North Africa

TUNISIA

During the period under review (July 1, 1957, to June 30, 1958), Tunisia was occupied with the consolidation of its independence and sovereignty. The year also saw a major alteration in the form of the regime. On July 25, 1957, the monarchy was abolished and Tunisia proclaimed a republic, with Habib Bourguiba as president—both chief of state and chief of government. The new republic was quickly recognized by all foreign countries.

In the negotiations following the French aerial bombing of the Tunisian village of Sakiet-Sidi-Youssef, near the Algerian border, in February 1958 (see below), Tunisia obtained an agreement in June for the evacuation of French troops.

In November 1957 Tunisia succeeded in obtaining arms from the United States and Great Britain, and in the following month she also received a small quantity from Egypt. During the year Tunisia signed commercial agreements with a large number of countries.

In the new government formed in July 1957, André Barouch, a Jew, remained as secretary of state for public works and housing.

A major reform was the abolition of the religious foundations known as habous or waqf. The first stage of this reform, affecting public habous foundations, had taken place in May 1956. The second and final stage, abolishing private habous foundations and those of mosques, took place in July 1957. Thus properties formerly held in mortmain, representing between a fourth and a third of all rural property, now became freely transferable. This liquidation of a very ancient Moslem institution was a daring reform for the young Tunisian state to undertake.

Franco-Tunisian Relations

Relations between Tunisia and France were strained for a number of reasons, arising primarily from the war in Algeria, at various times during the period under review. One incident took place in September 1957, about twelve miles from the Algerian border. The French government invoking the right of pursuit, the Tunisian government opposed that of legitimate defense and proposed to bring the matter before international bodies and to reconsider the agreements of June 1957 on the presence of French troops in Tunisia. Other incidents, on which the French and Tunisian versions of events differed, occurred in September and October.

The February 1958 Sakiet-Sidi-Youssef incident had been preceded by another in January, but was far more serious. French planes bombed the
village and left it almost entirely in ruins, with 86 dead and 100 wounded, many seriously. The Tunisian ambassador was recalled from Paris, and the French ambassador from Tunis. On February 13 Tunisia placed the matter before the United Nations Security Council. On February 16 Great Britain and the United States offered their good offices, which both parties accepted. Harold Beeley was designated as the British representative in the discussions and Robert Murphy as the United States representative. On February 18 the Security Council adjourned the discussion to permit the Anglo-American good-offices mission to deal with the question. After two months the mission proposed a compromise which the French government of Félix Gaillard was ready to accept. But the Gaillard government was defeated on the issue on April 15 (see p. 156). Its fall led to a prolonged crisis, insurrection in Algiers, the brief installation of a new cabinet under Pierre Pflimlin, and the coming to power of General Charles de Gaulle on June 1 (see p. 156). Meanwhile two further incidents in southern Tunisia, in Remada on May 20 and Gafsa on May 22, led to the reopening of the complaint before the Security Council. The Security Council set the Tunisian complaint and the French counter-complaint for discussion on June 4, but General de Gaulle’s accession to power in France led to postponement to June 18.

On June 17 direct negotiations between France and Tunisia resulted in an agreement for the evacuation of French troops, except for those in the Bizerte area. All troops were to leave Tunisia by October 17, and by then negotiations in regard to Bizerte were to begin. This agreement was made known to the Security Council at its session of June 18. French Ambassador to Tunisia Georges Gorse took up his post on June 22, and Tunisian Ambassador Mohammed Masmoudi returned to Paris on June 29. The two governments were now in a position to discuss the remaining questions: land ownership, the future status of the bank of issue, technical and financial assistance, and the application of the cultural agreements of 1955.

As a result of the events of Sakiet-Sidi-Youssef, over 600 persons were removed from the frontier area and took refuge in Tunis. A majority, of French nationality, abandoned their properties and businesses. Many Frenchmen, most of them residents of Bizerte, were expelled from the country, and a number of French farmers were arrested for possession of arms. On May 11 they were released on probation by the magistrate, and by the end of June the authorities began to let some farmers return to their lands.

After May 10, 1958, the police required entry visas of French citizens, including residents of Tunisia, and shortly afterwards the French government imposed the same requirement on Tunisians going to France.

In February 1958 a young Tunisian, Salah ben Hamidane Nedjar, secretly attempted to slip across the frontier between Libya and Tunisia. He carried hand grenades, other weapons, and documents, including handwritten letters from Salah ben Youssef to 41 Tunisians urging the overthrow of the government and the assassination of President Bourguiba. Nedjar succeeded in escaping. On February 28, 1958, a communiqué in the newspapers announced that “authorized circles confirm the opening of an investigation into a plot against the external security of the state.”

