



Istiqlal Party meeting at the Jewish Club, Tetouan, 1956

“Divided Dreams: Moroccan Jews and the Post-Independence Moroccan State”

Dr. Alma Heckman, UC-Santa Cruz

Thursday, October 25, 5-6:30 pm

Judaica Suite, Smathers Library (2nd Floor)

The moment of Moroccan independence in 1956 was optimistic for Jews. The Istiqlal (“Independence”) government with King Mohammed V at its head appointed a Jewish minister, and the Muslim-Jewish unity group, al-Wifaq (“Accord”), drew the support from all segments of society. Following the Suez crisis, however, pre-existing tensions of anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism became increasingly conflated in the Moroccan public sphere, polarizing members of the Jewish community against one another in addition to the Jewish community vis-à-vis the majority Moroccan Muslim society. This talk addresses Moroccan Jewish leftist attempts to reconcile Jewish and Moroccan identities within an increasingly murky Moroccan political context.

Alma Heckman is the Neufeld-Levin Chair of Holocaust Studies and an Assistant Professor of History at University of California, Santa Cruz. She received her Ph.D. from UCLA in 2015. In addition to her research on radical Jewish politics in Morocco, Heckman is also working to digitize, transcribe, and publish interviews with European Jews who found refuge in North Africa and the Middle East during and after World War II. This fall, Heckman is a fellow at the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, and was a past fellow at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

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