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Maud S. Mandel, *Muslims and Jews in France: History of a Conflict*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2014. x + 253 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, and index. \$39.95 U.S. (hb). ISBN 978-0-6911-2581-7; \$24.95 U.S. (pb). ISBN 978-0-6911-7350-4.

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In January 2015, two days after the murderous attacks on the offices of Charlie Hebdo, the Hyper Cacher in the 20th *arrondissement* was attacked by Amedy Coulibaly. Coulibaly, a French-born Muslim of Malian background, killed three people immediately and took seventeen others hostage. Another was fatally wounded. As the attack took place, an employee of the supermarket, a Muslim originally from Mali named Lassana Bathily, guided six shoppers down to a freezer in the basement, where they could hide in safety. He then escaped through a delivery shaft and was able to give invaluable help to police, seeking information.

Maud Mandel's book, *Muslims and Jews in France: History of a Conflict*, gives the background to, and thus helps explain, the complex relationships that could find Bathily working for, and saving, Jews while Coulibaly made it his duty to attack and murder Jews in the name of Islam. This is a history from above, at the level of community organizations and government bodies, and below, from French Jews and Muslims in Paris and Marseille.

France is home to the largest Jewish and Muslim populations living side by side outside Israel, and for Mandel there is a specifically French story to be told in the history of Muslim-Jewish relations. Over six chapters, she sets this story out: each chapter centers around a particular moment when the relationship between Muslims and Jews became visible in the public record. Through the creation of Israel, the decolonization of North Africa, the six-day war in 1967, the 1968 student uprisings, and the 1980s experiments in multiculturalism, Mandel traces how the narratives of oppositional Muslim-Jewish relations emerged, and, indeed, how the narratives themselves served to "produce the very conflicts they purported to recount" (p. 2). Running through the entire book are three overarching thematic threads, which drive the broader story. First, Mandel insists on the long legacy of Jewish-Muslim relations in colonial Algeria and, in particular, resentments raised over the different treatment of both groups at the hands of the colonizing French. Second, as Mandel takes care to note, this is not a tale of two equal halves. Muslims and Jews who came to France from Algeria experienced integration very differently. Jews joined a long-rooted and well-organized community. Muslims had no equivalent to guide them through the processes they faced. (This was equally reflected in the availability of source material). Finally, Mandel traces in fine detail how the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, at first distant, came gradually to stand in for moments of conflict between the two communities in France.

Mandel takes great care to underscore the heterogeneity of both communities. Never was there unity of opinion. Rather, her work explores how different voices competed within each community. She acknowledges that in this sense, the labels she has chosen ("Jew/Muslim") are problematic when discussing two communities that were highly diverse, in ethnic, national, religious, cultural, and

socioeconomic terms. She chooses the term “Muslim” particularly to shift “the focus away from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and re-center our gaze on France, the context in which this term has come to stand in for at least two generations of French-born citizens pushed to the national margins” (p. 10). At the same time, however, she argues that there was a “community of experience;” of “democratic life and economic homogenization” for Jews (p. 8), and “the bitterness of exclusion as well as successful efforts to integrate” for Muslims (p. 7).

Chapter one, “Colonial Policies, Middle Eastern War, and City Spaces: Marseille in 1948,” establishes and explores the various events and issues that fed into Jewish-Muslim relations not only in Paris but particularly in Marseille. The 1948 war that followed Israel’s declaration of independence had repercussions in France coinciding with the growth of North African anti-colonial movements in the metropole. Animosities surfaced particularly in Marseille where the distant war was brought close by movement through the port of people and weapons, both destined for Israel, and their increased visibility through the administrative apparatus that sprang up in the town. Marseille’s location and role as a transit port city meant that it was constantly close to and deeply affected by events in North Africa. The repercussions of World War II in France also affected the city. Because in Marseille, “the specific contours of the urban landscape” brought Jews and Muslims together (p. 33), these two issues were felt acutely. Thus, while in Paris, “1948 came and went with little interethnic unrest,” in Marseille, officials predicted “a general Muslim-Jewish standoff” (p. 22).