At a press conference on March 4, high government officials stressed that
Salah Nedjar carried an Egyptian laissez passer visaed by the Libyan ambassador in Cairo, to which the Tunisian government attached great importance, and that the letters he carried showed the existence of a previous correspondence between Salah ben Youssef and the addressees. At the end of the period under review, the alleged conspirators had not been tried. Relations between Tunisia and Egypt were scarcely cordial after this, but at the time of writing a complete break of relations had not taken place.

Law No. 2 of 1957 provided for the confiscation of the property of the bey's family, excluding property acquired through inheritance. At the beginning of March 1958, the affair of the beylical family jewels exploded. A large part of the jewels, which had been secreted with third parties to avoid their confiscation, were found in the possession of the brother-in-law of former Premier Tahar ben Amar, who had signed the autonomy conventions of June 3, 1955, and the Protocol of Independence of March 20, 1956. Tahar ben Amar, his wife, his brother-in-law, and various other persons were arrested and imprisoned, but at the time of writing the case had not yet come to trial and no one had been released on bail.

The Arabic daily As-Sabah was suspended in August 1957 but was authorized to reappear on March 20, 1958, the anniversary of Tunisian independence. Two French-language journalists, one French and the other Italian, were expelled from Tunisia at the end of May 1958.

**Economic Situation**

The economic situation of Tunisia, an essentially agricultural country, improved somewhat as a result of good harvests, but commerce was in difficulties. There were some foreign investments, notably in exploration for oil. While there was some improvement in the balance of payments, it continued negative, and Tunisia remained in need of foreign assistance. It was estimated that over a period of ten years Tunisia would need foreign aid amounting to 350,000 million French francs.

France, which had promised 16,000 million francs in aid in April 1957, suspended this assistance in the following month, as a result of a Franco-Tunisian clash. In July 1957 France agreed to unblock 1,500 million francs, but Franco-Tunisian relations deteriorated so greatly as a result of the events previously described, especially those at Sakiet-Sidi-Youssef, that there could be no question of financial aid from France.

The United States continued to give Tunisia substantial aid. On April 8, 1958, Ambassador Mongi Slim signed an agreement with the United States International Cooperation Administration providing for the delivery of 20,000 tons of wheat as the first step in a program designed to help Tunisia fight unemployment. The United States gave $8 million for special economic aid in 1957 and $15 million in the first half of 1958, of which $3 million was reserved for the Tunisian Bank Company. Technical assistance came to $.5 million in 1957 and $1.2 million in 1958. In addition, there were wheat shipments, assistance to children, aid for Algerian refugees, and aid for Sakiet-Sidi-Youssef. A new aid program for the fiscal year July 1958–June 1959 was under discussion in Washington, D. C.
Jewish Population

In the absence of any census since February 1956, the only available figures were those for the distribution of matzot during Passover 1958. The number of Jews in a total Tunisian population of 3,700,000 was between 70,000 and 80,000, and the excess of births over deaths was less than the number of emigrants. About 75 per cent of the Jewish population lived in Tunis and its suburbs. There were about 3,000 in Sfax, 3,000 in Sousse, 2,000 in Djerba, 1,300 in Bizerte and Menzel-Bourguiba, 1,000 in Gabès, 1,100 in Nabeul, 800 in Kairouan, Gafsa, and Kebili, 500 in Zarzis, and 500 in Béja.

Civic and Political Status

The government continued to avoid all discrimination during the period under review. In September 1957, 12 Jewish magistrates were appointed. This was significant progress, because formerly Jews were not permitted to exercise judicial functions. The organ of the Old Destour Party, L'Istiqlal, opposed these appointments in its issues of August 23, September 6, and October 11, on the ground that Jews should not "be judges in the disputes of Moslems" and that it was "contrary to logic, to tradition, and to Islamic law."

In June 1958, in an interview with Chet Huntley of the American NBC television network, President Bourguiba declared:

Tunisian Jews are completely assimilated with Tunisian Moslems. They have the same rights and the same duties. They are part of the Tunisian nation in exactly the same sense. They belong to our party. They participated in the struggle; some of them were put in concentration camps along with us. Israel? I think that's a different question. We have made the Tunisian Jews citizens. But we have not recognized the State of Israel because we believe it was created by an act of violation and spoliation.

The weekly L'Action published the full text of this interview under the heading: "The Jewish problem is one thing, the problem of Israel is a different one."

On December 26, 1957, President Bourguiba complained that there had been inadequate subscriptions for the shares of the Tunisian Bank Company, to be financed exclusively by Tunisian funds. (Of its 400-million-francs capital, 210 million were to be furnished by the Tunisian state, with the assistance of the United States International Cooperation Administration.) But he added: "Fortunately, our Israeliite brothers have shown themselves more impressed; they understand the importance of this company."

