

Emigration

Algerian Jews felt themselves to be completely integrated into French Algerian life; scarcely one per cent emigrated to Israel.¹ Where life was hard, as for example, in the south, Jews looked to the cities of the north or to France. Thus, in the postwar period many Algerian families went to settle in Marseilles, Lyons, and the Paris region.

Cultural Life

It should be noted in conclusion that during 1951 not a single Jewish magazine was published in Algeria, either in French or in Hebrew; this was in marked contrast to the situation in Tunisia and Morocco. A book recounting the story of the Algerian Jews in World War II (they played an important role in the organization of the American landing in November, 1942) was published by the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine.

TUNISIA

Jewish Population

JURIDICALLY, there were in Tunisia two distinct groups of Jews: Tunisian Jews proper, who were subjects of the Bey, and Jews of French nationality born in Tunisia or Jews of foreign origin, who were now French nationals. According to the last available census (1948), the Tunisian Jewish population proper amounted to 70,971 out of a total Jewish population estimated at 105,000. The total population of Tunisia, Jewish and non-Jewish, was 3,990,952. Jews in Tunisia played an important role in industry (45.5 per cent being employed in that field); in commerce (33.1 per cent); in the liberal professions (8.9 per cent); and in administration and transport (5.9 per cent).

Unlike the scattered Jews of Algeria, those of Tunisia were concentrated in some forty principal centers. More than half of the population was to be found in the Tunis area which with its 65,000 Jewish inhabitants was the second largest Jewish center in North Africa (Casablanca being the first). After Tunis there was Sfax, with 4,223 Jewish inhabitants; Djerba, with 4,294 inhabitants; Sousse, 3,679; Gabes, 3,663; and Bizerta, 2,350.

According to the last census, of every 1,000 Jews of Tunisian nationality, 443 were between the ages of 9 and 19; 484 between the ages of 20 and 59; and 73 were sixty years and older. These statistics reveal how long-lived was the Jewish population, and also its exceptionally high birth rate.

¹ For statistics of immigration of North African Jews to Israel see *Immigration to Israel*, p. 421.

Civic Status

At the beginning of 1951 a political crisis ended, after long debate, in a reform of the Tunisian Protectorate. New powers were conceded to the local authorities and a number of important places in the administration of the Protectorate were assured to Tunisians. Needless to say, no distinction was to be made between Mohammedan and Jew in appointments to these positions. The result of this was expected to be a large increase in the number of Jews presently employed in the public administration (320, or 1.6 per cent of the total population), especially in the number occupying lower-ranking positions.

Since 1923, Jewish subjects of the Bey had been able to acquire French citizenship if they so desired. By 1930, 5,569 Tunisian Jews had availed themselves of this opportunity. Since 1930 another 2,000 persons or so had acquired French citizenship, which was automatically extended to the descendants of naturalized persons. The number of Tunisian Jews possessing French citizenship was estimated at about 35,000.

Anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism was never strong in Tunisia, either in the European population, which always felt a close bond with the Jews, or in the Mohammedan population, which as a rule was friendlier than its coreligionists elsewhere in North Africa. The year 1951 was an entirely peaceful one in this regard everywhere in the country. There was a tacit agreement between Mohammedans and Jews to ignore the Palestinian question, which was a potential source of friction. Occasionally, the Tunisian Arabic press reproached Tunisian Jews for a too-open display of their Zionist sentiments.

Community Life

Tunis, with its 65,000 Jewish inhabitants, was the center of the Jewish life of the Protectorate. The beginning of 1951 was marked by the election of members to the city's Jewish community council. After a bitter contest, the ticket headed by Charles Haddad was victorious. This group represented elements attached to the traditional values of Judaism; though markedly sympathetic to Israel, it was not explicitly Zionist. The new president of the community undertook to carry out an ambitious program, but it was too early at the time of writing to judge the results of his efforts.

Cultural Life

A widespread and vital Jewish press existed not only in Tunisia, but (with the exception of Algeria) in all of North Africa. A weekly program devoted to Jewish life was broadcast over the radio. A federation of Jewish youth movements was recently constituted under the direction of the Union of Jewish Students of Tunisia.

Jewish Education

The Jewish student body was divided as follows:

<i>Educational Division</i>	<i>Number</i>
Primary.....	10,964
Vocational.....	943
Secondary.....	985
Higher.....	93
Private (decree of January 24, 1920).....	979
TOTAL.....	13,964

Of these 13,964 students, 3,344 attended the five schools of the Alliance Israélite Universelle. These figures testify to the great progress that had been made in a country where illiteracy was so widespread. In the south of Tunisia, however, above all in Djerba, there were Jewish communities which refused to send their children to the French schools; they gave as their reason for this their hope of emigrating to Israel in the near future.

The ORT and Alliance opened a vocational school at which instruction was being given to more than 100 students. This school was a temporary one, to be replaced by a large building whose construction was begun in the spring of 1951.

Social Services

The OSE, under the presidency of Dr. Roger Nataf, who was recently appointed to the World Health Organization as an authority on trachoma, gave invaluable aid to the Jewish population, particularly in the south, where there were five dispensaries to care for the population. In certain regions the infant mortality rate fell 75 per cent following the establishment of these dispensaries.

In the schools maintained by the Alliance the welfare project *Nos Petits*, also under the direction of Dr. Nataf, distributed tons of food and clothing. It was able to enlarge its activities in 1951 thanks to the support of the JDC.

In 1951 the UNICEF completed its campaign against tuberculosis. It was hoped that in 1952 Tunisia would witness the initiation of an international campaign against trachoma.

Zionism

A large part of the Jewish population of Tunisia hoped eventually to settle in Israel. Especially in the south, where French influence was least felt, there was a feeling that a general exodus would take place as soon as Israel again opened its doors to immigrants from North Africa. Zionist organizations were very active. For the poorer class of Jews, Israel remained a hope and goal illuminating their wretched daily life. At the end of 1949 it was estimated that 7.7 per cent of all Tunisian Jews had departed for Israel. In May, 1950, the figure was 8.2 per cent; in 1951, around 10 per cent. The Sephardic problem in Israel greatly interested the Tunisian Jewish population and was often discussed in the local press.