Those in the Zionist and pro-Palestinian camps did confront one another in Marseille, but Mandel argues that it was in fact anti-Jewish riots in the Moroccan town of Oujda “that first brought passions to a head in Marseille,” rather than the 1948 war (p. 28). In this way, Mandel underscores the close links between Jewish-Muslim relations in Marseille and events in North Africa. In a pattern that becomes familiar in Mandel’s book, any serious violence failed to eventuate even though authorities continued to warn that it might. Muslim resentment came to focus on French support for Jewish migration to Israel. This point, Mandel argues, indicates not only the local relevance of the war in the Middle East, but also local dynamics and particularly the institutional inequities that Muslim immigrants faced in France.

In chapter two, “Decolonization and Migration: Constructing the North African Jew,” Mandel traces Jewish departures from Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria “and the way a whole host of actors came to see particularistic meanings within them” (p. 37). Jewish emigration to Israel and France, as well as decolonization, particularly in Algeria, changed the way a diverse set of social actors, including French colonial administrators, international Jewish spokesmen, and a wide range of indigenous nationalist groups conceptualized Jewish belonging throughout the region. Their engagement, she argues, led to the emergence of the “North African Jew.” This was a category to which no individual ascribed, but that worked rhetorically to unite the diverse Moroccan, Tunisian, and Algerian Jewish populations into a collective often understood to be in conflict with “North Africans,” “Muslims,” or “Arabs.”

The wider story of her second chapter is one where both Jews and Muslims in Algeria, in particular, struggled to find answers to questions of universality and particularism. Was the emigration of Jews, for example, specifically Jewish emigration? Could Jews simply be Algerians, or would they be Jewish Algerians? These questions changed with circumstances, and responses were never homogenous. But the give and take on these questions between FLN and Jewish spokesmen, Mandel argues, “pushed both into more polarized camps” (p. 50). For Jews, as one observer put it, “Algerian nationalism seemed to threaten their Jewish selves as much as their French selves” (p. 58)

Chapter three, “Encounters in the Metropole: The Impact of Decolonization on Muslim-Jewish Life in France in the 1950s and 1960s,” explores how these new ways of conceptualizing Muslim-Jewish interactions, and the longer term inequities built into French colonial and minority policies, shaped integration in France. Thousands of Muslim and Jewish migrants came to France throughout the decolonization process. Muslim and Jewish migrants could come together through their sense of

displacement and common origins, and as Mandel is led to repeat, throughout the book, “relations on the ground were often cordial” (p. 79). However, differing relationships to the French state—many resulting from the legacy of French colonialism—were equally powerful in shaping mutual perceptions in the 1950s and early 1960s. This manifested most clearly in “sharply divergent” processes of settlement and integration, which could serve to drive the two communities apart (p. 4). Some members of both communities sought dialogue and cooperation. For others, growing tensions, and the rise of antisemitism in the Middle East, meant that dialogue was impossible. It was the more polarized perspective that “came to dominate most mainstream communal discourse by the mid-1960s” (p. 60).

Chapter four, “The 1967 War and the Forging of Political Community,” traces the hardening of ethno-religious political identity through mobilization around the war. While we know that Jews became “politically visible in unprecedented ways” in 1967, we know less about Muslim political activity and affiliation in France during the same period. Mandel addresses this gap by exploring “early efforts of FLN representatives, the Arab league and Muslim student activists to encourage North African Muslim immigrant identification with the Palestinians,” efforts that, while only moderately successful, “increasingly made disagreement over outcomes in the Middle East relevant to minority politics in France” (p. 80).

In chapter four, we are introduced to new political actors, particularly university students, who were beginning to embrace radicalism, and to bring foreign policy onto French campuses. Jews and Muslims continued to differentiate between the criticism they directed at events in the Middle East, and the way they saw one another, and the conflict, ultimately, had very little impact on daily interactions. However, clashes on campuses “began to pit Jewish and Muslim activists against one another in new ways” (p. 81). Ironically, it was Jewish leftist students, many the children of Holocaust victims who took a universalist message from the genocide, who established movements such as the *Comité des étudiants juifs antisionistes*, which formed alliances that proved to be “essential in the emergence over the next few years of a pro-Palestinian movement in France” (p. 86). One of the deep ironies that emerges from this story is the involvement of actors, seeking to bring members of the community together, whose actions ultimately serve to force them apart.