In 1957 and 1958, the Tunisian Jewish communities did not receive their former government subsidy of 20 million francs a year.

A decree of September 27, 1957, abolished the rabbinical tribunals and placed Tunisian Jews under the Code of Personal Status promulgated on August 13, 1956. The Code of Personal Status was essentially inspired by Moslem law. Tunisian Jews were therefore brought under the jurisdiction of a code at least as outmoded as the Jewish law that some had complained of, but not having the merit of being their own.

Secretary of State for Justice Ahmed Mestiri, speaking on July 16, 1958, at
the installation of the temporary management committee of the Jewish community in Tunis (see above), again proclaimed the equality of rights and duties of Jews in Tunisia. He recalled that they had been appointed ministers and judges, and that all public positions were open to them. He added that Jewish women had been emancipated—given the vote, receiving the right of inheritance, and freed from the levirate.

**Emigration**

Jewish emigration to Israel, which had declined the previous year, fell still further to about 1,800 in the period under review. About 1,300 emigrants went to France, and 200 to other countries, mainly Canada. The United HIAS Service continued to give substantial aid.

Mestiri, in his speech of July 16, 1958, severely criticized those who remained in Tunisia but turned their eyes toward Israel. He said that in their own interest and that of Tunisia, they should leave the country and that they would not be prevented from departing; moreover, the government would take the initiative to compel the departure of those who maintained more or less secret ties with Zionist organizations, sowing discord in the country and disturbing social peace. This statement agitated the Jewish population and emigration to Israel continued to diminish.

**Communal Organization and Communal Affairs**

Government efforts to develop a basis for the organization of the Jewish community within the country continued during the period under review. In December 1957, Mestiri called a conference of Jewish leaders with varying points of view to discuss the question. In April he submitted a draft law to Tunisian Jewish leaders, who proposed certain changes, some of which were incorporated. The law established a temporary management committee of the Jewish Community of Tunisia and took effect on July 11, 1958. It dissolved the old communal council of Tunis, the welfare funds, and the Jewish religious bodies functioning in the interior of the country. Its preamble stated that it was intended to reform the administration of Jewish worship in order to adapt it to the requirements arising from the independence of the country and the profound changes which have taken place in its institutions . . . the present structure and functions of the bodies charged with the conduct of the Jewish religion no longer correspond to the new statute of the state, which guarantees equal rights and duties to all citizens without discrimination.

The new system established by the law was similar to that of the religious associations functioning in France. Such associations were to be concerned with: 1. the administration of Jewish religious affairs, including the management of properties; the organization and upkeep of synagogues; burials; ritual slaughter; *kashrut*, and *matzot*; 2. assistance of a religious nature to the Jewish poor; 3. religious education, and 4. consideration of all questions affecting Jewish worship, and particularly the nomination of the chief rabbi of Tunisia.
The necessary funds were to come from the revenues of the associations' properties, special taxes, gifts and legacies, offerings and fees for religious ceremonies and services, collections from members, subsidies received from international welfare organizations with the approval of the government, and public subsidies.

The associations were to be run by administrative councils with 5 to 15 members, elected by general assemblies. Voters were to be Jews of both sexes over 20, and candidates had to be Tunisian citizens over 30. The councils were to direct the associations, represent them before the authorities and in the courts, administer and dispose of their property, decide on their budgets, appoint religious officials other than rabbis, and in general exercise the functions of the religious associations. The secretary of state for the interior would have the power to remove members of the councils for due and sufficient reason related to public order. The government could also dissolve an association by decree for grave reasons; in that event, in the absence of other legal provision, the property of such an association was to be transferred to another association with the same purpose.

The law provided for the appointment of the chief rabbi by decree, after the customary consultations. The chief rabbi was designated as the spiritual head of the Jews residing in the republic, with control over synagogues and establishments for religious instruction; the religious associations were obliged to consult him in the appointment of rabbis. Rabbis were to be designated by orders of the secretary of state for justice.

The law did not permit the new institutions to undertake any assistance other than of a religious character. At the same time, it assigned to them the proceeds of the special taxes on kosher meat, sacramental wine, etc., which had always been used by the communities to meet their welfare budgets. Thus the religious associations had important resources at their disposal, including the taxes and subsidies from foreign organizations mentioned in the law, which would not be available to welfare organizations that might be created. The religious associations were permitted to give religious but not cultural instruction. Moreover, there was no provision for a federation of religious associations.

Religious Life

There were no difficulties in the way of Jewish religious life. Shehitah was practiced in the municipal slaughterhouses, kosher food was available in restaurants vigilantly supervised by the grand rabbinate, matzot were prepared, the Sabbath and religious holidays were observed, worship in the synagogues and pilgrimages to the tombs of venerated rabbis continued.

