arriving from beyond the border: 120,000 people, according to Abraham Zacuto) did not leave the country after the Edict of Expulsion, nor did their descendants throughout the centuries of the Inquisition and generally they joined the Christian population by marriage (Lúcio d’Azevedo, “*História dos Cristãos-Novos portugueses*”, 1921, and Abraham Zacuto, “*Sefer Yohassin*”, Zacuto Foundation, 2006).

5. The Portuguese Inquisition (1536-1821).

There is much fantasy around the Inquisition, which lasted three centuries and persecuted thousands of people who were not Jewish at all. From the beginning, many devout Christians who, in answering the inquisitorial interrogation, claimed not to be Jews and not to have sins to confess, were condemned to death for being unrepentant. To save their lives, many decided to make false confessions that they were Jews professing all sorts of Jewish practices. As a result, they and their relatives, both close and distant, were then regarded as Jews forever, although they were not. One of the most renowned Portuguese historians wrote that the Inquisition was a “factory of Jews”, not of true Jews but imaginary Jews. (Antonio Jose Saraiva, “*Inquisição e Cristãos-Novos*”, 1969).

6. The discourse of proselytizing organizations on Captain Barros Basto and the Rescue of Marranos is misleading and deceptive.

Basto was not a Marrano (Prins Salomon, “The Captain, the Abade and 20th Century ‘Marranism’ in Portugal”, 1976), the official Community he founded was 100% ashkenazi and not composed by any Marrano (Archives CIP/CJP), there was little receptivity for the “Rescue Work” on the part of the Marranos (Arnold Diesendruck, “Os Marranos, 2000), Basto was victim of two letters from Marranos with a fake charge of sexual crimes, and the State took the opportunity to expel him from the army (Inácio Steinhardt, Elvira Mea, “Ben-Rosh”, 1998), in 1940, Captain himself considered that “The Rescue Work failed!” (Proceedings of the Polícia de Vigilância e Defesa do Estado - Police of Vigilance and Defence of the State - nº 458-SR, information dated 3 August 1940), and from this way Basto’s romantic utopia has ended (Augusto Canelo, “Belmonte - Judaísmo e Criptojudaísmo”).

7. “Bnei Anousim” or “Marranos” is currently a false statute.

Marranos is currently a false statute that applicants take on for their own convenience, as an effective way to greatly simplify their conversion processes. Ordinary people who only wants to convert to Judaism become “Bnei Anousim” as soon as they begin to interact with proselytizing organizations. Although they are not from Belmonte or other small villages where the Bnei Anousim lived, suddenly these people swear that their deceased grandmothers practiced Jewish rituals.

By virtue of this document, the REVIEW COMMISSION of the Jewish community of Oporto is hereby created, which shall function and be governed in accordance with the following rules:

Article 1

(Composition of the Commission)

The Commission is comprised of the Rabbi, a member of the Religious Committee, a Portuguese Jewish member and a foreign Jewish member of the Jewish Community of Oporto.

Article 2

(Purpose of the Commission)

In the event that any person or persons declaring themselves to be “Marrano” and desirous of becoming part of the Oporto’s congregation, the case shall be passed to the Review Commission who will commence the pertinent investigative proceedings in order to conclude as to the veracity of the allegations made by the person(s) in question.

Article 3

(Tasks of the Commission)

1. The Review Commission shall perform the following tasks:

- a) Assess the ancestral Jewish practices of the family of the alleged Marrano, to which end any living relatives should be interviewed and their homes and customs examined, together with any other investigations which may be necessary;
- b) Investigate, as exhaustively as possible, the known marriages in that family;

c) Examine the personal and professional circumstances of the alleged Marrano, verifying his/her true purpose and desire to become a part of the congregation of the Jewish Community of Oporto.

2. The tasks of the Commission set out in the previous paragraph shall be performed independently of the procedure for verifying the compliance with the moral prerequisites of the Jewish Community of Oporto for anyone to be able to enter the Synagogue and of the procedure for possible conversion to Judaism, which must be conducted by a recognized poskim.

Article 4

(Special Precautions)

Extra care and special precautions must be taken when there is reason to believe that the alleged Marrano is acting at the behest, instigation or in representation of Jewish proselytizing organizations or, generally, of individuals who agitate the spirit of ordinary Portuguese citizens who are merely needing spirituality or seeking an identity, by suggesting that they are Marranos.

Article 5

(Costs of the investigation)

The costs of the investigations referred to in Article 3 must be borne by the alleged Marrano and/or by any credible international organization that provides assistance to Marranos.

Article 6

(Conversion)

In the event that the Commission finds that the person in question is a true Marrano, the procedure for his/her conversion to Judaism shall be accompanied by recognized poskim and credible international organizations that provides assistance to Marranos.

Article 7

(Fake conversions to Judaism)

The Board has consulted world-renowned rabbis - Shoftim - of an Orthodox Beit Din to answer the following question: "Should a conversion done in a false scenario (false parental crypto-Judaism) and false witnesses (from a proselytising organisation) be considered a conversion 'according to halacha'?" The Rabbis' written response was as follows: "No."

Opinion to the Government on the regulation of the “Sephardic law” (2013)

VII

Your Reference
Proc. 2610/2013
No. 6520

Your Excellency Madam Minister of Justice,

The Portuguese Government has referred to the Jewish Community of Porto, for consultation, a Draft Law to amend the Regulation of Portuguese Nationality, which, in the relevant segment, has the following wording:

‘Article 24a

Naturalization of foreigners who are descendants of Portuguese Sephardic Jews

1. The Government may grant Portuguese nationality, by naturalization, to descendants of Portuguese Sephardic Jews, when they meet the following requirements:
 - a. Are of legal age by Portuguese law;
 - b. Have not been convicted of the commission of a crime punishable by imprisonment of a maximum of three years or more, according to Portuguese law;
2. The application is accompanied by the following documents, without prejudice to the dismissal of its submission by the person concerned pursuant to Article 37:
 - a. birth certificate
 - b. certificates of criminal record issued by the competent Portuguese services, the country of birth and nationality, as well as the countries in which he has had residency and is resident;
 - c. Certificate of the Jewish Community recognized in Portugal attesting to the person concerned belonging to the Sephardic Jewish community.
3. In the application, the circumstances determining the tradition of belonging to a Sephardic community of Portuguese origin, namely surnames, family language, direct or collateral offspring, are indicated and demonstrated.
4. Proof of the direct or collateral descent of that community shall be made by means of certificates of the corresponding birth records and, in its absence, may be made by other means which the Minister of Justice deems appropriate.’

1. Introduction

Law No. 1/2013, of July 29, introduced amendments to Law No. 37/81 of October 3 (Nationality Law), and it was the government’s right to grant nationality, by naturalization, to the descendants of Portuguese Sephardic Jews. It did so in the following terms:

‘The Government may grant nationality, by naturalization, with exemption from the requirements laid down in paragraph 1 (b) and (c) to descendants of Portuguese Sephardic Jews by demonstrating the tradition of belonging to a Sephardic community of Portuguese origin, on the basis of proven objective requirements for connection to Portugal, including surnames, family language, direct or collateral descent.’ (Article 6(7))

This Law also provides for the need to introduce the necessary changes to the Portuguese Nationality Regulation approved by Decree-Law No. 237-A/2006 of December 14, amended by Decree Law No. 43/2013 of April 1. The Project now referred by the Government to the Jewish Community of Porto aims to address this need.

2. Jewish community recognized in Portugal

There is no 'Jewish Community recognized in Portugal', referred to in the Draft Decree-Law, just as there is no federation that connects Jewish communities with the status of a religious legal entities in Portugal, communities which are geographically distant and with dissimilar qualities.

It is indisputable however, that each community will have the autonomous capacity to constitute its own internal committees, communicating with the individuals and the competent bodies outside it, in order to honor a Law based on moral principles whose time has come.

Having as a guide what has been said, and without prejudice to what will be explained below with regard to the possible establishment of an international commission, point (c) of Article 24a(2) referred to in the Draft Decree-Law should be revised to the following wording: 'Certificate of Jewish Community, with status as a religious legal entity in Portugal, attesting to the belonging of the person concerned to the Sephardic community of Portuguese origin.'

It is well known that the expression "Sephardic Jewish community" encompasses both communities of Spanish origin and communities of Portuguese origin. The legal item in the Project should mention clearly the "Sephardic community of Portuguese origin".

3. International Commission

The situation of candidates to obtain Portuguese nationality by naturalization will raise innumerable and, in many cases, insoluble difficulties, in the wake of what happened, not only in Spain, but also, with the "Law of Return" in Israel regarding the clause proving membership of the Jewish people. In order to have an approximate notion of the range of candidates obtaining Portuguese nationality, it is worth remembering that, according to the rules of legal hermeneutics, and given that the Halacha (Jewish religious law) admits direct descent, to any degree, or collateral, up to the sixth degree, it is necessary to consider that the 'descendants of Portuguese Sephardic Jews' with ties of belonging to a "Sephardic community of Portuguese origin" may be, not only individuals considered Jewish by Halacha, but also simple descendants of Jews. This is the case of the son of a non-Jewish mother and a Jewish father descended from Portuguese Sephardic Jews.

Doubts also do not remain that the legislator intended to grant Portuguese nationality, by naturalization, to all descendants of Portuguese Sephardic Jews who were once forced to leave Portugal (towards many destinations, in an organized or disorganized way, with or without a community, with or without a synagogue, etc.) and not only to those who, after leaving the country, had ties with "organized communities" that were typically Portuguese.

Sephardic communities, still existing today, that can genuinely be considered "of Portuguese origin" are very rare. Indeed, the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogues found in London, Amsterdam, New York, Curacao, Suriname, as its name implies, include Jews of Spanish origin. The typically Portuguese communities that existed in Thessaloniki and Smyrna (KK Portugal, KK Portugal Velho, KK Lisboa, KK Évora, etc.) disappeared with the Holocaust. The Sephardic community of Smyrna was largely of Portuguese origin,

but most of its living members live today in other countries, especially Israel, and its descendants have allied themselves, by force of circumstances, with other communities of different natures, including Sephardic or even Ashkenazi communities.

Given the complexity of the matter, the Jewish Community of Porto consulted with Mordechai Arbell, perhaps the world's leading expert on Portuguese Sephardic communities, a subject on which he has published more than a dozen books, and a member of the board of the World Jewish Congress and the World Sephardic Congress. His opinion, resulting from a broad view of reality, is as follows: *"I have been researching the Portuguese Jewish Diaspora for the last 40 years. I think the decision of Portugal and its law are very positive. I propose that a special committee of specialists on the subject can serve as an advisor to the Portuguese authorities on the proofs to be received."*

Such an ad-hoc commission should be made up of historians, researchers and existing genealogists specialized in the Portuguese Jewish Diaspora, accompanied by members of the Jewish communities with religious legal status living in Portugal.

4. Evidence

The draft Regulation under consideration requires the demonstration of the circumstances that determine the tradition of belonging of candidates to a Sephardic community of Portuguese origin, namely surnames, family language, direct or collateral descent, and that the evidence must be provided by means of certificates of the corresponding birth records and, in their absence, by other means that the Minister of Justice deems appropriate.

Mordechai Arbell notes on the subject of evidence: *"The process of proving Portuguese descent may be difficult and lengthy but is not impossible. The proof can be obtained by several sources: 1) Community archives of births, marriages and deaths. I know of archives in Amsterdam, Bordeaux, Curacao, St Thomas, Sofia and more. 2) Cemeteries and lists of tombs in Surinam, Thessaloniki, Amsterdam, Hamburg, Curacao, Bayonne, Paris, Vienna and more. 3) Records of circumcision. 4) Family trees. I have at least three: the Maduro, Fidanque and Robles families that have details from Portugal till today. 5) General Government archives that show arrivals from Portugal. 6) Lists of ships and passengers arriving from Portugal. It could be more difficult to have details from Izmir and Tunis."*

There are archives and records in some communities of the Portuguese Diaspora, dating back to the date of the arrival of the first families. For other communities, and for all those who have fled to unknown destinations, documentary evidence is difficult or impossible to obtain.

For the purpose of granting of Portuguese nationality to descendants of Sephardic Jews forced to leave Portugal, consideration should also be given to drawing up a list of surnames that offer no doubt, similar to what was attempted in Spain.

Theoretically, one could not deny, for example, that an Abarbanel was of Portuguese origin, but some members of the Abarbanel family are descendants of Jews who lived for many generations in Bulgaria and even in Poland. In the telephone books of Israel, there are common surnames such as Portugali (from Ukraine), Portugues (the name of a soldier killed in a terrorist attack), Lisbona, Albaz (presumed to have been Elvas), Bejarano (a name that may come from Beja, Alentejo, or Bejar in Spain). There are even more complicated cases, such as the name Rappaport among German Jews. The name traditionally derives from the Rappa family (Rofé, meaning doctor in Hebrew), from the old Jewish community of Porto.

5. Response to the consultation

The analysis performed, given the time limitations that did not allow a deeper investigation, allows us to formulate the following conclusions:

- I. Consideration should be given to the establishment of an international commission composed of historians, researchers and genealogists specialized in the Portuguese Jewish Diaspora, accompanied by members of Jewish communities with the status of religious legal entities in Portugal, and, in the right measure, the provisions of article 24a (2) (c) referred to in the Draft Law.
- II. Given the impossibility of forming an international commission, Article 24a(2) should now have the following wording: ‘ a Certificate of Jewish Community with the status of a religious legal entity in Portugal attesting to the belonging of the person concerned to the Sephardic community of Portuguese origin.’
- III. There is no ‘Jewish Community recognised in Portugal’, which is mentioned in the Draft Law, just as there is no federation of Portuguese Jewish communities with the status of religious legal entities in Portugal, communities which are geographically distant and with dissimilar qualities. It follows that, if the certifications have to be issued by these communities, each of them shall have the capacity to set up its own internal committees.