In chapter five, “Palestine in France, Radical Politics and Hardening Ethnic Allegiances, 1968-72,” Mandel traces the brief “fusion between gauchisme, immigrant politicization, and Jewish radicalism” (p. 124). In the atmosphere of late 1960s radical culture in France, Jewish and Muslim student radicals, linking the occupation of Palestinian territories ever more fully to leftist politics at home, brought the story of Muslim-Jewish polarization to France’s national conversation. Mandel sets the quieter, more difficult to trace examples of ongoing cooperation against highly visible moments of conflict, such as the riot in the Parisian immigrant neighborhood of Belleville in June 1968, and ongoing oppositional encounters between Muslim and Jewish university students, which increased polarization around Middle Eastern politics. While the fusions and encounters were brief, Mandel argues that their effects were enduring. By the mid-1970s, Muslims and Jews were beginning to see one other as competitors in the French public sphere, just as Muslim immigrants were coming to understand themselves as legitimate participants in France’s domestic and international affairs. While Mandel seeks to remind the reader that cooperation between Jews and Muslims during this time should underscore that Jewish-Muslim polarization around the Middle East was not predetermined by particularist allegiances, what remained from this period, nonetheless, was the presumption of ethnic tension between the two groups over the Middle East.

The final, sixth chapter, “Particularism versus Pluriculturalism: The Birth and Death of the Anti-Racist Coalition,” moves to the effort to establish a multiethnic anti-racist campaign in 1980s France under the presidency of François Mitterrand. Now, for the first time, cultural and linguistic diversity was recognized in law in France, leading to new forms of ethno-religious organization. The public space was now open to young Muslim and Jewish activists who wished to take advantage of this legal recognition

of difference to express their particularist allegiance and politics. Mandel follows the two competing approaches to ethno-religious participation in the French state that emerged. The first was “a particularistic vision that encouraged intergroup solidarity as a way of fighting for the individual community’s needs” (p. 125). For example, the so-called *Beur* movement created momentum around a new identity politics for a new generation of French-born Muslim activists. The second was a new “pluricultural” model of ethno-religious cooperation, typified by *SOS Racisme*. The great excitement over the possibilities for a joint anti-racist campaign, Mandel argues, “overlooked ongoing tensions between ‘particularistic’ and ‘pluricultural’ approaches to ethno-religious participation in the French state. Three social crises at the end of the 1980s brought these tensions to a head, and cemented the shift to what Mandel calls the “political binary Muslim-Jewish” (p. 2): the *affaire foulard*, when three Muslim girls were expelled from a middle school in Creil, near Paris, for refusing to remove their head scarves; the desecration of a Jewish cemetery in Carpentras; and the 1991 Gulf War.

By decade’s end, the much-celebrated efforts at cross-ethnic cooperation had given way to distrust and bitterness. Interethnic conflict was henceforth presumed. Yet, and here is the argument at the heart of Mandel’s book, “whatever their links to the Middle East (and such ties were never homogenous or frozen in time), Muslims and Jews related to each other also as former residents of French North Africa, immigrants competing for limited resources, employers and employees, victims of racist aggression, religious minorities in a secularizing state, and citizens. These multiple and complex interactions were often lost, however, as a narrative of polarization took root, thereby helping to erase them” (p. 7).

Scholars may wish to engage more deeply with Mandel’s insistence on the specific Frenchness of this story, and the question of whether it could be balanced against an international backdrop, particularly in the context of the general growing radicalism in the 1970s, including anti-Americanism, on which she touches, and the Cold War. Indeed, in chapter two, her use of both French and American sources, places the Jewish story in a broader and richer context of the rhetoric of international Jewish organizations and its polarizing effect. This is, however, a beautifully structured book, which traces out the fine grain of a complex story in delicate detail. The focus on the two cities of Paris and Marseille works to allow the reader to understand how generalized discourses, and the urban spaces in which Jews and Muslims interacted daily, fed into and off one another, or not. The comparison is telling. As Mandel notes, at moments of the greatest tension, including the 1991 Gulf War, or the period after 2000, when Muslim-Jewish relations came under public and media scrutiny, relations in Marseille “remained largely calm,” and this dynamic “captures the way fears of growing Muslim-Jewish conflict could take on a life of their own, divorced from the more variegated social landscape” (pp. 12-13).

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