A problem arose when the municipality of Tunis claimed that the ancient cemetery in the heart of the city was its property. Negotiations between the Tunis community and the city failed to produce an agreement, and the municipality decided in June 1958 to take possession and transport the bones elsewhere, while observing the requirements of Jewish law. But it was discovered, after some weeks of work, that this would be slow and costly. The municipality therefore decided to reconsider the question.
Social Service

Until their dissolution, the Jewish communities continued to furnish the various forms of assistance which they had customarily supplied—family relief, aid to students, distribution of matzot at Passover, etc. They also helped such organizations as the Oeuvre de Nos Petits (Child Care Association), Organization for Rehabilitation Through Training (ORT), Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants Israélites (OSE), and Oeuvre de l’Habillement (Clothing Fund), but the amount of their assistance to these organizations was substantially reduced as a result of the government’s failure to pay the subsidy.

L’Oeuvre de Nos Petits continued to operate canteens for school children in Tunis and other cities of the interior, supplying almost 5,000 children with breakfast, a mid-day meal, and an afternoon snack. In the winter it supplied the same children with warm clothing and shoes, and in the summer gave clothing and meals to 1,500 children in camp. OSE continued to operate a number of dispensaries in Tunis and the interior. Both organizations were aided substantially by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), L’Oeuvre de Nos Petits also receiving surplus foods from the United States Department of Agriculture. Among the other organizations which did valuable work were the Oeuvre de la Protection de la Jeune Fille Juive (Protection for Jewish Girls), the Oeuvre des Couvertures (Blanket Fund), and La Bouchée de Pain (Morsel of Bread).

The Caisse Israélite de Relèvement Economique (CIRE; Jewish Economic Assistance Fund) continued its activity, making 318 loans during the period under review, for a total of 20,018,500 francs, 99.5 per cent of which were repaid. COGET, the federation of Jewish charities established in June 1956, functioned in a sporadic and intermittent manner. The community house begun in 1955 (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1957 [Vol. 58], pp. 349-350) had not yet come into existence, about 25 million francs still being needed for its construction and equipment. More assistance was asked of the JDC, which had already contributed 15 million francs.

Education

Education in Tunisia was supported partly by the secretariat of state for national education, and partly by the French cultural mission. The schools of the Alliance Israélite Universelle came under the jurisdiction of the secretariat for national education, and hence were introducing the Arabic language in the preparatory grades. Only a small proportion of the French teachers who had left could be replaced, and the government appealed to all holders of the baccalaureate, and to graduates of Sadiki College, a Tunisian institution where teaching was conducted in French and supplemented by Arabic, to fill in as teachers. In spite of these difficulties, the schools were able to open successfully for the 1957 school year.

At the opening of the school year, Secretary of State for National Education Lamine Chabbi said that beyond the first two years of school, complete Arabization would not be possible, and that about a third of the teaching would be in French. The government sharply increased the appropriation for scholar-
ships to 100,000,000 francs, as against a previous maximum of 48,000,000, and the number of children served by canteens was increased from 24,000 to 74,000.

The government was planning an educational reform. Anomalies going back to Napoleon I and difficulties resulting from the dual secular and religious systems were to be eliminated, and the system was to be adapted to the needs of the country, in order to supply it with enough trained personnel. Technical committees were preparing a reform in time for it to take effect in October 1958.

In February 1958, the students of the Zitounian schools (those under the supervision of the Grand Mosque)—and more especially their teachers, whose jobs were involved—protested against the proposed abolition of Zitounian education. They asserted that the value of this education lay in its fundamental Islamic principles and its refusal to separate itself from the Arabic language. The Union Générale des Étudiants Tunisiens (UGET; General Union of Tunisian Students) supported the reform, asserting that the need for it was shown by the archaic character of Zitounian education. The UGET declared that it was universally admitted that Arabic was an unsatisfactory language for instruction in science, and that the large number of students in the Zitounian schools (about 10,000) were causing Tunisia to lag behind in scientific progress.

The instruction offered by the Tunisian ORT was increasingly sought after and appreciated. Its Ariana school, near Tunis, had 430 students, including 78 at the girls' school; 443 graduates who had completed their apprenticeships became journeymen or helpers. ORT graduates did substantially better than graduates of other trade schools in their examinations.

The two kindergartens in Tunis and those in La Goulette, l'Ariana, Sfax, Sousse, Gabès, and Djerba continued their activity, though the number of children enrolled fell slightly as a result of emigration. In some interior cities it was hard to replace teachers who had left. JDC supplied appreciable help. Modern Hebrew was taught in evening courses in Tunis, Sousse, Sfax, and Gabès.

