

MOROCCAN NEWS BULLETIN

50X1



60 Sutton Place South
New York 22, N.Y.

Moroccan
Information
Office

1613 Harvard St., N.W.
Washington, D.C.

New York, Nov. 28, 1952

No, 5

PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT ON THE FUTURE OF MOROCCO

"Why does Morocco, inhabited by Moroccans, belong to France? ...Anything must be better, than to live under French colonial rule. Should a land belong to France? By what logic and by what custom and by what historical rule?"

"When we've won the war, I will work with all my might and main to see to it that the United States is not wheedled into the position of accepting any plan that will further France's imperialistic ambitions....."

From AS HE SAW IT, By Elliott Roosevelt
(Duelle, Sloan & Pearce), 1946

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
1. The Sultan's Speech from the Throne	1
2. New York Celebration of the Sultan's Silver Jubilee	1
3. The Jews in Morocco	2
a. The Status of the Jews in the Past	2
b. Letter from the Sultan to a Jewish Leader	3
c. Pro-Jewish Decree of 1864	4

-1-

THE SULTAN'S SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

The Sultan's Speech from the Throne was reported, though incorrectly, in most New York papers. We are limiting ourselves therefore to recapitulating its main points.

The Sultan gave a comprehensive survey of the events that have led to the present Moroccan crisis, pointing out that all his efforts towards achieving his country's legitimate aims by means of direct negotiations with France, have failed. He showed how under the present protectorate regime it was impossible for Morocco to advance and to develop a truly democratic way of life. The present regime, though fitting in 1912, had long since lost its value, and only in an independent Morocco, based on a democratic constitutional monarchy, could his country assume its rightful place among other nations.

He stated that in an independent Morocco all legitimate French rights would be safeguarded, as would be those of all other foreigners. He stressed the close links that unite Morocco with the other Arab and Moslem countries, and prayed that the present efforts of those countries in the UN Assembly (on behalf of Morocco) be crowned with success.

The Sultan's speech once again demonstrated clearly that there have been no genuine negotiations between him and the French Government, but only a sterile exchange of notes. It is only on account of the French Government's persistent refusal to negotiate with the Sultan that the Arab-Asiatic bloc felt impelled to place the Moroccan issue before the UN Assembly.

NEW YORK CELEBRATION OF THE SULTAN'S SILVER JUBILEE

To celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Sultan's accession to the throne, Mr. Balafrej, Secretary of the Istiqlal party, and the Moroccan delegation to the UN Assembly held a reception at the Plaza Hotel in New York. The heads of most of the other delegations to the UN were present, among them ten Foreign Ministers and many Ambassadors.

The occasion was graced by the presence of Sir Zafrullah Khan, Foreign Minister of Pakistan, who made the following speech:

"I feel that the choice of the person who should say a few words on this auspicious occasion is perhaps not very appropriate. It it was intended to choose somebody from outside Morocco but who had made an intensive study of Moroccan affairs and the character of His Majesty Mohammed V, nobody could have done it better than Mr. Rom Landau who is present here. If it was intended that somebody be selected from among the delegations of the United Nations, the most appropriate choice would have been His Royal Highness Prince Saif-ul-Islam Abdullah and it would have been most appropriate in this sense, also, that it would be fitting that one prince should pay tribute to another. If it is important that somebody

-2-

should have been selected for the facility and charm in the English language, the selection should have been Professor Bokhari.

"But the honor has fallen upon me, perhaps, because this is such an excellent cause that even the least capable for such a purpose would do.

"We are here to do honor to His Majesty on the 25th anniversary of his accession to the throne of Morocco. Though I am not very intimate with the affairs of Morocco or His Majesty, I know enough to know that he represents a very unique place among rulers today. Apart from his other personal qualities, he, along with His Highness, the Bey of Tunis, who also deserves this tribute, has put himself in one sense at the head of the movement for the complete restoration of the independence and sovereignty of his people; and that is somewhat unique.

"His Majesty, by the stand he has taken, by the efforts he has made, has given perfect service to his people. He ascended the throne of Morocco at the comparatively early age of 17, and here was every opportunity for him to occupy himself with the kind of affairs and attractions that attract young men at that age, but he has done his country and his people the honor of ruling over them and preferring service to his people and to his cause. Indeed, he set himself an example in his own person of how anybody who is put in any position of authority, ought to conduct himself. His position has not been an easy one. The relations between France and Morocco did not make it easy. And he has acted throughout with dignity, with tact, with courtesy. He has been persistent in his effort to restore Morocco to the full position of sovereignty and independence. And yet he has neither done nor said anything to which anybody, including the French authorities, could take offense: that wasn't easy to do.

"I was very much struck in Paris last year both by the substance of his spirit and the form and expression of it. I was already an admirer of his, but I became a devoted admirer after listening to him speak.

"I shall not detain you very long. I pray that it may be His Majesty's good fortune, and the good fortune of his people and country, and of all those who are anxious that the world should progress that Morocco will find itself occupying its due and equal position among sovereign states. Thank you very much."