This is the result of our analysis, and the arguments supporting the changes in the text drawn up above, to which it refers.

November 5, 2013

(Kislev 02 of 5774)

By the Directorate of the Jewish Community of Porto

Isabel Ferreira Lopes, Vice-President



HOTEL DA MÚSICA

מלון דה מוסיקה, סימפוניה לחושים / UMA SINFONIA PARA OS SENTIDOS

Muito mais que um hotel de design, o Hotel da Música é um mergulho numa sinfonia de experiências. Integrado no emblemático edifício do Mercado do Bom Sucesso, o Hotel da Música alia modernidade e conforto a toda uma orquestra de cultura, gastronomia e história.

SERVIÇOS - Restaurante • Bar • Estacionamento Privativo • Sala de Eventos Polivalente • Business Center.

הרבה יותר ממלון בוטיק, מלון דה מוסיקה הוא כמו צלילה לתוך סימפוניה של חוויות המלון מהוות חלק מבניין השוק הבום סוססו האייקוני, מחבר מודרניות ונוחות עם סימפוניה של תרבות, גסטרונומיה והיסטוריה. שירות: מסעדה, בר, חניה פרטית, אולם אירועים רב תכליתי ומרכז עסקים.



PORTO

פורטו, סמפוניה לחושים / UMA SINFONIA PARA OS SENTIDOS

Assim como o Hotel da Música, também a cidade do Porto se revela uma sinfonia para os sentidos. Deixe-se absorver pela riqueza do seu Património histórico, cultural e gastronómico. Suba aos Clérigos, entre no Museu de Serralves, ouça a Casa da Música, prove a Francesinha, passeie no Parque da Cidade, visite o Café Majestic, leia na Livraria Lello e sinta tudo isto e muito mais, num magnífico cálice de Vinho do Porto.

בדיוק כמו המלון דה מוסיקה, כך גם העיר פורטו מציעה סימפוניה לחושים, תן לעצמך להיסתף לתוך מורשת היסטורית, תרבותית, גסטרונומית עשירה אתה יכול ללכת מסביב לנהר להתפלל בבית הכנסת כדורי ולקבל סיור מודרך במוזאון של הקפיטן ברוס בסטו, להסתובב במוזאון "סרלסס", לשמוע מוסיקה ב"קסה דה מוסיקה", לשעום את האוכל הפורטוגזי המפורסם, ללכת בפארק העיר, לבקר בקפה "מג'סטיק", לגלוש בין הספרים של חנות הספרים "ליברריה ללו", ולהתענג על כל זה ועוד הרבה יותר על ידי כוס יין פורטו מפואר.



LOCATION

Set amongst the urban flow and array of stalls at the new Mercado do Bom Sucesso market, the Hotel da Música welcomes you to stay here during your leisure or business trip. Use it as a base from which you are free to lose yourself at Casa da Música, at the Museu de Serralves, at the Rio Douro wine cellars, in the city centre, on the beach, at the sea...

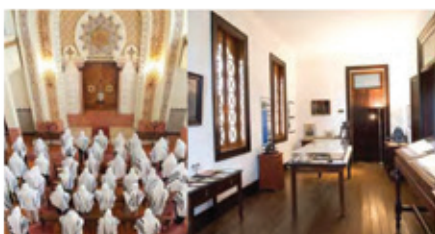


ROOMS

85 rooms, 01 of which has disabled access, 01 suite, and 12 twin rooms. Every room has a mini-bar, hairdryer, free wifi access, a safe, a telephone providing direct access out, air conditioning, and a plasma TV with cable channels.

RESTAURANT & BAR

Whether at Breakfast, Lunch or Dinner or during some tapas in the afternoon, you will always have a unique opportunity to enjoy imaginative and selective cuisine at our Bom Sucesso Gourmet Restaurant. Don't miss the chance, either before or after your meal, to enjoy a drink at the bar: a glass of wine, a vintage port or a cocktail.



SYNAGOGUE

The Kadoorie Mehor Haim Synagogue is the largest Synagogue in the Iberian Peninsula. Only kosher activities are permitted. The building has a Mikveh in operation and the Community offers solutions in terms of Kashrut.

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[illegible]

Flyer to the Jewish Visitors (2016)



The Jewish Community of Oporto is...

Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue
Oporto, Portugal

The Jewish Community of Oporto includes 200 members from 21 countries and the Oporto Rabbinate is recognized by the Rabbanut Harashtit of Israel. Religious and secular Jews work together. The Community has a regular minyan, Torah classes and kiddush every week. It gives tzedakah via a vast network of Jewish organisations. There are a kosher hotel, restaurant, bar and two kosher stores. Burials at the cemetery, the nursery, the community meals and the use of mikveh are free of charge for members.

The Kadoorie Mekor Haim is the largest Synagogue in Sepharad. It includes not only a prayer room, but also spaces reserved for studying, a mikveh, a nursery, a kosher store, a community dining room, an apartment for the Rabbi and a Jewish museum where non-Jewish visitors always receive a pamphlet containing the Sheva Mitzvot. A Synagogue shall always be an expression of Judaism, even in terms of visits, contributing to the spiritual and cultural enrichment of peoples, to combat anti-Semitism and for the construction of a better world.





Jewish Community of Oporto
Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue
Phone: +351 911766596

Official Website: info@comunidade-israelita-oporto.org
Official Blog: jewishcommunityofporto.blogspot.pt

Community suggests the Government to invest in education (2016)

Oporto, May 13, 2016

Dear Prime Minister,

We respectfully request you to update the secondary school history curriculum so that History textbooks include material on the presence of Jews in the Iberian Peninsula in general and in Portugal in particular. This is not currently the case.

Browsing, for example, the 5th year manual “História e Geografia de Portugal”, by Fátima Costa and António Marques, a work with a large circulation, produced in accordance with the current curricular goals, it appears that Jews are completely purged from the history of the territory that is now Portugal.

The primitive hunter gatherer communities are mentioned, as well as the agropastoral communities, the Celts, the Iberians, trading peoples (Phoenicians, Greeks and Carthaginians), the Romans, the Visigoths, the Muslims, everyone but the Jews.

An explanation is made about the meaning of Christianity (p. 60), of Islamism (p. 69) and even of pagan cults (p. 45). Not a word about Judaism.

In the context of the benefits of the Islamic presence on the Iberian Peninsula, there is a quote by Maimonides (p. 74), who is identified as being Muslim, when in fact he was one of the most renowned figures of medieval Judaism.

Without referring to the Jews, mention is also made of the Portuguese burghers (merchants and artisans) of the 13th and 14th centuries (p. 112), with the description that “they attended the schools existing in the cathedrals and monasteries or had individual teachers (priests and monks)”. Not one reference to the Jewish schools, which were frequented by the major burghers of the kingdom: the Jews.

There is a passage that says that in the 14th century in Europe, “some believed that the Jews were guilty of every evil, and were charged with poisoning fountains and wells” (p. 121), without any reference to the terrible genocides that ensued from such proclamations, for example in Spain in 1391. All is summed up by the simple “some people believe”.

As regards the reign of King D. Manuel, his life is highlighted and his decision to “continue the enterprise of the Discoveries” (p. 144) is underlined, with no reference to the 1496 Edict of Expulsion, one of the most important decisions in the history of Portugal and the world.

Regarding the settlement of S. Tomé e Príncipe, it is said that this was carried out with “the Portuguese and with black slaves from Guinea and the Congo” (p. 153), which is true, although it leaves out the young settlers of the late 15th century: hundreds of Jewish children (taken from their parents) who were sent to the island in 1493, on the orders of King D. João II.

The reign of King D. João III is filled with lines of details, highlighting that “the Portuguese started taking African slaves to Brazil” (p. 159), completely forgetting the setting up of the Inquisition in Portugal, which had consequences not only on the history of Portugal but on the history of the world.

It seems to us that it would not be bad form to point out, at the very least, the presence of Jews and Judaism in Portugal, prior to the foundation of the Portugal given their relevance in the construction of the country.

Regards,

The Board of Director, Jewish Community of Oporto



Protocol of Friendship and Cooperation

Considering that the Jewish and Catholic Communities of Oporto have lived peacefully together, even before the foundation of Portugal, and that they currently enjoy an excellent relationship of friendship between the Diocese of Oporto, represented by its Bishop, Manuel Linda, and the Jewish Community of Oporto, represented by its President, Dias Zion, and Rabbi Daniel Litvak, we establish this Protocol, which is governed by the following articles:

Article 1 - The Catholic and Jewish Communities of Oporto will, from this date, collaborate in the social and philanthropic area, to organize and cooperate on joint projects of assistance, in order to restore to a dignified life those who are trapped in the shackles of poverty, lethal addiction, or moral misery.

Article 2 - The leaders of the Catholic and Jewish Communities of Oporto will meet regularly to cement good relations, mutual respect, and friendship and to commit themselves in the conduct of their members with respect for their differences, and in cooperation and mutual friendship.

Oporto, 17 December 2018,

The Bishop of Oporto

The Rabbi of Oporto

The President of the Jewish Community



MINUTES No. 57

A meeting of the Board of the Jewish Community of Oporto (CIP/CJP), Religious Entity registered with number 592000982, with headquarters at Rua de Guerra Junqueiro, n.º 340, Oporto, was held on the 25th day of October 2018 (two thousand and eighteen) of the Common Era, at 6.30pm.

The agenda was as follows:

Single point – Legal action against the author of slanderous statements made during the General Assembly of the Jewish Community of Lisbon on 6th October of the current year.

The following members of the Board took part in the meeting: Dias Ben Zion (President), Isabel Ferreira Lopes (Vice President), Michael Rothwell (Treasurer), Francisco Garrett (Member) and Eliran Graedge (Secretary) and, at the invitation of the President, the Head Rabbi of Oporto, Daniel Litvak.

The meeting having started, the following points were discussed and ordered to be recorded in the minutes:

1. It can be read in minutes no. 56 of this Board that “*at the last General Assembly of CIL [Jewish Community of Lisbon], in the heat of discussions between opposing factions, a person allegedly stated that the Oporto community commits illegalities in the process of certification*”, that “*by order of the Board, the lawyer Pedro Alinho sent a letter to the President of the General Assembly of Lisbon, asking for the identification of the slanderer and of the members of the CIL present in the Assembly, to serve as witnesses*” and that “*it is convenient to provide a prompt remedy to such situations, bearing in mind that, on the eve of a previous General Assembly of the same community, CIP/CJP was also insulted by an individual who said that the Mekor Haim synagogue was just a museum open to tourists, which led to him being prosecuted, with a large claim for compensation*”.

2. It should not be forgotten that the type of offense under consideration is not new. It started in 2015 and continued through the mandates of Dr. Jose Carp and Dr. Gabriel Steinhardt, who always sought to create friendships and bridges with CIP/CJP, but invariably saw their work undermined by third parties who never wanted the peaceful understanding between the institutions and who did everything to ruin it, in a low, underhand way, throwing stones and hiding their hands, so as not to have to answer for the offenses, as will be mentioned later on.

3. Given that CIP/CJP received several informal requests to drop the lawsuit that constitutes the sole point of this agenda, even if the person who proceeded so incorrectly is identified, it is important to give a full response to these requests, taking into account the various perspectives on the matter.

Let us consider the pertinent facts.

4. The Jewish Communities of Oporto and Lisbon were closely involved in the legislative process which resulted in the possibility of granting Portuguese nationality to the descendants of Sephardic Jews who once lived in the country. There is abundant evidence in the archives of the synagogue in Oporto that CIP/CJP was heard by the Parliamentary Group of the Socialist Party, in (April) 2012,

regarding the amendment to the Nationality Law, when it suggested the insertion of a paragraph 7 in article 6 of that Law, just as it was heard by the Government of the Social Democratic Party, in 2013 and 2014, regarding the Regulation of the Nationality Law, having initially defended the existence of an international Commission to operate abroad and then, in view of the Government's rejection of this solution, commissions in Oporto and Lisbon. In the meantime, CIP/CJP proposed to the Jewish Community of Lisbon (CIL), also a participant in the entire foregoing legislative process, the setting up of a joint Commission of the two communities, a proposal that was openly received by Dr. José Carp, but which was rejected by most of his peers, who with their ridiculous stance intended to keep CIP/CJP at a distance.

5. Then, in December 2014, a fake news item, two full pages long, was published in the “Expresso” newspaper, in which people linked to CIL swore to the public that this community would be the only certifying entity. This was, an unfair, disastrous and, it should be said, ruinous action for CIL itself, since, two days later, CIP/CJP announced to the world the entry into operation of its own Commission, starting to work alone in the heart of the Sephardic communities, leaving CIL with its hands tied, not in a position to express its dissatisfaction, forced to wait for the regulation of the Law to come into effect through publication in the *Diário da República*, which would not happen until 1st March, 2018.

6. In Oporto, it was decided to start work in December 2014, making a large financial investment, with a Commission capable of responding to requests from around the world in real time, 24 hours a day; a Commission led by the rabbinate of Oporto, made up solely of Jews, of good technical and ethical standing, from Oporto and other places around the world; a Commission familiar with the Hebrew language, with proofs of Judaism in the light of Halakhah, with the traditional *ketubot* of Sephardic communities of Portuguese origin and much more. An extensive team, working day and night (except for *Shabbat* and Yom Tov), which was ordered to focus on pure Sephardim, the simplest cases, for immediate resolution or rejection, leaving the mere “descendants” of Jews, the Ashkenazim and other complicated cases, as a rule, to Lisbon or Spain. The labyrinthine world of uncertainty was left to others.

