

a simple one, nor an easy one to take, in the conflict between the Tunisian and Moroccan nationalists and the French Government. The Jews had lived for centuries among the Moslem masses. The problems of emancipation for these masses were, on a different scale, the same as theirs. They were concrete problems which required not talk but hard daily work. And the Jews were profoundly concerned in the processes of the emancipation of the Moslem masses. Very fundamental ties united the Jews and Moslems of North Africa, so that nothing which affected the interests of the Moslems could leave the Jews unmoved. But on the other hand, the Jews of North Africa unanimously recognized that they owed the degree of culture and of security which they had achieved to the work of France, whose presence had made possible the emancipation of North African Jewry. This had redounded to the benefit not only of the Jews, but also of the great mass of the Moslems, who had also been progressively affected by the great changes that had revolutionized the social structure of North African Jewry.

The example of Libya did not encourage the Jews of North Africa to look with a favorable eye on the more extreme nationalist aspirations. The independence of Libya, proclaimed on January 1, 1952, resulted in the completion of a historical process which began with the massacres of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica on November 4, 1945, and June 12 and 13, 1948. There remained in Libya only 4,000 Jews. The rest had emigrated to Israel.

The future of the Jews of North Africa depended on the future of the countries in which they had been living for more than two thousand years. The situation required a pacific solution not only for the sake of the future of the great mass of North African Jews and Moslems, but for the security and stability of Europe itself.

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ALGERIA

SINCE 1947 Algeria appeared to have achieved that unstable political equilibrium which Tunisia and Morocco were still seeking. Algeria was the first of the North African countries to be the beneficiary of French influence, and it was the one where the influence of the West had made itself most widely and profoundly felt. The ideas and techniques of the West, represented by France, had penetrated deeply into the farthest parts of the country. Even Algerian nationalism had been fundamentally influenced by French thought. Ferhat Abbas, the leader of the Democratic Union of the Algerian Manifesto, remained an admirer of France even while he sought autonomy as a solution of Algeria's political problems.

For Algeria, in contrast to Tunisia and Morocco, the year under review (July 1951 through June 1952) was one of profound calm. It was marked by no significant political or social developments. The internal evolution of the country had not gone beyond the Statute of 1947, under which all the Moslems were admitted to French citizenship. The events in Tunisia aroused little interest, and the extreme nationalist parties, such as that of which Messali Hadj remained the leader, had not succeeded in winning the sup-

port of the masses, who were disinterested in politics. It is noteworthy that in the last municipal elections 85 per cent of the Moslems failed to vote.

Demographic Structure and Emigration

The Jewish population of Algeria was the second largest in North Africa. It numbered 140,000, as against 225,000 in Morocco and 105,000 in Tunisia. One must hasten to add that these figures have only a token value. The last official count in Algeria dates from 1941. Since that date the census figures have not indicated religion. One is reduced to estimates on a basis of various ascertainable factors. This indirect method remains defective, and it is hoped that private initiative may make possible a more thoroughgoing study of the present composition of the Jewish population of Algeria.

This figure of 140,000 represents 1.75 per cent of the entire population of Algeria and 12.7 per cent of its European population. The process of westernization of Algerian Jewry, most advanced in the *départements* of Oran and Algiers, where European influence was greater than in the *département* of Constantine, strongly affected the birth rate and population increase. (Thus in the *département* of Constantine there were 18,863 children for 6,285 families, an average of 3 per family; in the *département* of Oran, there were 13,338 families with 37,442 children, an average of 2.796; and in the *département* of Algiers the ratio fell to 2.487, with 10,755 families and 26,750 children.)

The 140,000 Algerian Jews were distributed in eighty-eight centers in Oran, eighty-eight centers in Algiers, sixty-one centers in Constantine, and sixteen South Algerian oases. The heaviest concentration of Jewish population was in the *département* of Oran, adjacent to the great Moroccan reservoir. The distribution of Jews in Algeria, and a study of their migrations within the country, show their tendency to live where the European population is greatest, and a concomitant concentration in the cities, where 82 per cent of the Europeans in Algeria resided. In the eleven most important cities of Algeria, there were 85,756 Jews. These cities offer the greatest opportunities not merely for employment but for culture. But if the Jews are attracted to highly developed centers, they nevertheless do not hesitate to colonize and develop the country. Thus, the Jews of the ancient commune of Miliana forsook the conveniences of a center which they found completely comfortable, in order to go out into the plain and contribute to the agricultural and commercial development of Affreville, Duperré, Orleansville, the Attafs, Rouina, and Oued-Fodda. In a similar manner Tlemcen and Constantine served as centers from which the Jewish population spread out to the areas in the process of colonization.