THE JEWS IN MOROCCO

The Status of the Jews in the Past

French propagandists, nonchalantly disregarding historical facts, and anxious to discredit the Moroccan nation and its rulers, both of the past and the present, claim that the Jewish population of Morocco has always been treated badly by the Sultans, and that only since the introduction of the French protectorate have the Moroccan Jews enjoyed any rights and freedom. It hardly needs saying that this story is as untrue as are most of the fairy tales that French propaganda disseminates on the subject of Morocco. But since French propaganda (especially within the USA) has at its disposal almost unlimited funds, employs an army of agents, and has the power to influence foreign public opinion, many people really believe that in the past the Moroccan Jews suffered from the sort of treatment to

-3-

which their fellow-Jews used to be exposed in so many European countries.

What is the truth?

The Jews, in Morocco, who today number over 200 thousand, have lived there for many centuries. They have always been treated, and have regarded themselves, as Moroccans. In the fifteenth century, when the Jews were expelled from Spain and when no European country would receive them, Morocco alone offered them asylum. Since in Morocco Islamic law governed all social relations, the Jewish community was placed under its own Rabbinical Courts that have existed right until 1912. Ghettos were established; but not as a punishment--as they were in European countries--but to enable the Jews to lead their own individual life, and to follow their own traditions and customs. In times of general poverty, most of the Jews were poor. When Morocco prospered, many of the Moroccan Jews prospered. At a time when in Europe no Jew could hold public office, Moroccan Jews were Ministers in the Sultans' Governments.

When during the second World War the French Government in Vichy tried to introduce the anti-Jewish Nürnberg Laws into Morocco, the present Sultan opposed himself whole-heartedly, pointing out to the French authorities that the Moroccan Jews were his subjects, and would not be victimized by any discriminatory racial laws. The life and property of many thousands of Jews were saved thanks to the Sultan's courage and to the support he received from the entire Moslem community in Morocco. Nevertheless, there were many instances when the Sultan's interference failed, and when French administrators eagerly followed their Vichy masters, sequestering Jewish enterprises, imposing heavy fines on their owners, and even sending numbers of Jews to concentration camps.

Letter from the Sultan to a Jewish Leader

The following letter was written by order of the Sultan to M. René Cassin, one of the leaders of the Jewish community in France:

Palace of His Majesty the Sultan
Private Office

Rabat, May 18, 1949

To the Honorable Attorney,
Mr. René Cassin, Representative
of the French Republic on the
International Committee for Human
Rights

Distinguished Greetings,

Your letter of March 29, 1949, in which you are concerned with the condition of the people of your faith, reached his Sherifian Majesty.

His Majesty was very touched by the way in which you emphasized the policy carried out by his generous ancestors in favor of Moroccan Jews, a policy which consists particularly of treating them on an equal basis with the rest of their Moslem compatriots. His clear-cut attitude with regard to them, his firm resolution to defend them during the last war - as you noted in your letter - as well as his declarations reiterated to their delegations on several occasions, are a confirmation of this policy, an application of his principles and the carrying out of what he considers as one of his duties as Chief of State, without making any distinction among the elements of his people.

-4-

His Majesty has asked me to draw your attention to the fact that within his Sherifian Kingdom, as far as the Moroccans are concerned, there exists no legal provisions favoring one element to the detriment of another. Moroccans of Jewish faith benefit particularly from legal protection with regard to practising their religion and to the application of their personal status.

As regards the public liberties which you desire granted to your Jewish people, in keeping with the spirit of the principles adopted by the Committee for Human Rights, His Majesty ardently desire that these liberties should be made general and extended to all His subjects, without any exception or discrimination.

The deplorable condition in which, according to your letter, a portion of the Jewish element finds itself, is part of present-day difficulties. They are not alone in that condition; it is also true for a good-sized number of their Moslem compatriots. His Majesty spares no effort in defending the rights of all the poor classes of his people, Moslems as well as Jews, so that their standard of living may be raised and their economic and social situation improved.

On this occasion, I am happy to tell you of the great interest with which His Majesty follows the noble efforts which you are exerting to make Human Rights triumphant and to guarantee their fulfillment. He prays that Almighty God will inspire us with the thought of happiness for all. Salutations.

Pro-Jewish Decree of 1864

On February 5, 1864, the Sultan Mohammed Ben Abdallah published the following decree:

"It is our order that all Jews residing in Our Empire, regardless of the situation in which they were placed by the Almighty, should be treated by our governors, administrators and other subjects, in conformance with strictest justice, and that, before our legal courts, they should be on an equal basis with any other person, so that not even the slightest injustice may be done them nor any unmerited treatment accorded them. Neither the authorities nor any other person shall do any harm to the Jews, either to their person or their property...Because such an injustice is an injustice in the heavens and we cannot under any circumstances, prejudice their rights or those of any other person; Our dignity is opposed with all its might to such proceedings. In Our eyes, all men have an equal right to ask for justice..."

ISTIQLAL (INDEPENDENCE) PARTY OF MOROCCO, (Moroccan Office of Information and Documentation). Dr. El Mehdi Ben-Aboud (M.D.) representative of the Independence Party of Morocco in the United States of America, is so registered at the Department of Justice, Washington, where copies of this material are being filed and where his registration statement is available for inspection. The fact of registration does not indicate approval or disapproval by the United States Government of the contents of this petition.