7. In Lisbon, on the other hand, it was decided to start work in March 2015, after the publication of the Law in the *Diário da República*, at a time when the bulk of the candidates had already opted or were opting for Oporto. Given the small volume of work, the Commission created in Lisbon did not need to be as large as the one operating in the north of the country, nor did it need to have such costly members. It was based on demand. The result that transpires from these lines explains why CIL ended up with a fragile Commission, working only during office hours, composed of two non-Jewish people (supported by unpaid “volunteers” of CIL, the which, despite being romantic, is inappropriate for a large organization), who did not act under the tutelage of an Orthodox rabbi, did not understand Hebrew, did not accept applications in Hebrew, did not ask for proof of Judaism (which, incidentally, they would not be able to assess), requiring only proof of Sephardic ancestry, thus becoming entangled in very complicated cases of non-Jews or Ashkenazim and in family trees that are very easy forged, with all the associated risks, resulting in very time-consuming the work, leading to a reputation for very slow decisions and the consequent rush of the applicants and their relatives and friends to Oporto, where they would receive an answer on the same day. It is so even today.

8. The weighty arguments explained above are enough for any person in good faith to understand why it is (and always has been) “easier” to obtain certification (or rejection) by the Oporto community, whose Commission is better, more numerous, and certainly with a much more costly human structure, than the CIL Commission. The facts are self-evident and there is no need for enthusiastic praise. Anyone who knows CIP/CJP today – <http://jewishcommunityofporto.blogspot.com> – knows that its certification department has the same level of quality as all the other departments of

the organization, based in the synagogue in Oporto, which today houses the strongest community in Portugal, at many levels, first of all in religious terms, being on the way to the 4th consecutive year with an uninterrupted *minyan* (on *Shabbat* and Yom Tov) without ever having had the need to count tourists or put up with problems of *lashon hara*.

9. Attesting to its *bona fides*, the CIP/CJP Commission evaluates the applicants' cases based on all the elements that guarantee a tradition of belonging to a Sephardic community of Portuguese origin - for example, family surnames (and not just the applicant's surname), lists of traditional Sephardic family surnames in the countries where their ancestors settled over the last five centuries, the communities and synagogues to which they belonged, cemetery records, the types of *ketubot* and other objects the families may have kept to the present, religious or food rites and customs, episodes narrated in history books about the Portuguese Jewish diaspora, the applicant's connection to the Jewish world in the present and his/her status in the light of Jewish law (Halakhah), religious temples they still attend today and the knowledge, albeit limited, of the history of such families by famous academics or rabbis recognized by organizations with halakhic credibility - critically articulated with their knowledge and understanding of Jewish reality, culture, religious law and religion and with other materials gathered throughout the assessment procedure, using the tools at their disposal. Brief pertinent statements make for quick decisions; there is no time for complex arguments.

10. If there is no reliable proof of Judaism, as expressed above, CIP/CJP does not consider itself competent to carry out the certification of applicants, nor does it consider that the "tradition of belonging" required by law is fulfilled. The explanatory memorandum of the draft law, the preamble of Decree-Law no. 30-A/2015, of 27th February 2015, and paragraph 5 of Article 24A of the Nationality Law Regulation - which must be taken into account as elements of interpretation, in accordance with article 9 of the Civil Code – irrefutably attest to whom the law is intended, as it was not the intention of the legislator to contemplate tens of millions of non-Jews of Jewish origin spread throughout the world, including, by way of example only, the millions of alleged *B'nai Anusim* in Brazil and the millions of Turkish Muslims of Sephardic origin from six, seven or even ten generations ago.

11. According to the basic rules of legal interpretation, the letter and spirit of the law must be considered together. However, no one on the part of CIP/CJP has ever proclaimed in Portugal or abroad that the CIL commits illegalities by granting certificates to people who do not correspond to what the legislators had in mind. CIP/CJP is certain that CIL will always do its best to serve Sephardic Jews and the Portuguese State.

However, the contrary does not apply. Several individuals close to the CIL Commission, and others, have criticised the CIP/CJP Commission for the past 4 years, which has always operated under the watch of supervisory elements who, in turn, work in collaboration with lawyers in Portugal and from other countries, such as Israel and Turkey. It is evident that the "illegalities" are in fact committed by the slanderers, through the two worst variants of gossip: *lashon hara* and *hamotzi shem ra*.

12. In the years 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015, CIP/CJP maintained strong growth, becoming stronger step by step in all areas, making the most of everyone's particular skills, creating a community. CIL was then chaired by Dr. José Carp, who did his best to create ties and bridges between communities. His work, however, was permanently undermined by third-party elements of the Lisbon synagogue and the CIL administration who never failed to spread messages abroad such as "the synagogue of Oporto is a museum" and "the community of Oporto does not exist", messages that unsuspecting tourists took onboard and brought with them to Oporto, where these messages were invariably shown to be lies. Legal peace was only restored when CIP/CJP took to court, to serve as an example to third parties, a slanderer who repeated these lies, in November 2015, in the context of a CIL General Assembly.

13. Since 2015 and, above all, in the years 2016, 2017 and 2018, it no longer possible, even for the least informed, to sustain the idea of the non-existence of the Jewish community in Oporto and the life of its synagogue, as a result of which their speech changed focus to the “illegalities in the certification of Sephardic Jews”, slander that CIP/CJP tried to stop, in 2016, by proposing a protocol of cooperation to the CIL Board, chaired by Dr. Gabriel Steinhardt, aimed at regulating, among other matters, *lashon hara*. Despite the excellent intentions of the President and the Vice President of CIL, Dr. Jaime Sayash, the proposed protocol failed to obtain the support of all the leaders of that community, at a time when the treacherous discourse of “illegalities” was gaining strength in Lisbon.

14. The slander had started the previous year with Israeli lawyers who work(ed) with CIL, continued with applicants approved by CIL (one of whom would later be investigated and confess, heavy-heartedly, the motive for the crime), extended to workers and members of CIL and was finally echoed on 6th October 2018, in another General Assembly of that organization. Hence the action of CIP/CJP to try to prosecute the author of the aforementioned offense is, as can easily be understood, the result of a long process of tolerance that was never understood or respected by various people linked to CIL. The slander reached so far in terms of results and impunity that one of the greatest political figures in Portuguese society expressed shock to the President of CIP/CJP, Dr. Yigal Dias Zion, himself a descendant of Sephardim from Smyrna, with the volume of criticism of the Oporto community commission that came to him via the highest personalities of Jewish culture linked to CIL. Incredible but true.

15. It is known today that the attempt by CIP/CJP to identify the author of the slanderous statements made at the CIL General Assembly on 6th October has already achieved undesired publicity, but has nevertheless certainly had the effect of exhorting the slanderer, and others alike, to correctness and a sense of responsibility. The exhortation alone is worthless, but it remains a serious warning for anyone who follows. It will serve as an example. Under these circumstances, it was decided to suspend the intended judicial procedure, even if this move does not result in the elimination of the harm caused.

16. As a way of preventing or deterring *ab initio* new attacks on CIP/CJP, in this and other matters, the Board has decided to renew the proposal for a cooperation protocol rejected by the CIL in 2016. It has been reformulated in the following terms:

CLAUSE ONE

(Certification of Sephardic Jews)

Considering that the Jewish Community of Oporto and the Jewish Community of Lisbon are entities that certify descendants of Sephardic Jews of Portuguese origin and that the possible existence of gossip about either of them could jeopardize the image of rigour, professionalism and honesty of the certification process that the Portuguese State entrusted to the Portuguese Jewish communities, it is agreed that between the signatory communities there must be a sharing of information, in real time, about everything that could endanger this image, so as to make it possible to stop the prevaricators by the necessary legal means.

CLAUSE TWO

(Journalistic corruption)

Considering that, in several countries, there are shocking signs of the sacrifice of truth in reporting in exchange for illicit advantages for journalists, and given that, in the past, several news stories,

particularly from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA), totally distorted the Portuguese Jewish panorama, always having as protagonists the founder of an Israeli proselytizing organization and a corrupt journalist associated with it, it is stipulated that the leaders of the signatory communities must be very careful not to allow the use of the names of their institutions for illegal practices, aware that corrupt journalists must be persecuted like other corrupt individuals.

CLAUSE THREE (Events in Portugal)

Considering that, in the past, against the will and interest of the Jewish Community of Oporto, the secular and religious leaders of the Jewish Community of Lisbon were present at an official presentation ceremony, in the city of Oporto, of an alleged “Jewish Interpretation Centre” led by an Israeli proselytizing organization and a Catholic priest who desired to obtain material income from the history of the Oporto Jews, which forced the aggrieved entity, CIP/CJP to destroy the conspiracy through the use of the necessary means, exposing the scandal, it is established that neither of the signatory organizations should participate in events in the geographical area of the other when, this could, in any way harm it or force it to take a strong position, out of necessity, likely to damage the image of Jews in general and Portuguese Jews in particular.

CLAUSE FOUR (Representation of the national community)

Considering that, in the past, the Jewish Community of Lisbon has participated in events such as forums and conferences, in Portugal and abroad, on behalf of the Portuguese Jewish community; bearing in mind that the Jewish Community of Oporto does not wish to be represented except by itself, but that, on the other hand, it has no interest in participating in the overwhelming majority of these events, which it deems useless and a waste of time and energy (as explained on its official page regarding the World Jewish Congress), the Jewish Community of Lisbon should inform the organizers of the events whom it represents and whom it does not represent, nor is authorized to represent.

CLAUSE FIVE (Protocol Management)

Considering that the practical application of this Cooperation Protocol is essential, it is established that the boards of the signatory communities should appoint representatives for permanent contact between the institutions with regard to the matters referred to above.

|||

The President of CIL, Dr. Gabriel Steinhardt, former CIL President Dr. José Carp, mentioned herein, and the Israeli Ambassador to Portugal shall be notified of the content of these minutes.

As there was nothing else to discuss, the work of this meeting was concluded at 7:30 pm, of which, for the record, these minutes were drawn up, which, after being written, read and approved, will be signed by all the participants of the meeting.

Letter from the Jewish Community of Oporto to the Chief Registry Office, Maria de Lurdes Barata Pires Mendes Serrano on the impossibility of certifying the Sephardic status of non-Jews descendents of victims of the Inquisition that no one can guarantee were Jews.

Oporto, October 6, 2019.

In Oporto, this case can obviously not be approved, as the applicant (i) is not Jewish, (ii) does not belong to a traditional Sephardic family of Portuguese origin, and (iii) has not lived for centuries in the Ottoman Empire, North Africa, the Mediterranean, or in the modern Sephardic communities created by Portuguese New Christians.

Under the same criteria, Mrs. Maria de Lurdes Barata Pires Mendes Serrano would be a Sephardic Jewess on all sides for, according to official data compiled at the Torre do Tombo:

-- Of the BARATA family punished by the Inquisition: 100% were mothers/widows; 100% were sentenced to jail and the habit; 100% were punished in the reign of the House of Bragança, between 1641 and 1750; and between 1500 and 1750, only the widows of the Barata family were more inclined to be punished by the Inquisition;

-- Of the PIRES family punished by the Inquisition: 40% were parents/ professionals; 13% were mothers/widows; 47% were sons and daughters; 72% were sentenced to jail and the habit; 16% were dead, burned alive on the bonfires; 3% died under torture; 9% had other sentences; 31% were punished during Spanish rule between 1580 and 1640; and 69% were punished in the reigns of the House of Bragança, between 1641 and 1750. Furthermore: 21% were merchants; 16% were farmers/ranchers/mill owners; 5% were doctors; 5% were lawyers; 5% were tailors; 5% were members of religious orders; 5% were labourers; 38% had other professions. So, between 1500 and 1750, the Pires family were more inclined to be: farmers/ranchers/mill owners;

-- Of the MENDES family punished by the Inquisition: 46% parents/ professionals; 29% were mothers/widows; 25% were sons and daughters; 54% were sentenced to jail and the habit; 9% were dead, burned alive on the bonfires; 5% died under torture; 32% had other sentences; 1% were punished in the reigns of the House of Avis, between 1500 and 1579; 8% were punished during Spanish rule between 1580 and 1640; 91% were punished in the reigns of the House of Bragança, between 1641 and 1750. Furthermore: 23% were merchants; 6% farmers/ranchers/mill owners; 9% were businessmen; 9% were dealers; 11% were cobblers; 1% were doctors; 6% were lawyers; 2% were military; 3% were contractors; 1% were tailors; 2% were goldsmiths; 3% were barbers; 1% were members of religious orders; 1% were labourers; 22% had other professions. Between 1500 and 1750, the Mendes family would be more inclined to be merchants; farmers/ranchers/mill owners; businessmen; dealers; cobblers and lawyers; and

-- Of the SERRANO family punished by the Inquisition: 34% were parents/professionals; 33% were mothers/widows; 33% were sons and daughters; 100% were sentenced to jail and the habit; 100% were punished in the reigns of the House of Bragança, between 1641 and 1750. Between 1500 and 1750, the Serrano family would be inclined to be small-time businessmen.

In short, it is as if one claimed that thousands of women named “Maria” were condemned by the Inquisition!