There is a tendency for the Jewish population to shift from the southern part of Algeria to the northern part, towards France or Israel. In spite of this, there are increasingly important Jewish colonies in some of the mining centers of the South, notably Colom-Bechar and Kenadza. In the former of these the Jewish population grew in the course of the past few years from 186 to 1,936. In Algeria, unlike Morocco, there were almost no Jews in the Berber-speaking districts.

It is very hard to get precise figures on Jewish emigration from Algeria to France and Israel. The official statistics offer no exact guide in respect to migration to France, since Algerian Jews are Frenchmen and Algeria is administratively an integral part of France. But it is safe to assert that the movement of Algerian Jews to metropolitan France continued on a significant scale. Particularly in Paris, Lyon, and Marseille, the Jewish population of Algerian origin had been growing more numerous by the year. The emigration of Algerian Jews to Israel, though it still continued to some extent, especially from South Algeria, remained statistically negligible—not more than a few dozen for all of Algeria.¹

Political and Social Status

The Crémieux Decree of October 2, 1870, gave French citizenship to the Jews of the Algerian *départements*. They are thus in a different position from the Jews of Tunisia, only part of whom have become French citizens by individual naturalization, and the Jews of Morocco, who are juridically incapable of becoming French citizens as long as they remain in Morocco. Their integration into the citizen body means that the Jews of Algeria have no special political problems; in law and in fact, they are Frenchmen on an equal basis with all other Frenchmen.

The one political problem which still remains is that of the status of the Jews of the M'zab (Ghardaia and adjacent areas). The individuals and organizations working on this problem had hopes that it would be solved in the course of the past year. Since these hopes have been disappointed, it is desirable to discuss this question in detail.

France conquered the territories of the M'zab in 1880. It organized them into the territories of the South, administratively separate from the *départements* of the North and of Algiers. In 1882 the French administration, faced with the problem of the Jews of the M'zab, decided not to give them the benefit of the Crémieux Decree. There were two reasons for this attitude. One was political, namely, the furious struggle which the anti-Semites of France and of Algiers had waged since 1870 against the Crémieux Decree, whose abrogation they wanted. The other was juridical, since the wording of the Crémieux Decree referred specifically to "the Israelites of the *départements* of Algeria," so that a strict construction excluded the Jews of the M'zab, who were included in the South Algerian territories which were not organized into *départements*. A paradoxical situation thus arose, and a special status was created for a population of less than 3,000 Jews. This situation has continued down to the present. The Jews of the M'zab still possess no regular civil status, and are unable even to acquire one, since the law of 1882 dealing with civil status applies exclusively to Moslem natives. Electorally they are included with the Moslem electors of the Second College, as a result of which they have unanimously abstained

¹The official statistics of the State of Israel do not distinguish among the immigrants originating in Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco. During the period from April 15, 1948, to March 1951 there were 35,932 Jewish immigrants to Israel from North Africa, most of whom came from Morocco and Tunisia. During 1951 there were only 2,190 immigrants; the total was probably still less in 1952.

from making use of the right to vote given to all natives of Algeria by the law of September 20, 1947. This is because the few Jews of the M'zab do not wish to enter into a political competition or compromise themselves in a political struggle which is essentially Moslem. Finally, the Jews of the M'zab continue to be subject to the Mosaic law in all questions of personal status, such as family relationship, marriage, divorce, and inheritance. All these matters are regulated by rabbinical law, and to this day they are subject to the jurisdiction of the rabbinical tribunal, at present presided over by Rabbi Moshe Sellem. Polygamy (exceptional, it is true) and the unilateral divorce of the wife by the husband remain as survivals of a past which all agree in rejecting. The French administration, understanding these problems, has many times reaffirmed its desire to solve them.

The means it has chosen has been, not to promulgate a new law, but to wait for the southern territories to be made into new Algerian *départements*, whereby the Jews of the M'zab would *ipso facto* find themselves beneficiaries of the Crémieux Decree. The law departmentalizing the South Algerian territories is before the French Parliament, but it may not be passed for some time. The result of this state of affairs is a prolonged crisis for the Jews of the M'zab, who seek a solution for the acute problem of their political status in emigration to North Algeria, to France, or most often to Israel.

