

Handout

Timeline: Shifts in Power and Antisemitic Legislation in North Africa from Colonialism through WWII

1830

France forcibly occupied Algeria and established colonial rule

1870

The Cremieux Decree was passed in Algeria, which granted French citizenship to most Algerian Jews

1881

France forcibly occupied Tunisia and established colonial rule

1911

Italy forcibly occupied Libya and established colonial rule

1912

France forcibly occupied Morocco and established colonial rule¹

1922

Benito Mussolini was appointed Prime Minister of Italy, and, in the course of the next seven years, he consolidated power to form a fascist state

1933

Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany

1935

Nuremberg Race Laws were passed in Germany, restricting German citizenship to those who were "racially pure" as well as outlawing intermarriage or sexual relations between Jews and "people of German or related blood." In the years that followed, Germany passed many more antisemitic laws.

1936

¹ Spain also forcibly occupied parts of Morocco in the same year.

Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy signed a treaty of cooperation

1938

Antisemitic “Race Protection Laws” passed in Italy and were instituted in Libya

1939

Germany invaded Poland, beginning WWII

1940

In June, France surrendered to Germany, and Germany occupied the northern part of the country. The pro-Nazi Vichy government of Philippe Pétain governed the southern part of France, Algeria (which had been claimed as part of France), as well as Morocco and Tunisia, which had been claimed as French protectorates.

In September, Italy attacked British-controlled Egypt from Italian-controlled Libya and was driven back by the British.

In October, France passed antisemitic racial laws and the Cremieux Decree was abolished, taking French citizenship away from Algerian Jews.²

1941

In February, German troops reinforced Italians in Libya to drive out the British, and territory in Libya continued to go back and forth between British and German control until January 1943.

1942

On November 8, “Operation Torch” began with the Allied landing in Morocco and Algeria as the Allies fought to take control of North Africa and force out the Axis powers.

On November 10-11, Vichy leaders in North Africa ordered French forces to cease armed resistance, and French forces in North Africa joined the Allies, prompting Hitler to occupy Vichy France and Tunisia.³

1943

In January, the British drove the Germans out of Libya.

² Additional antisemitic laws were passed by France in 1941 and implemented to varying degrees across French-controlled North Africa.

³ The Allied victory in North Africa did not mean the end of antisemitic legislation due to the fact that many of the Vichy administrators were left in power as part of a negotiated deal for the French forces in North Africa to join the Allies. Up until mid-March 1943, the French authorities refused to consider any change to the Vichy laws, and then the laws were repealed with pressure from Jewish organizations in North Africa and the United States. The Cremieux decree was not reinstated until October 1943, when a French government opposed to the Vichy administration took that step.

In March, Vichy racial laws were repealed, but the Cremieux Decree remained overturned.

On May 7, the British captured Tunis, the capital of Tunisia, and U.S. forces captured the last port controlled by the Axis powers.

On May 13, Axis forces in North Africa surrendered, and the war continued for two more years as the Allies advanced towards Germany and Japan.

1945

WWII came to an end with Germany's surrender to the Allies on May 8 and Japan's surrender on September 2.

This timeline draws from the following sources:

["Series: North Africa,"](#) United States Holocaust Museum, accessed February 14, 2023.

["World War II Dates and Timeline,"](#) United States Holocaust Museum, accessed February 14, 2023.

["The Nuremberg Race Laws,"](#) United States Holocaust Museum, accessed February 14, 2023.

["Italy,"](#) United States Holocaust Museum, accessed February 14, 2023.

["The Jews of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia,"](#) Yad Vashem, accessed February 14, 2023.

["The Jews of Libya,"](#) Yad Vashem, accessed February 14, 2023.

["The Jews of North Africa,"](#) Yad Vashem, accessed February 14, 2023.

"Between Metropole and French North Africa: Vichy's Antisemitic Legislation and Colonialism's Racial Hierarchies" by Daniel J. Schroeter

"The Persecution of the Jews in Libya Between 1938–1945" by Jens Hoppe in Aomar Boum, and Sarah Abrevaya Stein. *The Holocaust and North Africa*. Stanford, CA. Stanford University Press, 2019.