The Board of Directors,

Message from the President of the Portuguese Republic (2019)

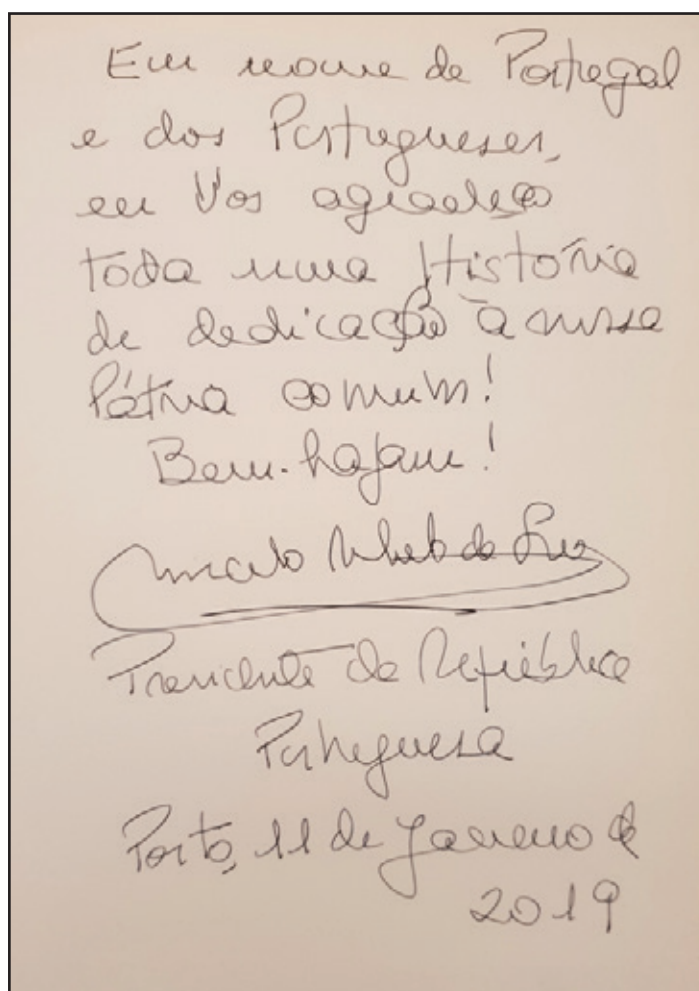
VII

On behalf of Portugal and the Portuguese people, I express my gratitude to you for a long history of dedication to our common homeland! Thank you!

Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa,

President of the Portuguese Republic

Oporto, 11th January 2019



B'nai B'rith International writes to the Prime Minister and honors the Community (2019)



B' N A I B' R I T H I N T E R N A T I O N A L

CHARLES O. KAUFMAN, PRESIDENT

January 27, 2019

Dear Prime Minister Costa,

It was my privilege to return to Portugal this past weekend to celebrate the Sabbath with Jewish religious leaders from around the world. They came from as near as Paris to as far away as Thailand. What an extraordinary experience of authentic religious expression.

Your warm and inspiring message of religious diversity was shared with about 400 people in attendance. It is also displayed with great pride and prominence in the Jewish Museum in Porto, across the street from the magnificent Kadoori Synagogue.

While the Inquisition left the earth scorched, I and B'nai B'rith, the largest and oldest Jewish membership organization in the world, founded in 1843, have seen in your glorious country how the almighty replenishes both the rich, open fields and his chosen people.

These remain urgent times for Jews around the world. However, Portugal is a blessed country, and its heart glows today with great warmth for people of all faiths. May your country grow from strength to strength in prosperity and may it bond forever with the Jewish people and the State of Israel.

Sincerely,

Charles O. Kaufman
President, B'nai B'rith International
1120 20th Street NW
Suite 300 N
Washington, D.C. 20036



THE GLOBAL VOICE OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

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Message from the Portuguese Prime Minister

January 24th, 2020

Jews were always present in the history of Portugal. With the establishment of the Inquisition, Jewish diasporas from Portugal benefited greatly the communities in which they established themselves, in cultural, artistic, scientific and economic terms, in Northern Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, the United States and other regions of the globe.

Contemporary Portugal, tolerant and open to the world, welcomes an increasing number of Sephardic Jews from the old and traditional Jewish communities of the Iberian Peninsula, to which Portuguese law recognizes the right to acquire nationality.

The Jewish Community of Oporto has been a key partner in this journey, has grown in size and is experiencing a period of intense dynamism and cultural and religious resurgence.

Portugal, which recently became a full member of the International Alliance for the Remembrance of the Holocaust, has a culture of tolerance that I wish to reaffirm today before the members of the Jewish Community in Oporto and the members of the international organizations present at the ceremony on Jan 24.

**The Prime Minister of Portugal,
António Costa**

Message from the Anti Defamation League to the Prime Minister (2020)

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January 29, 2020

H.E. Mr. António Costa
Prime Minister
São Bento Palace
Lisbon

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

I listened with great pleasure to your warm welcome, read aloud to the 400 people at the international Shabbat celebration in the beautiful Kadoorie Mekor Haim synagogue in Porto.

The Porto Jewish community itself is no less beautiful than its synagogue. Comprising members from around the world, it is diverse in origin, but unified in purpose; speaking many languages, while singing joyously in one voice. It is small, though perhaps the fastest growing Jewish community in Europe. The attention you gave to it with your congratulatory letter is well merited.

I had the honor of addressing the community and noted that Jews were being drawn to Portugal from elsewhere in Europe in part by the absence of anti-Semitism, a fitting phenomenon to reverse the anti-Semitic expulsion over five centuries ago. In a similar vein, I highlighted the Jewish community's partnership today with the Portuguese government and with the Catholic Church. The support and protection offered today are the polar opposite of the persecution which drove the Jewish community out so long ago.

I hope your schedule will allow for you to be present next year at this annual event, to witness in person the joyous support from around the world for the Jewish community of Porto, whose renaissance is an inspiration for the entire Jewish people.

Sincerely,

Andrew Srulovitch
Director, European Affairs
Asst. Director, International Affairs

Letter from B'nai B'rith International to the President of the Portuguese Republic (2020)

VII



B'NAI B'RITH INTERNATIONAL

CHARLES O. KAUFMAN, PRESIDENT

May 12, 2020

The Honorable Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa
President of the Portuguese Republic

Dear Mr. President,

In 2015, Portugal took a giant leap forward in granting Jews from traditional Sephardic communities the right of Portuguese nationality without the need to speak the native language or live in Portugal. A proposed change in the law would require people to physically live in Portugal. This proposal threatens not only the spirit of the law but sadly reverts to a time that we'd just as soon forget.

Change does not happen overnight. In a time of mobile societies, people throughout the world maintain dual citizenships, reflecting the great pride and loyalty they experienced in past homelands. Remember, at the time of the expulsion, people fled quickly, converted or were killed. People do not return 500 years later as quickly as they left or virtually disappeared. They dispersed to all corners of the earth. If the authors of the original law in 2015 were earnest and well-intended, they will hold to the spirit of the law.

Twice in the past 12 months, I had the great joy of visiting the Jewish communities of Lisbon and Oporto. During the first visit, Jewish leaders from at least 15 countries, representing the International Council of B'nai B'rith, heard a wide array of excellent speakers, including Catarina Vaz Pinto, the president of the Jewish community and the Israeli Ambassador to Portugal. They discussed the great contributions of Jews to the history, culture and economic development of your beautiful country. We attended a global conference at the University, an annual symposium about the Jews of Portugal in an exercise of great intellect and outstanding scholarship. I was privileged to inaugurate Oporto's remarkable Jewish Museum, which will become a magnet for global visitors.

Before embarking on B'nai B'rith's 2019 conference to Lisbon, a delegation met with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres about our planned meeting. He could not have been more pleased, and when we returned and met with him at the United Nations after, he was delighted to hear about B'nai B'rith's most positive and productive meeting.

I returned a few months ago to address more than 400 people at the magnificent Kadoorie Synagogue in Oporto during a weekend of inspiring religious observances and learning. The weekend was attended by the members of the growing local Jewish community, including students, business leaders of great import and other professionals; and rabbis from throughout Europe, the Far East, Russia, Australia, South America and North America.

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B'NAI B'RITH INTERNATIONAL

CHARLES O. KAUFMAN, PRESIDENT

The Jewish reawakening and growth in Portugal continues to manifest itself in many important ways, with kosher restaurants and hotels, the production and wide distribution of award-winning films, including one praised by Pope Francis. Finally, among numerous other activities in recent years, one Sephardic family donated 50 million euros to the Campalimaud Foundation and another paid for the digitization of the Inquisition files that were decaying for a lack of funding.

On behalf of B'nai B'rith International, founded in 1843, the global voice of the Jewish people, we implore you to halt attempts to modify Decree-Law No. 30-A/2015 in any way that would lessen or weaken the law promoting the right of Portuguese nationality.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Charles O. Kaufman

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MINUTES OF MEETING N° 86

The Board of Directors of CIP/CJP, religious corporation, tax identification number 592000982, with head office at Rua de Guerra Junqueiro, n.º 325, Porto, met on 23 September 2020 (twenty thousand and twenty) of the Common Era at 9 pm.

The agenda was as follows:

The wave of antisemitism sweeping Portugal between May and July 2020.

Board members present: Dias Ben Zion (President), Isabel Lopes (Vice President), Michael Rothwell (Treasurer), David Garrett (Member) and Eliran Graedge (Secretary).

The meeting was called to order with discussions and decisions having been reached on the following:

The last minutes of this Board are dated 14 April. It took five months to find the time, perception and inclination to produce these minutes. A pandemic wave and an antisemitic wave raged in Portuguese society. The country as we knew it (in terms of public health, economy and peace for the Jews) changed forever, although it is too soon to perceive and outline the more damaging effects.

On 28 April, the Socialist Party Parliamentary Group, through Constança Urbano de Sousa, a Socialist Party member of Parliament, submitted a draft amendment to the Nationality Law regarding naturalisation of Sephardic Jews. This established that before applying, said people should have lived for at least two years on Portuguese territory. The draft amendment (which basically killed a law that had been unanimously approved by Parliament in 2013 and did not require Sephardim to live in Portugal) was headed by a list of the reasons, emphasising “passports of convenience”, illicit advertising taking place in Israel and the word “business”, which the draft attributed to the Jewish Community of Lisbon, as if the latter had attributed illegalities to the Jewish Community of Oporto. The Board of the Jewish Community of Lisbon immediately contacted the Socialist Party Parliamentary Group and demanded a formal apology in writing, which was provided and later appeared in the newspapers.

From the start, the reasons behind the intended amendment to the Nationality Law were obvious. On the one hand, the virulent antisemitism of a group of people in the State apparatus, who wanted neither Jews, nor Jewish conservatism, or Israelis; on the other, the predatory publicity practised in Israel, where nationality is virtually for sale. Finally, the lashon hara of the Lisbon community against the Oporto community, which must have reached Parliament and the Government. Minutes n° 57 of this Board set out quite plainly what that gossip consisted of, over a period of five years.

To return to the Socialist Party’s draft amendment to the law, the Jewish communities of Oporto and Lisbon were quick to resist this change, as they could not understand the reason for so much haste and concern, considering that the law had never given rise to any problems. However, the antisemites were determined not to back down!

It was the beginning of an all-out war by the antisemites, led by that Constança, with the express support of the Portuguese Communist Party, the flag of the Soviet Union and an official online newspaper filled with opinion articles on the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. Other shameful antisemites joined the fray, in particular the editor of the newspaper *Público* (who wrote an editorial saying that all one needed to become a Portuguese citizen was thousands of euros), a statistician who spends his life speaking of others (who said that the communities were like bottomless pits devouring applications), one Socialist Party employee (who said that there was every justification for putting an end to the law) as well as others. In the midst of their attacks, the antisemites always avoided one particular subject: the positive effects of the nationality law, that is to say, the major

growth in the Jewish population in Portugal, the development of religious life and Jewish culture and the billion euro investments made by Sephardim in the national economy.

On the part of the law and the Sephardic Jews, the defence consisted of meetings with personalities, expositions by the communities to Parliament and the Prime Minister, opinion articles by Portuguese Jews (Michael Rothwell and Leon Amiras on the side of CIP/CJP; Esther Mucznik and José Ruah on the side of CIL), open letters from B'nai B'rith Internacional, the Anti-Defamation League and the European Jewish Congress, and the public intervention by senior politicians and other important personalities in Portuguese society (Jorge Sampaio, Manuel Alegre, Vera Jardim, Maria de Belém Roseira, Alberto Martins, Padre Victor Melícias, Ribeiro e Castro, Ricardo Sá Fernandes, Rui Tavares and many others). Prominent, in particular, were the contributions by “PS historical figures” (not only for what their actions in public, but mainly for their influence on the party core) and José Ribeiro e Castro (with half a dozen articles that deserve their place in history, given their fairness, technicity and accuracy).

In the midst of this confusion, Constança Urbano de Sousa managed to find one example, one single example, among 16.750 people – who had a passport of convenience. Blaise Baquiche, a British citizen specialising in European policy, was accused of stating in an international magazine that he had only requested Portuguese nationality because of Brexit, as there was nothing linking him to Portugal. The answer was published in an opinion article in the newspaper Público: Blaise Baquiche, a relation of Henry Tillo and Alain Piccioto, two distinguished members of CIP/CJP since 1960, refuted Constança de Sousa and asked her not to follow the example of Great Britain.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister intervened and the Socialist Party altered its original proposal, so that the mandatory two-year period of residency was no longer required, only a current and effective link to Portugal, to be defined if at all in the subsequent regulation. Generally speaking, the Communities accepted the need for an effective link to Portugal but saw no need to alter Article 6[7] of the Law, considering that Article 24-A of the Regulation might be altered accordingly by the Government. The Law once approved unanimously by the Assembly of the Republic should remain untouched!