**Zionism and Relations with Israel**

There was no Zionist activity in Tunisia, and no relations between Tunisia and Israel. No funds were raised for Israel in the period under review. In the preceding year a small collection did take place, over the opposition of local Jewish leaders. The collectors were prosecuted and on July 17, 1958, were given a two months' prison term.

**Cultural Activity**

During the year under review, the activities of the two long-established Jewish cultural groups, Les Compagnons des Arts and Ha-Kol, diminished. The former staged only one play, *La Maison du Bon Dieu* by Edmond Fleg. Ha-Kol did not present any plays, but continued to supply Radio Tunisiennne (a part of the French network) with the weekly half-hour program "Images et Pensées Juives" (Jewish Thought and Image).
Personalia

A distinguished leader of the Tunis community, Serge Moatti, died suddenly in Paris on August 16, 1957. A journalist by profession, he had led the Socialist party for many years and was a former member of the Grand Council.

MOROCCO

Two years after gaining its independence, Morocco was still trying to develop a stable government leadership and to shape its fundamental governmental institutions. All ministers held office at the invitation of King Mohammed V, who ruled by decree. The advisory Consultative Assembly had no real powers. There were plans to develop truly representative bodies, working up from the communal to the provincial and finally to the national level, but no start in this direction was expected before the middle of 1959, at the earliest. The central administration still suffered from a serious shortage of qualified personnel. Moreover, the government had to cope with tribal unrest, and even incidents of terrorism such as had marked the Moroccan struggle against the French years before. To preserve internal peace, the king often had to throw his immense personal prestige into the scale or send his son Prince Moulay Hassan to the scene of trouble. While matters remained essentially under control, there were serious rumblings of discontent.

Politics

A subtle and continuous struggle took place in the period under review (November 1957–November 1958) over Morocco’s future. This struggle had gone on since the country became independent, but became more acute after April 1958 and prevented effective government action. The chief factors in this struggle were the king, the rallying point of Moroccan independence; the Istiqlal party, by far the strongest political force in the country, with its supporters in the labor federation, the Union Moroccaine de Travail (UMT); the Democratic Independence party (PDI), which, though much smaller than the Istiqlal and losing influence, still had some following, and various independent personalities and groups, some of whom had tribal support. The first Moroccan cabinet, appointed early in 1956, was presented as a national-union front and balanced Istiqlal, PDI, and independent forces under Premier Si Bekkai. It included many men whose first allegiance was to the king, rather than to any of the parties. In October 1957, Istiqlal forced the ouster of the PDI and subsequently eased out various independents. Finally, in April 1958, it insisted on ruling the country alone. Si Bekkai resigned just before it was clear that Istiqlal would have its way, his attempts at creating an effective political opposition meeting with no success. Under Istiqlal pressure, the king had to yield—but he made sure that certain key positions, like command of the internal-security forces, stayed in the hands of “the king’s men.” And in
May 1958 he issued a royal charter providing for the eventual establishment of a deliberative assembly elected by universal suffrage, to share his legislative powers. Istiqlal was by no means happy about this. Sometimes openly, sometimes by implication, it had been striving to present itself as the only true representative of the Moroccan people, arguing that it should guide Morocco's destiny, and that the times were too troubled to permit any kind of opposition. In the new cabinet Foreign Minister Ahmed Balafrej became premier, while retaining his old post as well. The one Jew in the two Bekkai cabinets, Leon Benzaquen, an independent who had held the post of minister of post, telegraph, and telephone, was not reappointed. Some observers saw in this a sign that Istiqlal felt it no longer had to pay attention to Jewish opinion, inside Morocco or out; others held that it was simply part of the Istiqlal policy of forcing out all independents.

As soon as it came to power, Istiqlal was riven with internal differences. To some degree, these were ideological, but in part, they resulted from internal jealousies, and in part from a feeling of frustration among certain leaders. They felt that although Istiqlal was now responsible for government in the eyes of the people, it did not yet really rule. The police and the army, commanded by Prince Moulay Hassan, were still kept out of its grasp. Party chiefs who had expected to be ministers but had not been appointed were unhappy that Istiqlal had not insisted on making its own cabinet choices. And, worst of all, the party was divided as to the line to follow—a conservative, bourgeois line or a more socialist and Jacobin one.

Hundreds of thousands of Moroccans had no jobs or earned only a pittance. Production in the cities, such as Casablanca, had decreased notably, to the detriment of the terribly poor Moroccan sub-proletariat. Emotional satisfaction with independence was no longer enough to offset an economic discontent which the labor unions were sometimes scarcely able to contain. Finally, there was grumbling among the small but important Moroccan middle class that “those from Fez”—whence came many of the more conservative Istiqlal leaders—were profiting at the expense of others. By the fall of 1958, some of the mountain tribes had taken up arms, putting them down reluctantly after some skirmishing with government troops. Isolated incidents of terrorism were again being reported.