Aside from this question, which concerns only a few thousand Jews and which is the result of historical events, there is no political problem for the Jews of Algeria. They are completely French, and each year they are more completely integrated into the life of the country. The increase of their number in the liberal professions, intellectual pursuits, and administrative posts is an indication of the rapidity with which social emancipation has followed politically for them.

Inter-religious Relations

Algeria was traditionally the country of Africa where anti-Semitism was the most virulent. One can recall the great wave of hate which threatened the security of the Jews at the beginning of the century, as well as the polemics of the anti-Jewish parties of Algeria from 1933 until their culmination in the abrogation of the Crémieux Decree on October 7, 1940.

The re-establishment of the laws of the French Republic ended this discrimination on October 23, 1943. Since that date relations with the Christians have taken a turn for the better. The Algerian Jews won general sympathy because of the major role they played in preparing the way for the American landing of November 8, 1942, and because of their part in the war of national liberation. The Christian elements of the population have also come closer to the Jews in the face of the two perils which threaten the future of Algeria—Arab nationalism and Communism. The example of Libya has shown that the fates of European and Jewish populations faced with Arab nationalism are closely linked. And the Christian population has learned that anti-Semitism can feed Communism; the city of Sidi Bel

Abbes, which was for decades the stronghold of Algerian anti-Semitism, today has a Communist municipal government, the only one of its kind in Oran.

On the other hand, relations between Jews and Moslems have not altered significantly. Intense anti-Semitism has never existed in organized form among the Moslems of Algeria. The Jewish and Moslem populations are closely linked in their daily life and united by a long common past. For their part, the Jews of North Africa never forget that they are largely the descendants of Judaized Berbers, and hence are among the original inhabitants of the country, a rare enough situation in Jewish history. Palestinian events and the demands of Arab nationalism have produced a certain coolness and stiffness in these relations. The Moslems would have liked to find Jewish support for their national claims. The Jews, though in favor of all the reforms proposed to raise the standard of life of the great mass of the Moslems, nevertheless remain unanimously faithful to the principle of French presence in North Africa. In this they are in agreement with an important and enlightened part of the Moslem population.

Nevertheless, these differences between the point of view of the Arab nationalist parties and the general opinion of the Algerian Jews have not disturbed the peaceful relations between Jews and Moslems in Algeria. The organizations of the Jews are of a religious nature, and do not concern themselves with political questions. At the same time, individual Jews endeavor to reconcile the points of view of the Europeans on the one hand and the Moslems on the other. Thus, in the Algerian Assembly three elected Jewish members, Dr. Amouyal, André Bakouche, and Marcel Belaiche, are distinguished by their role as conciliators and mediators.

An article in the newspaper *Information* of April 15, 1952, by the well-known philosopher Raymond Benichou, points out that a rapprochement between Algerian Jews and Moslems could have profound repercussions throughout the world. Such a development would be facilitated by the rapid westernization of the Algerian Moslems. One can observe them progressively taking the places of Jewish merchants who move to the new quarters of the cities, thus facilitating a development toward social integration. Such a rapprochement among Moslems, Christians, and Jews remains the most fundamental desire of the Jewish population, which remains deaf to all rash counsels. This desire for unity has shown itself on numerous occasions in recent months. Among these were the ceremonial visits to the Association Consistoriales Israélite by the Moslem religious leaders, by Archbishop Leynaud of Algiers, and most recently by Raymond Laquière on his election to the presidency of the Algerian Assembly. In turn, the representatives of the Jewish population have missed no opportunity to show their desire for unity. Thus the Fédération des Communautés Israélites d'Algérie sent a telegram of condolence to the Moslem community following the death of the Grand Mufti Hanefite El-Assimi.

Community Organization

The activity of the Jewish communities of Algeria remains essentially religious. The Consistories, regulated by the law of 1905, are identical with

those of France. They have no political function and carry on very few social activities. The situation is very different from that in Morocco and Tunisia, where the as yet unemancipated Jews remain less assimilated than in Algeria.