In the presence of the President of CIL, CIP/CJP carried out the public launch of its film “The Light of Judah”. The resulting revenue was given to the Oporto Food Bank and to three Catholic institutions linked to the Diocese. On 15 June, at the request of CIP/CJP, a meeting was held with the Government, in this case with the Foreign Minister and the Justice Minister. Present on behalf of CIP/CJP were the Chief Rabbi Daniel Litvak and the Board members Dias Ben Zion (President), Michael Rothwell (Treasurer) and David Garrett (Member). We were asked if we would oppose a final time limit for the law, to which we replied:

As representatives of 20% of the world Jewish population we will never be willing to accept an amendment to the 2013 law, such as fixing a time limit, mandatory residency and speaking Portuguese.

Having heard the communities, the Government should handle the legislative process and improve the Regulation as regards the “link to Portugal”, before more damage is caused to everyone. Social media networks are filled with slander against the Jews, who are accused of selling Portuguese passports because of a mishandled legislative process, lacking a State view, lacking sensitivity, lacking respect for the work of the Jewish communities of Oporto and Lisbon, and linked only to the stereotype of money and covertly to corruption.

We were summoned to a hearing at the Assembly of the Republic but refused to attend, we would rather that the 16.750 new Portuguese who were slandered be heard, as well as the members of Parliament of the work group, who should set down in their minutes a description of how the proposal of the Socialist Party Parliamentary Group was forced on them, with slander against the communities.

The “curve” of the Sephardic Jews has flattened (i.e., the monthly number of requests is falling) and in two or three decades possibly 500 thousand people may be interested, by which time Portugal will have partially regained its Jewish community.

The effects of the law have been remarkable: the Jewish Community of Oporto is the world Jewish community of Oporto, with members from forty countries, and billions of euros invested in Portuguese society by Sephardic Jews.

The meeting with the Government ended on this note: “We will all work for the prosperity of Portugal”.

There was a debate in Parliament about the “Sephardic Law”. The Foreign Minister, who had been present days earlier at the meeting with CIP/CJP, reduced the positive effects of the nationality law to a “few tourists visiting Portugal” as well as greater standing for Portugal in the concert of nations. In turn, the Justice Minister, who had also been present, said that the law (as an act of symbolic reparation) should have a time limit and that the entire process was in the hands of the Communities, which is not true! The Registrar (who has always said that the Sephardim are the happiest foreigners when granted Portuguese nationality) was summoned to Parliament to underline the large number of Sephardic applications. One genealogist was summoned to question the certification process as if it did more than just seek traditional Jewish families from Sepharad (which does not require genealogy). Other hearings took place with the sole object of destroying the law, headed by a clearly antisemitic and foolish woman. CIL was present at the meetings. CIP/CJP refused to take part in this circus. It claimed that the 16.750 new (Sephardic) Portuguese should be heard and that it would reply in writing to Parliament, if so requested. It was not.

At the end of the debate, which essentially aimed to turn the Portuguese population against the Jews, the Social Democratic Party submitted a new proposal: applicants would have to comply with at least one effective circumstance of concrete connection, fixed in the law under the *numerus clausus* regime. The Communities protested loudly and publicly. CIP/CJP considered that the PSD proposal was a “constitutional mistake and a political mistake” and said that it “did not accept discriminations in the 21st century”. CIL, on the other hand, ordered the immediate suspension of all amendments to the law, prosecution of which have since the very beginning merited nothing but the greatest condemnation.

At the end of this dispute, the Socialist Party announced a new (fourth) draft amendment, which received the favourable vote of Parliament: the Government was authorised to amend Article 24-A of the Regulation to “ensure fulfilment of proven objective requirements of connection to Portugal”. Naturally, the intention of this draft is also to destroy the law, but things will not be as easy as some people think. A new phase is beginning, this time with the Government. CIP/CJP has already prepared a document to send to the Justice Minister, as soon as the President of the Republic forwards this legal amendment for publication, which will probably occur next October or November.

So far, and seen overall, it has been a fight worth fighting. Three murderous amendments to the law have failed and the Portuguese Jewish Communities have shown that they are much stronger than they were five years ago. We believe that the amendment to the Regulation, carried out by the Government, will not prevent Sephardim from continuing to obtain Portuguese nationality and to strengthen the local Jewish community. Although the number will fall considerably, candidates will on the other hand be of a higher social standing, which is also of interest to CIP/CJP.

The effects of the antisemitic campaign:

I – The first effect consists of a partnership between B’nai B’rith Internacional and CIP/CJP. There is already a B’nai B’rith group in Portugal, whose main mission is to defend the Jewish community. No association was created in Portugal, there are no presidents or vice-presidents at B’nai B’rith Portugal. The President is in Washington. By now, he has already sent two letters, one to Eurojust and the other to the Sonae Group (which owns the newspaper *Público*), requesting an explanation for the antisemitic wave that swept through Portugal.

II – The second effect involves the much greater alienation between CIP/CJP and CIL. As foreseen about two years ago, in Minutes 57 of this Board, the gossip by members of that community

could cause a huge problem regarding the law. Every defamation campaign against the law started with the Member of Parliament Constança Urbano de Sousa, ill-judged, uncultivated, unqualified and married to an anonymous German Jew from Lisbon, who said that the law was a business opportunity for the Oporto community. The rottenness within CIL comes from a long way back. One day, the law will end. Those responsible for it are in Lisbon. The Oporto community will have grown enormously in all regards (as it continues to grow), while none of its members has ever spoken ill of anyone at all.

III – The third effect regards the inaction of the State of Israel, which failed to defend Portuguese Jews attacked in every possible way by a group of State antisemites. As far as Israel is concerned, it was no more than “a democratic debate on the subject of immigration laws”, which is an insult. The religious antisemitism was quite obvious, as was the political antisemitism. Even the President of the Portuguese Republic confessed to persons close to CIP/CJP that all this was “a Palestine issue of the Foreign Minister”. The Jewish Community of Oporto (which, proportionately, is the Jewish community of the Diaspora that provides the most aid to Israel) wrote to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to say that Israel should defend Jews wherever they are attacked. The response was a regrettable standard reply by an aide, demonstrating both ignorance and bad faith. CIP/CJP replied that the positions of both are irreconcilable.

The Danger of a Dreyfus Case:

The campaign by the antisemites made it clear that, in the future, when there is but one simple suspicious case regarding a certificate of Sephardism that was wrongly issued by either community, there will be a nationwide scandal that will agitate communication agencies, corrupt journalists, the police and a whole range of miserable destroyers. Watch out for a possible Dreyfus case!

The rules of war say that a convenient Dreyfus case should target a convenient applicant from a convenient country. A politically correct case for antisemites, the newspaper, the Portuguese legal system. And here, one word clearly emerges: Russia.

Almost six years after the “Sephardic Law” was approved, about forty Russian Jews obtained approval from CIP/CJP. A small number, but one that raised various issues that should inspire concern and fear: the “Cold War” climate between Russia and NATO, the Schengen concerns over that giant Asian territory and the brutal antisemitism that has taken over a Portuguese political sector with major access to the press and the police. All of this represents a danger! May these minutes serve for the certification department to reinforce all its care with Russian Jews of Sephardic origin!

An example of how justice operates in Portugal. Some years ago, the lives of both a very honest director of the Immigration and Border Service and a Minister of State were destroyed because of two bottles of wine and the manner in which both spoke on the telephone about legal measures that might be expedited. Legal Measures, in capital letters! It was judged as “corruption” in criminal proceedings that took years, led to people’s assets being seized, their Holocaust in the public arena, to the extent that that very honest man, with grandchildren, was jailed and received no salary for more than two years! In Portugal and elsewhere many are expecting a “suspicious case” which will be transformed into a “major crime” by the newspapers, with scandalous news, imprisonment, the destruction of our community and so on! It was thus with Dreyfus!

A few significant notes on the Jewish community of Russia, possibly the community that has shown the most progress and development in the modern world. What happens there in terms of religious Jewish life (synagogues, kolelin, *kosher* restaurants, schools, etc.) and cultural life (cinemas, museums, publishers, etc.) is a miracle, largely aided by the relationship between the local Chief Rabbinate (headed by Berel Lazar) and the Kremlin (headed by Vladimir Putin).

Russia has many Jews who originally came from Sepharad. The 2015 Executive Act, designed to restore Portuguese nationality to descendants of Sephardic Jews of Portuguese origin, mentions the main destinations as being the Mediterranean Basin, the Middle East and Northern Europe

and beyond. However, other Sephardic Jews did not go further, instead looking for places where they thought it would be easier to engage in their profession or go about their business. They lived in lands where the predominant communities were Ashkenazi. In some cases, when justified by their number, they formed their own synagogues, which did not last for many years, depending on the frequent travels of their members. They almost always ended by joining the predominant communities, compelled to adapt to their uses and customs as well as their dialects.

According to CIP/CJP criteria, established in 2015, in addition to Jews of Sephardic communities of Portuguese origin, *“Portuguese nationality may be granted to descendants of Portuguese Sephardic Jews (...) to all those descendants of Portuguese Sephardic Jews who after leaving Portugal, due to religious persecution, travelled far and wide, and who maintain an emotional connection to Portugal, even if, by virtue of circumstances, they have become part of other Jewish Communities, whether Sephardic or Ashkenazi, whether in an organized manner or not, and whether or not actively belonging to a community or a Synagogue”*.

As regards Ashkenazi Jews in general, says Inácio Steinhardt in his work *“Judeus Portugueses Esquecidos – Sefarditas em comunidades asquenazim”*, published online in March 2017: *“We cannot ignore and forget that important part of the Portuguese Jewish Diaspora, so difficult to document, and limit their rights to ancestral nationality. In such cases, opinions must ascribe greater weight to generally reliable family traditions, of an ancestral Iberian origin, and the minor details of religious rites and gastronomy, which are revealed in the questionnaires and that only the experts can detect.”*

What legal and factual criteria authorise this certification?

As part Article 6[7] of the Nationality Law and Article 24-A paragraphs 2, 3 c), 4 and 5 b) of the Regulation of the Nationality Law, proven objective elements of a link to connection are, among others, “family surnames”, “family idiom” and “family memory”.

As regards “family memory”, it is not merely a question of the applicant invoking family memories of belonging to Sepharad. They all claim that. There must be a strong testimony to such belonging provided by the local Chief Rabbinate, provided it has Halachic credibility within the Jewish world or before the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and the Beit Din of London, which is the same thing. That is the case of the Russian Rabbinate!

In addition to having to present to CIP/CJP their full identification, address and family tree, applicants must also bring a certificate from the Chief Rabbi of Russia, Berel Lazar, or Rabbi Alexander Boroda, number two at the Russian Rabbinate and President of the Federation of the Jewish Communities of Russia, a cultured religious man who works with the Chief Rabbi. In either case, it is a question of a certification that is as trustworthy as any produced by Rabbi Isak Haleva of Turkey. Said certificate must declare that the applicant is Jewish, descended from the Sephardic communities of Portugal and Spain that were expelled in the 15th century, and that his or her style of life is rooted in typical customs and usages of Sephardic culture, together with a list of reliable witnesses, a signature, the place and the date.

The businessman Roman Abramovich is the most famous of the very few Jews who so far have obtained a certificate of Sephardism from CIP/CJP. On 16 July 2020, he personally requested this certificate from CIP/CJP, also submitting the legal supporting documents which included a valid document issued by Rabbi Alexander Boroda, stating that he is a Jew descended from the Portuguese Sephardic community.

The Oporto Rabbinate approved the case based on the documentation as a whole and on an analysis of this particular situation. The State of Israel had performed a preliminary verification (attesting to the fact that the candidate is Jewish and an Israeli citizen). Another verification was carried out by the Rabbi and President of the Federation of the Jewish Communities of Russia (who attested to the candidate’s Judaism and Portuguese Sephardism, even in terms of rites, style of life, traditions and food customs). Also to be taken into account was the fact that the applicant is one of the major billionaires of Europe and the world, whose personal fortune could buy many “golden

visas”, so that in actual fact he would have no material interest in becoming a citizen of a small country on the brink of bankruptcy.

The 10 points that CIP/CJP set out on its official website, for all the world to see:

Preliminary notes:

– *In 2013/2015 legislation was enacted restoring Sephardim’s right to Portuguese nationality without them having to live in Portugal or to speak Portuguese, and applicants need a certificate of Sephardism, which can be obtained through the Portuguese Jewish communities (Article 24 number 3 c) or the communities of origin of the applicants abroad (Article 24 number 5);*

– *In its contacts with the Portuguese Government (in September 2019 and June 2020) and Parliament (in March and May 2020) the Jewish Community of Oporto has always been in favour of the requirement that Sephardic applicants have a connection in the present to Portugal that is in the spirit of the 2013/2015 law and can combat the abusive advertising that is practised in Israel;*

– *The sovereignty of the Portuguese State which can end or change this law and any other law at any time is not in question, but a group of agents of the State and some puppets promoting antisemitism in all its forms is unacceptable;*

– *There is no intention to accuse specific people for the climate of antisemitism that was experienced in Portugal and that will certainly have harmful effects in the future, but the procedure to improve the law could and should have been implemented without jeopardizing the image and security of Sephardic Jews and the Portuguese Jewish communities;*

In light of the above, the Board of Directors and Rabbinate of the Jewish Community of Oporto, after consulting B’nai B’rith International, summarize in the following points the situation that occurred in Portugal between April and July 2020.