During the second half of 1958, therefore, Istiqlal's position was weakened and that of the king strengthened. Neither could hope to exercise real control without the support of the other. But Istiqlal still had to resolve its internal differences and come to a clear and satisfactory division of powers with the king. Mohammed V seemed determined to avoid facing Istiqlal alone, and wanted a loyal and effective opposition to operate, with himself as arbiter. In November he issued a new royal charter, dealing with the rights of political parties. How the new charter would be applied remained to be seen.

**Foreign Relations**

Morocco was in need of great economic aid from the outside. Her major source of assistance was France, with supplementary aid coming from the United States to the extent of $30 million in 1958. Morocco’s problem was
how to assert her independence of countries on which she was economically dependent.

Morocco was also torn between the Western and Arab worlds. The Moslem faith of its masses pushed Morocco towards closer ties with the rest of the Moslem world, and certain of its leaders (encouraged by overtures from Poland and Red China during the year) desired a neutralist foreign policy similar to Nasser's. Geography, knowledge that it needed Western help, and antagonism to Nasser's claims to hegemony in the Arab world pushed Morocco in the other direction. Worst of all the continuation of the French war with the Algerian nationalists continually forced Morocco to make a choice. The Algerian nationalist leaders insisted that Morocco denounce the French unreservedly and help them in their fight. Together with Tunisia, Morocco did enter into a Maghreb agreement with the Algerians, the three parties agreeing to undertake certain kinds of action only in common. It recognized the Front of National Liberation (FLN) as the legitimate government of Algeria. But it would not break with France, seeking rather to bring both sides to a peace table.

**Jewish Emigration**

Absorbed with other problems, the Moroccan government paid scant attention to the estimated 200,000 Jews included among the country's 10 million people. Government attitudes toward the Jewish population and its problems seemed to harden early in 1958, so that in certain important respects Moroccan Jews were worse off than the year before. In December 1957, when the king visited the United States, there was still hope for a change in Morocco's restrictions on Jewish emigration. Indeed, through the king's intervention, the policy was at that time alleviated in certain details. World Jewish Congress leaders in the United States announced in December 1957 that Morocco would permit some 5,000 Jews a month to go to Israel, if they went under the aegis of some private travel agency. But Morocco's restrictive emigration policy was confirmed and consistently applied in 1958. For the first time Jews were prosecuted on charges of having stimulated and organized Jewish migration. An expected invitation from the ministry of interior to Jewish community leaders, to discuss proposals they had made concerning the status of Jewish community organizations, never came. There was no real Jewish community leadership within Morocco to take up with the government problems affecting Jews. Nor were Moroccan ministers unduly concerned with representations from outside Jewish organizations.

A perceptible strengthening of pan-Arab sentiment during the year led to a sharper tone in regard to Zionism and Israel. The physical security of Jews in Morocco was not affected. (One exception was Joseph Sadoun, father of seven children, who was killed by a bomb in the town of Oujda on the eve of Passover. It was rumored that Sadoun, a newcomer to Oujda, had been killed by Algerian nationalists when he refused to pay a "tax" levied in this Moroccan-Algerian border city for support of the FLN.) It was only natural, however, for Jews to feel increased uneasiness under the circumstances.

Nevertheless, organizations such as the American Jewish Joint Distribution
Committee (JDC) were able to continue and in some instances to expand their operations. Local Jewish institutions met with some difficulties, but it was never clear whether this was due to central government policy or to overzealous interpretation by local officialdom.

By far the greatest problem Jews faced in their relations with the Moroccan government was that of emigration: meaning, really, emigration to Israel, which the Moroccan government had apparently decided to halt. From 1948 through the summer of 1956 some 135,000 Jews went from Morocco to Israel. In the next year, 10,000 more followed, many illegally. The government obviously knew about this illegal movement and closed its eyes, even while officially denouncing it. But as the government had closed down legal movement in 1956, so it clamped down on illegal movement in the fall of 1957. Moroccan authorities halted the departure of some 1,200 Jews from the hinterland who had made their way to Tangiers, and picked up another 200 near Tetuan. Though they had pulled up their stakes in the country and could not go back, they were not permitted to leave, despite pressure from outside Jewish organizations. And at the time of writing, over a year later, they were still in Tangiers (the Jews from Tetuan had been brought there too) as charity wards. Moreover, when the police took action against the would-be emigrants in the fall of 1957, they also decreed that thereafter, Tetuan Jews who wanted to make any trip, inside Morocco or out of it, would need a police permit. This was granted only when some other person stood bond for the one desiring to make the trip. A petition to the king against this measure was without result. So, too, was intervention by the then Minister Benzaquen with his colleague the minister of the interior, for the latter declared that he had no control over the frontier police. And when the city of Tangiers was effectively brought under Moroccan jurisdiction at the end of 1957 and orders were given concerning exit and entry visas to that city, there were special instructions concerning the granting of such visas to Jews. Thus, Jews were treated differently from other Moroccans, although they supposedly enjoyed equal rights and responsibilities. At about this period, too, police entered Jewish homes in the capital city of Rabat on various pretexts and questioned people about their connections with Israel or with Israeli citizens. This was stopped by instructions from the king, while he was in the United States in December 1958. Jewish fears diminished in the next few months; but there was resentment at being “prisoners” in Morocco, even among the great number who had never had any intention of leaving.