An examination of the consistorial assemblies shows the profound crisis which Algerian Judaism is undergoing. This intellectual and religious crisis shows itself most strikingly in terms of finances. The inadequate budgets, which promise only the most meagre recompense to religious functionaries, are always unbalanced. This very general situation shows the alienation of a very significant part of the population from all things Jewish. On the eve of World War II a number of individuals decided to found a *Fédération des Communautés Juives d'Algérie*, which actually came into existence after the liberation, in April 1947. This federation of all the religious associations, despite the concentration of energies which it represents, has had a very difficult life. The minutes of its *Assemblée Générale*, which took place in Algiers in April 1952, give a clear enough picture of Jewish life in Algeria in the past year. Every delegate from every community in Algeria voiced an appeal for help, cultural and religious as well as financial.

The principal result of the Federation's activities has been the establishment and development of a rabbinical school. This school continues to lead a very precarious existence, and the state of its finances is such that at the end of each month its directors wonder whether it will survive for another. Nine students of this school took the last examinations for the baccalaureate. During 1953 it plans to establish three supplementary classes and to increase the number of its students from sixteen to thirty. It also plans to complete the training of five rabbis by the end of the year. Modest as the scale of this institution is, Algeria has been unable to find the means to guarantee its financial requirements.

On April 21, 1952, representatives from all three *départements* in the *Assemblée Générale* expressed the same despair as to the future of the religious institutions. The principal preoccupation of the *Assemblée* was with finding sufficient additional resources to establish a system of supervision for kosher products, the building of a bakery for *matzot*, and the creation of a system of local taxation to supply increased income to meet the Federation's budget. A proposal to create a joint federation of the communities of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia, was designed to remedy the defects of the situation by creating a larger organization. The 1952 assembly decided that such an organization would be premature and postponed its establishment indefinitely.

The *Assemblée* also studied a revision of the statutes of the Federation in consequence of its affiliation to the *Consistoire Central de France*, to bring them into accord with the law of 1905. But by a special motion it decided that it would not merely be a religious organization, but would continue to support all the social welfare activities for youth and all the vocational training work in Algeria. This fact indicates the desire of the Jewish communities of Algeria to establish closer relations with French Jewry, a tendency which has shown itself in all the activities of Algerian Jewry, notably in the social field.

Education

The principal work in the field of intellectual and professional training for Jewish youth in Algeria is being done by ORT. At its meeting of February 10, 1952, it decided to increase its activity in Algeria. In Algiers, ORT envisaged the construction of large quarters for the boys' school, the opening of a modern school for young girls, and the creation of a placement service for apprentices. It also decided to open a girls' school and an apprentice placement service in Constantine. In the department of Oran, its activities will be extended to Tlemcen by the construction of a boys' school and a girls' school. The total registration for June 30, 1952, in the boys' school of Constantine and Algiers was 175. Sixteen pupils were graduated from the Algiers school in July 1952. Both schools had three-year courses.

The carrying out of these decisions remains dependent on the results of a fund-raising campaign throughout Algeria. In this connection, it is worth noting how little local financial cooperation there is in meeting the needs of the Jewish population. These needs remain very great, especially in the big cities, where there is a large proletariat which still remains very close to its indigenous origins.

Zionist Activity

Algeria remains the North African country where the Zionist movement is least developed. Despite great efforts, the Zionist parties were unsuccessful in inducing large numbers of Algerian Jews to emigrate to Israel, and confined their activity to cultivating a fervent admiration for the achievements of the State of Israel. This failure was partly due to the assimilation of the Algerian Jews, partly also to a consciousness of the obstacles which overt Zionist activity could place in the way of the good relations which they desired to have with their Moslem neighbors. Thus all the leading Jews of Algeria constantly counselled prudence and discretion in respect to anything connected with Zionist activity. In an article in *Vie Juive* of July 1952, President Azair Cherqui of the Zionist Federation of Algeria discussed these preoccupations.

Indeed, Algerian Jews were much more concerned with local problems than with large international ones, or with specifically Jewish questions. When rumors circulated concerning the transplantation of German heavy industry to North Africa, numerous protests resulted, on the ground that such a transplantation would involve the risk of bringing unreconstructed Nazis to Algeria.

The World Jewish Congress has continued to expand its activities in North Africa. It held its annual North African conference from June 7 to June 11, 1952, in Algiers. Delegates were present from Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco.

In January, 1952, the distinguished poet, Sadi A. Levy, died in Oran.

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