1. The outbreak of the pandemic and mandatory isolation in Portugal were seized on by a group of antisemites in an attempt to destroy the 2013/2015 legislation restoring Sephardim’s right to Portuguese nationality. The attempt to impose a two-year residence period in Portugal before the nationality application (later replaced by a current connection to Portugal) did not come from the far-right or the far-left, but from the political centre.

The draft alteration to the law contained a transition period until January 2022; proof that the law was not a source of any problems. There had not been a single suspicious case.

Then the small group of antisemites started a significant smear campaign. Sephardic Jews in general and Portuguese Jewish communities were humiliated by the antisemites who joined forces and used all possible means.

A short summary:

antisemitic stereotypes (such as “material interests”, “business” and “money”),

antisemitic sentences (like “the applicants only want passports of convenience”, that is, they are second-rate Portuguese),

antisemitic exaggerations (like “there are tens of millions of candidates”),

antisemitic comments (such as “Sephardic applicants have children and spouses” and “Sephardic Jews are born every minute”),

antisemitic feeling against Israel (manufacturing a scandal with the number of applicants from the largest Sephardic community in the world, and condemning abusive advertising only in Israel, not other countries),

antisemitic slanders without any evidence (“to obtain citizenship the applicants only need to pay thousands of euros to genealogists, lawyers and Portuguese Jewish communities”),

antisemitic falsifications (clipping phrases from official websites of the communities out of context in order to distort their meaning),

antisemitic lies (falsely saying that the law necessarily requires applicants to have a Portuguese name or to speak Ladino),

antisemitic omissions (not presenting one simple example of a convenience passport and omitting any positive effect of the law, which include the investments in Portugal by Sephardic Jews and the growth of Portuguese Jewish communities), and

other antisemitic behaviour during a pandemic, such as historical revisionism, spreading hate in the sewers of social media and attempts to use journalist friends, media agents, columnists, professional slanderers and mediocre men who do nothing to dignify others to manufacture scandals against the Portuguese Jewish communities.

All of these facts are objective, there are written or recorded records of them.

Dr. Joshua Ruah, of the Jewish community of Lisbon, said this was a case of “pure religious antisemitism”, a “reliving of the ‘Invasion of the Jews’” (a 1924 anti-Semitic book). In turn, Chief Rabbi Daniel Litvak of the Jewish Community of Oporto said that “Israel is the main target”. The fact that the majority of the applications came from Israel (made by Jewish families expelled from Arab and Muslim countries in the twentieth century) sounded the alarm. These people were unwanted. Thousands of Jews, of Israelis and, worse still, of Israeli Jews.

2. In an attempt to mobilise the Portuguese people against Sephardic Jews, the antisemites brandished arguments like “convenience passports” (with no specific example given), “deals for genealogists and lawyers” (who are freelance professionals independent of the Jewish communities), “abusive advertising in Israel” (also carried out in Goa, Brazil and other countries) and “tens of millions of candidates” (fully aware that the Iberian Sephardic diaspora comprises less than 2 million people, possibly one-fifth of whom may come to apply for Portuguese nationality).

3. To demonstrate their complete indifference to the positive effects of the law, those intending to destroy it never devoted a single word to the billions of Euros invested in the Portuguese economy by Sephardic Jews, to the huge surge in the Portuguese Jewish community and to the new solidarity networks, prayer rooms, restaurants, as well as Jewish centres and museums in Portugal, in addition to ecumenical projects, historical films and an extraordinary rise in Israeli tourism.

The Jewish Community of Oporto asked Parliament to hear, in writing, the 16750 new Portuguese who have benefited from the so-called Sephardic Law in the last five years.

4. In an attempt to create a conflict or an atmosphere of tension between Jews and Muslims, the people behind this endeavour to destroy the law began to wave the banner of Muslim discrimination. This is doubly antisemitic for, like the Sephardim, Muslims of Portuguese origin can apply for Portuguese nationality. This level of distortion of the truth plainly shows the antisemitic state of mind behind it all.

As a leader of the Portuguese Jewish community wrote, “all possible means were used!”

5. In an attempt to discredit the commissions of the Jewish communities of Lisbon and Oporto (invited by the State to certify candidates’ Sephardic heritage, given their knowledge of the Jewish world) the people who never devoted a word to the billions of Euros invested in Portugal by Sephardic Jews began to use the “money” stereotype against the community fees charged to analyse the applications which are intended to promote Jewish religion, Jewish life, Jewish culture and to help brothers and sisters of faith, in partnership with the largest Jewish organizations in the world. Fees from the Jewish world to the Jewish world, this was the “business” that antisemites were talking about for months!

A highly regarded representative of Lisbon community's committee was accused on a television programme of not being impartial as she was Jewish; in turn, the commission of the Oporto community, headed by the Oporto Rabbinate, was accused of using Halacha (the Jewish law) to verify if candidates were Jewish. It was as if the Jews could not be certified by a law dedicated to Sephardic Jews, but only Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, etc. The applicant for Portuguese nationality must be Jewish in accordance with Halacha or have at least one Jewish parent, without which it is not possible to claim a traditional connection with the Portuguese Sephardic Community ("tradição de pertença").

The antisemites also said that applicants were obliged to have a Portuguese name or speak Ladino, a falsehood consistent with antisemites, trying to corrupt journalists to repeat the falsehood, disdaining the commissions, showing no interest in visiting their archives, and not citing even one example of a wrongly issued Certificate of Sephardic Heritage.

No one wanted to know how almost 200 thousand people were certified in Spain in under four years, they were more interested in knowing how the two Portuguese communities were able to certify one-third of that number over a much longer period of time.

6. In an attempt to set the Lisbon and Oporto communities against each other, the people behind this endeavour to destroy the law started saying that the former accused the latter of not being "lay", that is, it only certified Jews so as not to lose its operability and not to be slowed down by complex cases of non-Jews. The Lisbon community never said any such thing. In March 2015 it was agreed between the Justice Ministry and the communities (there are written documents and correspondence on this matter) that the Jewish Community of Oporto would focus its activity on the cases of Jews descended from traditional families of the Sephardic communities (for instance, the Turkish Jews of the Abibe, Haleva, Alcalay and Benveniste families and the Moroccan Jews of the Abitbol, Athias, Sebag and Zagury families) while the commission of the Lisbon community – on which sit several historians – would also accept for analysis the cases of non-Jews, a task that in addition to everything else involves time-consuming perusals of palaeographic transcriptions of Inquisition processes, lengthy genealogies and the verification of the status of being a "New Christian" (and not an "Old Christian") from the forebears of the candidates.

7. In an attempt to create a scandal about the different criteria and numbers presented by the two communities, the people behind this endeavour to destroy the law sent journalist friends to enter the synagogues in Oporto and Lisbon. They were not successful because in the meantime the Justice Minister explained in Parliament that the different criteria used by the two communities explained the different numbers presented by both, with full integrity. To provide just one small example: in 2018, the Civil Registry Office of Portugal had to reject a nationality application by a minister from one of the largest countries in the world. He was the son of a Jewish father (but not a Sephardi from Sepharad) and a Jewish mother (who had converted to Judaism and claimed to have Portuguese ancestry), but this reputable citizen was unable to obtain a certificate from either of the communities who both alleged its legal inadmissibility.

There was an attempt to use journalistic corruption to create fake news, but journalists in general behaved with dignity. They found such strong explanations from the communities that once, in order not to disappoint their antisemitic sources, they went as far as to decide not to publish or show the interview with the Chief Rabbi of Oporto, a Jewish religious authority who is familiar with the Jewish world and the Hebrew language. It was very disrespectful to the Chief Rabbi who was wasting time being interviewed just a few moments before a Sephardic wedding and on a Shabbat eve for an interview that would not even be broadcast. Antisemites hate Jewish culture.

8. To take advantage of the illegal advertising practised in Israel, the people behind this endeavour to destroy the law tried to link said advertising to the Portuguese Jewish communities. Again, the methods used were appalling.

Three years ago, the Jewish Community of Oporto hired Leon Amiras, an Israeli lawyer, to try to set advertising guidelines for operators and lawyers, forbidding anything that might discredit Portugal's name and its flag, and reducing permissible advertising to an explanation of the steps in the law and the rights of Portuguese citizens.

The fact is that Portuguese diplomacy never did a thing to stop the abusive advertising. Was the move of the Oporto community praised? On the contrary. The antisemites used the name and the image of the lawyer as if he himself were an agent of illegal advertising in Israel, in the pay of the Oporto community. Total bad faith.

The antisemites were always condemning abusive advertising for Jews in Israel, not for non-Jews in other countries such as India and Brazil.

9. To create a favourable environment for the imposition of a final deadline in the law, those wishing its destruction attempted to reduce it to a symbolic act of the past, a historic reparation. However, the preamble to Executive Act 30-A/2015, has a vision of the future and foresees "the exercise of the right of return of the descendants of Sephardic Jews of Portuguese origin who wish to do so", explaining that the communities expelled from Sepharad settled "in some regions of the Mediterranean (Gibraltar, Morocco, Southern France, Italy, Croatia, Greece, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Algeria), northern Europe (London, Nantes, Paris, Antwerp, Brussels, Rotterdam and Amsterdam), Brazil, Antilles and the US, among others", with particular emphasis on the Megorashim who founded the modern Jewish Community of Lisbon: "Descendants of Sephardic Jews who had taken refuge in Morocco and Gibraltar returned to Portugal in the early nineteenth century".

In 2019, President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa visited the Oporto synagogue before two hundred members of the Jewish Community, commemorating, he said "historic relations, the past, but also the present and the future."

10. The actions of the small group of antisemites will go down in history and have nothing to do with the Portuguese people, as not even the skinheads were seduced by such broad antisemitism. Antisemites tried to mobilize Portuguese society against Jews, reduced the effects of the law to passports of convenience, made Sephardic Jews into second-class citizens, linked Portuguese Jewish communities to alleged business with Portuguese nationality, etc. The one thing the antisemites forgot to do was to get some friendly police to start an investigation based on anonymous reports from themselves, or another similar action, a Dreyfus case.

An international human rights organization is creating a base in Portugal so that what happened in recent months will never happen again without consequences for antisemites. For being antisemitic, the antisemites will pay a price (professional and international), regardless of whether they are deputies, editorialists, corrupt journalists or simple mediocre men and gossipers.

What happened in Portugal would never have happened in France, the United States or Canada. The latter, falsely accused in Parliament of being "concerned" with the passports of the Portuguese Sephardim, has established cooperation protocols with local Jewish communities to collaborate on Jewish immigration and reception.

Andrew Srulevitch, head of the Anti-Defamation League in European territories, visited Oporto a year ago and wrote that Portugal was possibly the best refuge for Jews in Europe. Many things have happened since then. The indiscreet return of many Jews, particularly from Israel, gave rise to the emergence of State antisemites who, 500 years later, have recreated a Jewish question in Portuguese society. The targets were Sephardic Jews of Portuguese genetic and cultural heritage, as well as the Portuguese Jewish communities. Despite the attacks, the Portuguese Jewish communities never raised the alarm in international Jewish institutions that have a unique understanding of the European battleground and are connected with the UN, EU, UNESCO, UNHCR. They wished always to protect Portugal's good name and were defended by renowned personalities of Portuguese society, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church and less visibly, by the Prime Minister and the President of the Republic, both of whom consider that the Sephardim are not only Portuguese but Portuguese of national interest.

VII

Supported by philanthropic Jewish families and having its own financial resources, the Oporto Jewish Community and Oporto Rabbinate are not there to please everyone but to support the development of Jewish life, disseminate Jewish culture and history, and promote a better, fairer and more equitable world.

Antisemitism and antisemitic groups will from now on be dealt with by B'nai B'rith International.

Board of Directors and Oporto Rabbinate,

Elul, 5780

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There being no further business, the meeting ended at about 10.30pm after which these minutes were drawn up, which only written, read and approved will be signed by all those present.

Anti Defamation League highlights importance of Community Museums (2021)

VII

Jonathan Greenblatt

CEO and National Director



March 3, 2021

Mr. Dias Ben Zion
President
Jewish Community of Porto
R. de Guerra Junqueiro 340
Porto

Dear Mr. Ben Zion,

Please accept our congratulations on the opening of the new Jewish Museum and the new Holocaust Museum in Porto. We wish you great success in the missions of both museums.

Having a Jewish museum will provide visitors with more knowledge about our religion, customs, culture, and history. Our people have much to be proud of and I am confident your new museum will add to the respect and admiration many have for the Jewish people. Familiarity with Jews is also an important defense against antisemitism. The more people know about the Jewish people, the less susceptible they are to hateful conspiracy theories and malign stereotypes.

The Holocaust museum will educate visitors from Portugal and beyond about the greatest tragedy that our people have suffered and impart the lessons that all must heed: Don't be silent in the face of evil. Don't be indifferent in the face of injustice. Portugal has a hero to look up in Aristides de Sousa Mendes, who saved tens of thousands of Jews from the murderous Nazi regime, and we hope he will become a role model for many more Portuguese thanks to your efforts.

While the Porto Jewish community may be small in number, it is great in impact. Thank you for the many benefits you have brought to the global Jewish community and to Portugal.

With warmest regards,

Jonathan Greenblatt
CEO and National Director

Letter from the European Jewish Association to the President of the Republic (2022)



Prof. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa
President of the Portuguese Republic
Lisbon, Portugal.

Brussels, 3 February 2022

Dear Mister President,

As a leading Jewish organisation in Europe in the fight against antisemitism, our task is to monitor, evaluate and report on antisemitic incidents across the Continent. It is also our duty and function to alert Heads of State and key decision makers where discourse and debate begins to veer strongly in an antisemitic direction in their respective countries.