In the summer of 1958 matters again took a turn for the worse. After months of detention and preliminary examination the government brought to trial a small group of Jews picked up when the would-be Jewish emigrants in Tangiers and Tetuan had been halted at the frontiers. They were charged with “threatening the internal and external security of the state, and propaganda and agitation against the established order.” They were brilliantly defended by Abdelkrim Benjelloun, PDI leader who had been finance minister in the first Si Bekkai cabinet. He argued that there was no law forbidding Jews to quit the country, or to move about in it; accused the administration of arbitrary action that had no legal basis, and recalled to the court that Morocco had signed the UN Human Rights Charter calling for freedom of
Nevertheless, the court gave jail sentences of ten months to three years to four of the defendants. The effect of the trial was to increase the fears of Moroccan Jews. It also led one leading Moroccan Jewish intellectual who had strongly supported national independence, Carlos de Nesry, to ask in the October-November 1958 issue of Information Juive, of Algeria, the only Jewish paper printed in North Africa, whether he had been mistaken in believing that Jews could live peaceably in an independent Morocco.

The Moroccan government did not interfere with emigration to countries other than Israel. United HIAS Service (UHS) reported moving some 568 persons from Morocco from July 1957 to July 1958, primarily to Canada. But the authorities' fear that persons granted exit visas to other lands might go on to Israel undoubtedly led to a cut in emigration to countries other than Israel. The number of Jews leaving Morocco to settle in France dropped sharply, according to Jewish welfare organizations in France.

Within Morocco only one voice was raised publicly against the government's emigration policy during the year. The National Union of Moroccan Students, meeting in Tetuan at the end of July, declared:

Considering that it is a fact that Zionist propaganda continues to divide Moroccan citizens . . . that citizens of the Jewish religion, misled by this propaganda, which is against the national interest, emigrate to Israel . . . that the repeated refusal of passports to these Moroccan citizens in no wise solves the problem . . . that these arbitrary measures only aggravate a spirit of being different fostered by imperialism and its ally Zionism . . . that the integration of this element of the Moroccan people is indispensable to the national unity . . . and considering that this integration can come about only through development and education in the national spirit of future generations on the benches of a single school system for all Moroccans, the Third Congress of the Union asks:

That the government and natural organizations combat Zionist propaganda and set to work by all possible means to eliminate prejudices, in keeping with the new spirit that should characterize independent Morocco; particularly stresses that the procedure for getting passports should be relaxed, and that mention of 'Jewish religion' be suppressed on passports where it has been affixed; firmly requests that all measures be taken to liquidate any division on religious grounds in school matters.

This motion was but one of many at the Third Congress that made the Moroccan government uncomfortable. It produced no change in official policy.

**Relations With Israel**

Several incidents showed the sharper attitude of Moroccan leaders toward Israel. In March 1958 Confluent, a French-language monthly favorable to the national movement and seeking to foster better relations among different religious groups in Morocco, printed some articles about Israel. In a letter featured by the leading Arabic-language paper in the country, Al ' Alam, a young Meknès Istiqlal leader named El Mansour denounced the "moral poisons distilled" in the articles and urged the authorities to end the distribution of such publications. Confluent stopped appearing almost immediately thereafter. The most important of Istiqlal leaders, 'Allal al Fassi, criticized the
Cairo congress of neutralist nations late in 1957 for condemning Israel only as a "colonial base" when it should have "demanded the suppression of the State of Israel as a spike planted in the heart of the Arab nation, signifying the wiping out of the Arab soul in Palestine." Commenting on the meeting of UNESCO national commissions from Arab lands in Fez, in January 1957, al Fassi went even further. "Many Zionists," he wrote, were specializing in Arabic studies, both in Europe and America, in order to "steal the treasures of Arab thought," so as to be able to spread them across the world without showing the origin of these treasures. In August, Al 'Alam denounced Israel and called for the destruction of the state. In the same month, Morocco joined the Arab League.

