

TUNISIA

IT WAS ESTIMATED in 1950 that the Jewish population of Tunisia was about 105,000. Of this number some 80,000 were subjects of the Bey of Tunisia, the rest mainly French. According to local reports, 70,000 Jews were residing in the city of Tunis in 1950. Occupational distribution of the Jews is shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2
OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF TUNISIAN JEWS ^a

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Commerce and peddling	51.8
Handicraft and industry	22.3
Labor	14.5
Public service and professions	7.0
Agriculture	0.4
Others	4.0
	<hr/> 100.0

^a Based on reports for 1949 in JDC files.

Civic and Political Status

The French Jews in Tunisia enjoyed all the rights and privileges of the non-Jewish French population. The Jews, who were Tunisian subjects, also had a status approximately equal to that of Moslems and enjoyed all the opportunities afforded other groups in Tunisia. There were, however, certain limitations as far as Jewish participation in public administration was concerned.

Communal Organization

Since 1948 there had existed in Tunisia a Federation of Jewish Communities which co-ordinated the efforts of local groups in every field of Jewish endeavor. During 1949 the Federation of Jewish Communities was presided over by Elie Nataf; René Cohen-Hadria was the secretary-general. Among the important communities represented in addition to that of Tunis (Elie Nataf, chairman), the following may be noted: Bizerte (Israel Archi), Sfax (Charles Satta), Sousse (Nessim Darmoni).

Tunisian Jews continued to live under special personal statutes affecting marriage, divorce, inheritance rights, etc., subjects which were within the jurisdiction of special rabbinical courts. During 1949 Rabbi David Benbaron, Grand Rabbin de Tunisie, was president of the Rabbinical Tribunal in Tunis.

Jewish Education

Large numbers of Jewish children were attending public schools, and, in addition, 3,344 children were enrolled in five Alliance Israélite Universelle

schools.⁶ During 1949 the Alliance intensified its effort on behalf of children of pre-school age by opening kindergartens for small boys and girls. As in other areas of North Africa, the work of the Alliance Israélite Universelle in Tunisia exceeded its purely educational aspects, and deserves special mention as a social factor of considerable importance in the community.

A school of talmudic law (Hevrath Limud Ha'talmoud) functioned under the aegis of the Chief Rabbi, and there were also some traditional schools (Ohr Hathorah) where, in addition to religious subjects, Hebrew and some French were taught. Indicative of the state of mind of Tunisian Jewish youth were the manifold activities in the field of education and sport. In Tunis alone several such groups were active, including the Alliance Sportive de Tunis and the Union Herzlia, and the Éclaireurs (Boy Scouts).

Zionism

Living with a greater degree of security and on a much higher social and cultural level than the Jews of Morocco, Tunisian Jews had developed a strongly organized Zionist movement with articulate Zionist political groups and organizations. Among these may be mentioned the Brith Trumpeldor, Mizrachi, Women's International Zionist Organization (WIZO), Keren Kayemeth (Jewish National Fund), and Thorah Va'avoda (Orthodox Halutz movement). It may be interesting to note the existence in the Zionist ranks of a strong militant Revisionist feeling.

Social Services

A large number of welfare and social service agencies provided for the needy in the various cities of Tunisia. Most of these agencies were organized independently of the communities and were active in separate specialized fields. An important medical program was carried out by OSE, which in 1949 had its centers in Djerba, Ariana, Souse, Sfax, and Bizerte. Some of the local agencies were supported by JDC, as were the activities of OSE. In January, 1950, the JDC feeding program provided for some 4,200 children in addition to 2,000 infants receiving aid at the milk stations of OSE.

ALGERIA

THE STATUS OF the approximately 130,000 Algerian Jews was altogether different from that of Jews in Morocco and Tunisia. Except for small groups in the southern territory the Algerian Jews were French citizens under the *Loi Crémieux* of 1870, and enjoyed all the rights of such citizenship. Culturally and socially also, they belonged to France.

⁶ *Op. cit.*, 40-41, February-March, 1950.