It is in this context that I write. We are increasingly aware of media reporting in Portugal in relation to the granting of Portuguese citizenship to Jewish People under the Law of Return. Some of the commentary and actions taken subsequent to the decision are of increasing concern.

Let me state from the outset that we commend and applaud the Portuguese Government and the Portuguese people for having taken such a progressive standpoint in facing history and making amends for the historic persecution of Jews. During a time where antisemitism and Holocaust denial is on the rise across the world, though this law, Portugal demonstrated true leadership which should serve as an inspiration in how countries should face the past and actively contribute to a more tolerant future.

It is therefore with regret, and in light of Portugal's positive leadership in this area, to follow and read some of the discussion and commentary on this subject over the past weeks, in particular with regards to Mr Roman Abramovich, a high-profile figure and therefore a focal point.

It is apparent that a small number of opinion-leaders have been using Mr. Abramovich's citizenship to cast a shade on the Jewish community, both by questioning their integrity and by exploiting antisemitic tropes.

We have observed comments referring to the Jewish community as a "passport mafia" and stating that the community are selling passports "to whoever is willing to pay for it". These comments are unacceptable and should have no place in our society today. They play to the basest instincts of the anti-Semite, and simply reheat for a modern audience, the trope of the 'money-hungry unprincipled' Jew.

Considering these statements have been widely published across several media outlets, we would caution Portuguese media in allowing their platforms being used for the distribution and repetition of antisemitic slurs.

We also note that certain Portuguese opinion leaders, who have previously been involved in high-profile antisemitic incidents, have been contributing to this debate.

European Jewish Association | Rue du Cornet 22, 1040 Brussels | office@ejassociation.eu | www.ejassociation.eu



Needless to say, individuals with a known bias who have made antisemitic remarks in the past should have no role in acting as experts on matters relating to the Jewish community.

We are not aware of the details behind the inquiry initiated by the Portuguese authorities; however, we would urge authorities to make decisions based on facts and only facts. The positive decision and leadership shown by Portuguese authorities must be defended from slur, slander and pushback from those whose objective is to undermine and perhaps ultimately overturn the Law and return. We urge you to remain steadfast in the face of this growing chorus of those who are seeking to build a general distrust towards the Jewish community and its faith leaders.

It is our hope that, going forward, this debate will be based on facts and leave no room for antisemitic slurs, nor the amplifying of antisemitic voices, whose dangers I need not underline to your good office.

Yours Faithfully,

Rabbi Menachem Margolin
 Founder and Chairman

European Jewish Association | Rue du Cornet 22, 1040 Brussels | office@ejassociation.eu | www.ejassociation.eu

Letter from the World Jewish Agency (2022)



Jerusalem, AdarII 26, 5782
March 29, 2022

חבר הנאמנים
Board of Governors

Mr. Berel Rosenberg
Jewish Community of Oporto

Dear Mr. Rosenberg,

We have been informed that your community has named the Jewish Agency as the beneficiary of your community's assets in the event that it ceases to exist.

We are honored that the community chose the Jewish Agency for Israel for this purpose. We greatly appreciate your recognition of the special standing of the Jewish Agency for Israel as the largest Jewish non-profit as well as being the organization representing the widest range of the different parts of the Jewish people, however, even so, we are touched by the concrete step you have taken, that translates this into reality.

We wish you and your community every success in the future and sincerely hope that the procedure you have formalized will only come to fruition in the event that the whole community will make Aliyah, by choice.

Sincerely,

Yaakov Hagoel
Chairman, World Zionist Organization
Acting Chairman, The Jewish Agency for Israel

Chairman, Board of Governors
The Jewish Agency for Israel

Cc: Ms. Amira Ahronoviz, Director General
Mr. Josh Schwarcz, Secretary General
Mr. Moshe Ashirie, CFO

Letter from B'tsalmo (2022)

To:

The leader of the Jewish community in Portugal

Mr. David Ariel

22/05/2022

Shalom,

Re: Words of encouragement and support because of the hard days that the community is facing and an offer of help

1. I would like to express my support for you given the wave of anti-Semitism and attacks against you from certain elements in the Portuguese government.
2. From my personal knowledge of you, I am sure that all of your actions were conducted in the most honest and legal manner for the good of Portugal.
3. I have approached the Israeli ambassador to the UN Mr. Gilad Erdan so that he would intervene immediately to discuss this with secretary general of the UN, who is a former Prime Minister of Portugal.
4. In addition, I have approached the Minister of the Interior of Israel, Ayelet Shaked, with a request that she stop the granting of Israeli citizenship to foreign athletes from Portugal until the principle of mutuality is restored, attacks on the Jewish community are stopped, the police investigation is terminated, and citizens of Israel are again allowed to receive Portuguese citizenship. This issue has appeared in various news media.
5. I am here for you on every matter and I will be very happy to help to the best of my ability with this problem.

Shai Glick

CEO B'Tzalmo



From Brooklyn to Porto

By Marilyn Flitterman, the oldest member of the Oporto Jewish Community

I was born in Brooklyn, but my parents, in their wisdom, decided, shortly thereafter, to move to the new frontier, the Borough of Queens, and bought a house in a little town called Laurelton on the South Shore of Long Island. Queens, one of the five Boroughs of New York City, was named Queens in 1683, in honor of the then Queen of England, Catherine of Braganza, consort of King Charles II.

Who would have thought that years later, this slim Portuguese connection would turn into a full-time life?

Growing up in Laurelton in the 1930s and 1940s was idyllic. There were families of many nationalities living on my street and my little friends were Irish, Italian, Norwegian as well as Jewish. There was a Reform Synagogue, walking distance from our house, (as was my Elementary School) called the

Laurelton Jewish Center, and my mother would take my brother and me there to attend services on the High Holy Days and my brother had his Bar Mitzvah there. My mother lived in that house for the rest of her days, and I did, too, until I graduated from University – Barnard College, part of Columbia University. I loved New York so much that I wanted to stay there for as long as I could.

My mother's friends in Laurelton were all Jewish ladies and they would get together once a week to play Bridge or Mah Jong. My mother was also very active in Jewish affairs, traveled to Israel many times and

served for many years as the President of the local Hadassah chapter.

Fast forward to 1970. My late husband, Harry Flitterman, at that time, had business interests in Portugal, and also in India. He asked me in which of the two places I would prefer to live. The answer, of course, was Portugal. He then went to Portugal to find a house for us. The children and I stayed in New York until he did. In June 1970, the children and I arrived in Porto and we all took up residence in Praia da Granja.

There we were delighted to have found not only a big beautiful house but also a big, beautiful Synagogue in Porto, but sad to see that it was always almost empty, with only a few families ever being there with us.

Nothing changed very much for the Synagogue for the next thirty to forty years – until one day someone came along to breathe new life into the old, empty Synagogue. His name: David Ariel. The congregation grew, and grew, and now it makes me happy to see that the Synagogue has finally more than fulfilled its destiny.

Oporto, January 2, 2022

Marilyn Flitterman



De Brooklyn ao Porto

Por Marilyn Flitterman, associada mais velha da CIP/CJP

Nasci em Brooklyn, mas os meus pais, na sua sabedoria, decidiram, pouco depois, mudar-se para Borough of Queens e compraram uma casa na pequena cidade de Laurelton, na costa sul de Long Island. Queens, um dos cinco bairros da cidade de Nova York, tomou esse nome em 1683, em homenagem à então rainha da Inglaterra, Catarina de Bragança, consorte do rei Carlos II. Quem diria que, anos mais tarde, esta ligação ténue que eu tinha a Portugal se transformaria numa vida a tempo inteiro?

Crescer em Laurelton nas décadas de 1930 e 1940 foi idílico. Havia famílias de muitas nacionalidades morando na minha rua. Os meus amiguinhos eram irlandeses, italianos, noruegueses e também judeus. Havia uma Sinagoga do movimento da Reforma a uma curta distância de nossa casa, tal como a minha escola primária, chamada de Laurelton Jewish Center. A minha mãe levava-me a mim e ao meu irmão a assistir aos cultos nos Grandes Dias Sagrados. O meu irmão fez o seu Bar Mitzvah naquela Sinagoga.

As amigas da minha mãe em Laurelton eram todas judias. Reuniam-se uma vez por semana para jogar bridge ou Mah Jong. A minha mãe também era muito ativa nos assuntos judaicos. Viajou para Israel muitas vezes e serviu por muitos anos como presidente local da Hadassah.

A minha mãe morou naquela cidade pelo resto de seus dias. Eu permaneci lá até me formar na Universidade – Barnard College, parte da Universidade de Columbia. Eu amava tanto Nova York que queria ficar lá o máximo de tempo que pudesse.

O meu falecido marido, Harry Flitterman, nos anos 70, tinha interesses comerciais em Portugal e também na Índia. Perguntou-me em qual dos dois lugares eu preferiria morar. A resposta, claro, foi Portugal. Ele então viajou para território português para encontrar uma casa para nós. Esperei o seu regresso com as crianças, em Nova York. Em Junho de 1970, todos chegamos ao Porto. Fixamo-nos na Praia da Granja.

Em Portugal ficamos encantados por ter encontrado não só uma casa grande e bonita, mas também uma enorme e bela Sinagoga no Porto. Era uma sinagoga triste, sempre quase vazia, descontando a presença da nossa família e poucas outras.

Nada mudou muito para a Sinagoga nos trinta a quarenta anos seguintes – até que um dia alguém apareceu para dar nova vida à velha e vazia Sinagoga. A congregação cresceu e cresceu. O seu nome: David Ariel. Hoje sinto-me feliz por ver que a Sinagoga, finalmente, mais do que cumpriu o seu destino.

Porto, 3 de janeiro de 2022

Marilyn Flitterman



Community response to Parliament, on June 22, 2022, after a request for an opinion on a proposal by the Communist Party that wanted to abolish, in theory, the law that the Socialist Party regulation had already eliminated in practice.

1. The interpretation and criteria followed by the Jewish Community of Oporto for seven years are public knowledge.

<https://www.jns.org/opinion/the-jewish-community-of-oportos-criteria-for-sephardic-certification-over-a-seven-year-period/>

2. The desire of legislators at the time, concerning what is known as the Sephardic law, published in 2013 and in 2015, was to reconnect Portugal to the Sephardic Diaspora originating in Sepharad. Over one million people could benefit from that right, based only on the traditional families of the Sephardic communities of North Africa and the former Ottoman Empire. Seven years passed. About 10% of that number requested Portuguese nationality, which was granted to approximately 5%.

3. 2020 saw the unfolding of a smear campaign against that legislation by agents of the State. “Candidates wish only to have passports of convenience”, “there are tens of thousands of candidates”, “Sephardic applicants have children and spouses”, “to obtain citizenship applicants need only pay thousands of Euros to genealogists, lawyers and the Portuguese Jewish communities”, and other such charges. At the same time, the 1000% growth of the Portuguese Jewish community was never mentioned, nor the work carried out over the years by the Jewish Community of Oporto: building centres for young Jews, *kosher* restaurants, shops and establishments, the Jewish cemetery, the largest Chabad Centre in Europe, the Holocaust Museum, the Jewish Museum of Oporto, the Jewish Cinema of Oporto, the production of three feature films which won international awards (“Sefarad”, “1618” and “The Light of Judah”), the handling of inquisitorial proceedings in danger of rotting at Torre do Tombo, the elaboration of the largest Jewish library of Portugal and Spain, the fight against antisemitism and the many donations to the poor, the sick, the elderly, to hospitals and to kolelin and Synagogues all over the world, for *Shabbat* meals for Jewish communities in 14 countries, for mikvaot centres, schools and cemeteries in Jerusalem, Ashdod, Moscow and Bangkok, food banks in a number of countries, aid to catastrophes in Africa and Asia, for all Keren Hayesod projects in Israel, for social actions of the Oporto Diocese and the world initiative Mukhayriq, whose aim is once again to join together the Jews and Muslims who have grown apart owing to mutual misunderstandings.

4. In December 2021, that group of State agents returned to the charge, gathered anonymous denunciations from the scum of society, reduced what was known as the Sephardic law to the fees charged by the Jewish Community of Oporto, spread lies that the Community leaders were embezzling funds from the organisation, involving them in “suspicions” of corruption and created an ambience of terror and adverse news by

means of half a dozen handpicked journalists and antisemitic influencers. Week after week, entire families were exposed to the holocaust of appearing in the newspapers and on television, based on anonymous denunciations. No one escaped this type of Inquisition style “purification”, from religious to secular leaders – rabbis, presidents, former presidents, vice-presidents, treasurers, members, secretaries – to the museologist and the doorman.

5. In fact, with the aim of attempting to destroy the Jewish Community of Oporto, the agents of the State who had organised everything with the journalists, influencers, slanderers and finally, magistrates and police, made use of denunciations they knew to be slanderous and had been perpetrated by “anonymous” persons whose identity was known to them, including one man convicted in court for advocating that non-Jews are “shit”, non-Jews are people “lacking human qualities”, non-Jews are people of “no value”, non-Jews are “repulsive”, non-Jews are “despicable”, non-Jews are “revolting”, non-Jews are “dirty people”, and others. (The Oporto Criminal Court in Proceedings 10444/16.0T9PRT, considered that by reason of his conduct the slanderer on trial had acted in a highly slanderous and insulting manner!)

6. The police invaded the Kadoorie Synagogue as if it were a house of ill repute and rushed to the house of the Vice-President, granddaughter of Captain Barros Basto, founder of the Jewish Community of Oporto, seeking bags filled with cash. The Vice-President, whose life has been devoted to rehabilitating her grandfather (Captain Barros Basto, once targeted by the Estado Novo regime, which used anonymous denunciations in 1934 and 1936 to destroy him and the Community) was herself the target of identical anonymous denunciations, so much so that her life was brutalised in ways she had never believed possible. At 8.30 on the morning of 11 March 2022, that distinguished septuagenarian economist who is ailing due to a serious accident, had to flee into her bathroom when her house was invaded by more than ten people, whom she later learnt were policemen, who were looking for bags of money, as well as false invoices belonging to her husband. A disgrace.

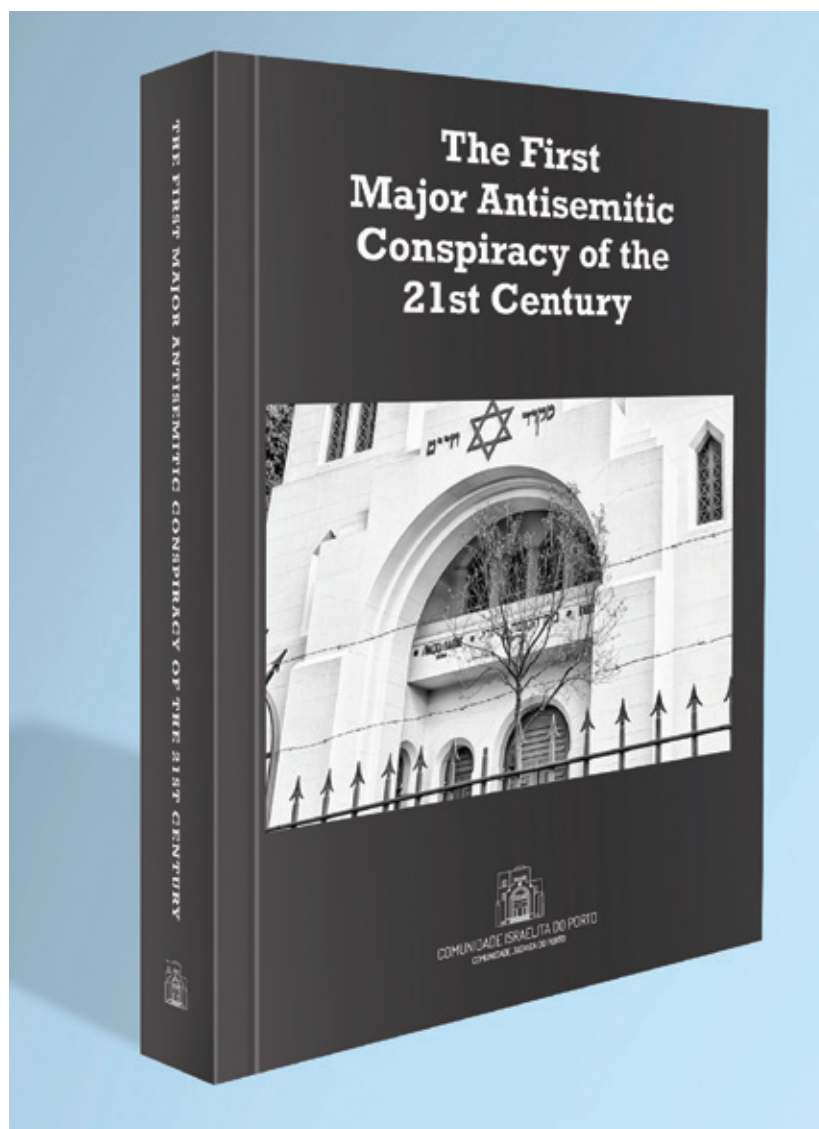
7. Conspiracy theories also abounded, which is par for the course when the subject involves Jews. In the anonymous letters that agents of the Portuguese State sent to the newspapers, the board member responsible for legal affairs was accused of having drawn up the legislation pertaining to the Sephardic nationality (which was unanimously approved by Parliament and the Government in 2013 and 2015) in order to traffic passports and steal the fees paid by applicants. He was a reviled target, his name mentioned over and over again in the denunciations, because of the fact that for over a decade he had conducted the rehabilitation processes of Captain Barros Basto, the Kadoorie Synagogue and the very Community, without ever holding office in the institution, receiving an eminent personality, giving an interview, or indeed addressing the congregation. As written by the oldest female member of CIP/CJP, at the age of 94, “Nothing changed very much for the Synagogue for the next thirty to forty years — until one day someone came along to breathe new life into the old, empty Synagogue. The congregation grew, and grew, and now it makes me happy to see that the Synagogue has finally more than fulfilled its destiny.”

8. The Chief Rabbi of the Jewish Community of Oporto, the person in Portugal who is best suited to issue certificates of Sephardism, who is so strict that he refused to certify a candidate to become Chief Rabbi of Israel and a Brazilian minister, as well as other important figures in the world today, was detained, forced to remain in Portugal and humiliated before the world, based on serious lies. These included the following in particular: for having certified Patrick Drahi (who had in fact rightly been certified by the Jewish Community of Lisbon), for having certified Roman Abramovich (who had in fact rightly been certified by the Jewish Rabbinate), for demanding “religious belief” from all applicants (which he never did, because being Jewish is a matrilinear genealogy), for corrupting Registry Offices (when as far as is known, he knows none), for embezzling the money of the fees paid by the Sephardim (technically impossible at CIP/CJP), for laundering the money that was never embezzled, and for the alleged intellectual disloyalty of the Chief Rabbis of countries with very strong Jewish communities.

9. The Court released the Chief Rabbi and has not prevented him from continuing to issue certificates of Sephardism. However, the Board of Directors of the Jewish Community of Oporto has decided to suspend this activity completely, as it refuses to cooperate with a State that brings an antisemitic and terrorist lawsuit against an organised Jewish community, based on inconceivable anonymous denunciations made by the scum of society.

10. Due to these facts and reasons, the Community no longer has any interest in cooperating with the State. By order of its General Meeting, it has opened a new room in the Jewish Museum of Oporto. Hundreds of school students and tourists were the first to visit this new room, presenting the chronology of antisemitism in Portugal between 2015 and 2022 and explaining the origin of the current criminal case. Soon, there will also be a brightly lit display case containing all the denunciations that led to this lawsuit, including photographs of the people who made, spread and used such denunciations for evil purposes.

Cover of the book that the Community sent to the European Public Prosecutor's Office (2022)





מְשִׁיב הַדּוּמָה
رئيس الدولة
THE PRESIDENT

Jerusalem, November 29, 2022

COMUNIDADE ISRAELITA DO PORTO

Dear community,

I was grateful to receive “The First Major Conspiracy of Antisemitism in the 21st Century,” a book which chronicles a chapter of considerable significance for the Jewish community of Porto.

The authoring and sharing of this book illustrate how meaningful is the attachment to Jewish heritage for members of the community as well as to how painful the sense of isolation, difference and vulnerability can be for Jewish communities around the world. I am hopeful that giving voice to the experiences detailed in this book has helped the community go through a process of resolution and closure.

There is no question that anti-Semitism, in any form, is a phenomenon that no just society can come to terms with and we in the State of Israel are roundly committed to the safety and wellbeing of our Jewish brethren around the world as well as to a global reality in which hatred and prejudice are afforded no place.

Thank you, once again, for sharing your work. I encourage and look forward to ongoing dialogue between the Jewish community of Porto and my office, as a reflection of the deep bonds that connect the Jewish people around the globe with Israel.

With kind personal wishes from Jerusalem.

Yours Sincerely,


Isaac Herzog
President of the State of Israel

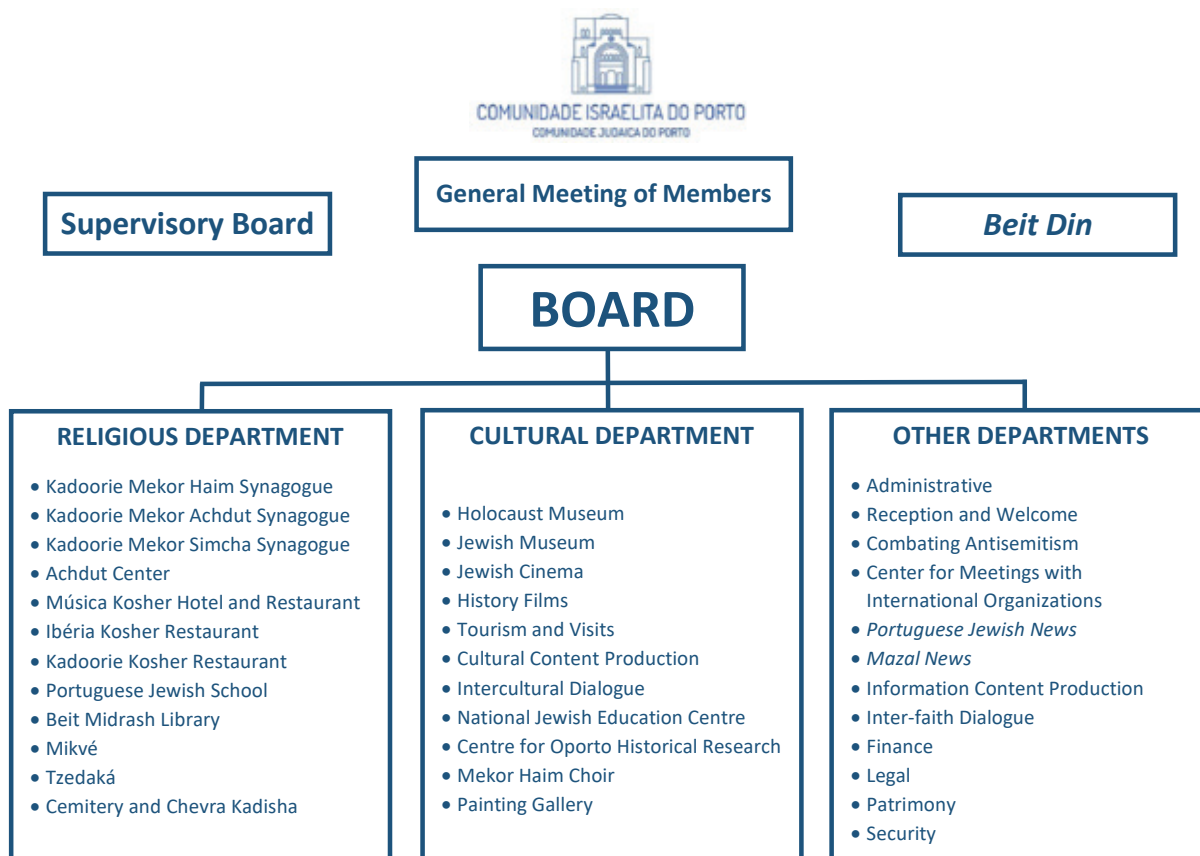
PUBLIC CONSULTATION

(Contributed by the young Jewish students at the universities of Oporto)

Whereas the Portuguese Assembly of the Republic launched a public consultation on the Commemorations of the 50th anniversary of the 25 April Revolution, Democracy and the Constitution, and whereas all can contribute ideas to the programme on the general theme of freedom, we, the young Jewish students at the universities of Oporto, would like to see an exhibition on “Operation Open Door” at the Assembly of the Republic, where the following texts should be displayed:

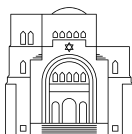
1. The democratic state promises that never again will it unlawfully detain a Chief Rabbi or illegally invade a synagogue, a Jewish museum and the homes of community leaders in a case “without foundation in fact” and “based on nothing”, in the words of the Lisbon Court of Appeal.
2. The democratic state promises that never again will it arrest a Chief Rabbi, photograph him as if he were a rapist, remove the siddur, tallit and tefillin needed for prayer, place him in a cell with a murderer, not allow *kosher* food to be brought in, deprive him of food for 36 hours, force him to break the Sabbath and to remain in Portugal, while travelling several kilometres three times a week for a humiliating presentation at a police station to prove he has not run away, until one day, six months later, the Lisbon Court of Appeal stated that the case was “based on nothing”.
3. The democratic state promises that never again will it attack, as it did, the strongest Jewish community in Portugal, with grave State corruption, mixing executive, legislative and judiciary powers, as well as trustworthy journalists, ridiculous characters whose only resumé is calumny, nocturnal burglars, people with mental health issues, and condemned for multiple crimes and acts of discrimination. (<https://firstmajorconspiracy.com/>)
4. The democratic state promises that never again will it cooperate with nocturnal burglars (who broke down the doors of law offices and private homes to steal a server and computers) whose aim was to attempt to incriminate people and build a legal proceeding that in fact is “based on nothing”, in the words of the Lisbon Court of Appeal.
5. The democratic state promises that never again will it cooperate with anonymous whistle-blowers who have spent time in psychiatric hospitals and sentenced in the criminal courts (for crimes of slander and libel, common assault and discriminating behaviour), in an attempt to incriminate people and build a legal proceeding that in fact is “based on nothing”, in the words of the Lisbon Court of Appeal.
6. The democratic state promises that never again will it seize, for later reading by decadent elites, the books of minutes of an organised Jewish community, which contain the records of a decade of religious, cultural, social life and international affairs, returning them seven months later with each page marked with the six digits that once were engraved on the arms of Polish Jews (including the parents and grandparents of current community leaders and many of its historic members). All of this, we say again, is “based on nothing”, in the words of the Lisbon Court of Appeal.
7. The democratic state promises that never again will it make an attention-seeking communication to the world, avowing that it is investigating an alleged “criminal association linked to forgery and corruption involving officials of the registry offices and misappropriation of funds that were not declared to the tax authorities and were laundered”, all of which is completely false, and “based on nothing”, in the words of the Lisbon Court of Appeal.

Community organization chart (2023)



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