Moroccan chiefs were prominent at the October 1958 meeting organized by ex-Mayor Giorgio La Pira of Florence (see p. 181) to foster better understanding among Mediterranean nations, and including Israelis (though whether in an official or in an unofficial capacity was never very clear); indeed, Prince Moulay Hassan was conference chairman. But the conference did little to promote better Arab-Israel relations. Al Fassi used the occasion to attack Israel again. None the less, Prince Moulay indicated at Florence that he intended to call another such conference in Morocco, some time in 1959, with Israelis as official guests. In their attacks on Israel, Moroccan leaders were often careful to point out that "Zionism is one thing and Judaism is another," but the local Jewish population could not help feeling the change in atmosphere.

Jewish Community Organization

Hopes for the revival of the Central Council of Jewish Communities waned, in the face of government hostility and differences among the heads of the various Jewish communities. Legally the Central Council was still alive and had offices in Rabat, but for all practical purposes it was nonexistent. Early in 1957 Jewish leaders in Morocco submitted to the government a series of proposals on the functions and responsibilities of Moroccan Jewish communities. A year and a half later they still had not been received by the minister of the interior to discuss the matter. Jews active in Istiqlal—who had become dominant in most local Jewish community bodies—pointed out that it was illogical to expect Istiqlal to permit the formation of a central or representative Jewish group while it sought to prevent or delay general elections in Morocco, or the establishment of any non-Istiqlal representative bodies, lest such action set a precedent. Furthermore, there was objection to giving a voice in community affairs to Jews not of Moroccan nationality, as proposed in the project submitted by Jewish leaders. In February, the impression was current that a dahir outlining the functions of the communities, but excluding foreign Jews, would be issued, but this too came to naught. Many Moroccan leaders also opposed any central Jewish organization because they wanted no organization to be able to claim to speak in the name of Moroccan Jewry.

In January 1958, after two years of doing nothing, the Central Council planned a meeting of community heads. But some leaders argued that such
a meeting would give the council a political character which it had been consistently refused—and which it had, indeed, eschewed—ever since Moroccan independence. In view of its size, the Casablanca community demanded the major voice in any meeting. Others objected. In view of all these difficulties the idea was dropped.

Failure to revitalize the Central Council and their own unclear official status did not keep the individual Jewish communities from activity. The nature and extent of this activity, however, depended on local leadership and local conditions. Moroccan Jewry as a whole was without a voice.

Social Service

The situation described above was only one factor impairing the activity and efficiency of local community efforts. Morocco’s economic troubles made it increasingly difficult to raise funds locally for welfare and other purposes, while increasing welfare needs. Government grants for education, health, and other welfare activities diminished. A proportionately greater burden, therefore, had to be borne by international Jewish welfare organizations.

JDC reported, in October 1958, that the number served by its feeding program had risen to 40,185 from 33,195 the year before; that recipients of cash relief had more than doubled; that loans to artisans had increased from 635 to 1,185, and that recipients of United States Department of Agriculture surplus food had risen from 32,800 to 43,900. Altogether, according to the report, “approximately 30 per cent of an estimated total Jewish population of about 192,000 in Morocco receive assistance from the JDC, day in and day out.” One reason for the increase, the JDC said, was that Jews from outlying mountain regions and small, isolated desert communities—for whom little had been done in the past—continued to move into the larger towns and cities, increasing the welfare rolls. The JDC also gave a certain amount of aid to non-Jewish children. In March 1958, for instance, it distributed 460 complete sets of clothing to Moslem children in Casablanca.

Whatever the situation elsewhere, the leadership of the Casablanca community (with its estimated 70,000 Jews) not only was vigorous but even moved into fields which had previously been the province of other local Jewish organizations. A major achievement of the Casablanca community was the wiping out of Jewish mendicancy in that city. Over 3,300 Jewish men, women, and children, a census had shown, had been eking out an existence by begging. The Casablanca community, headed by Meyer Obadia, established a special welfare and rehabilitation program for these people. It also expanded its soup kitchen so as to serve more than 500 persons with two hot meals daily. As a result of these measures, there ceased to be any Jewish beggars in the city.

As part of its ambitious 1958 program, the community began construction of a nursery for 500 children. It decided to construct a new synagogue building, which was also to contain the community offices, on a plot of land donated by the Casablanca city authorities. Plans were studied for construction of a home for the aged.

The new synagogue building was to replace the leading center of worship
of the Casablanca mellah, the Elijah synagogue. There was much emotion in the mellah when it was learned in March 1958 that this was to be torn down as part of the expansion plan of the Place de France, the "Times Square" of Casablanca, which borders on the mellah. It meant disturbing the tombs of three greatly revered Jewish holy men. None the less, the Jewish community council gave its approval to the demolition project and planned a mausoleum for Rabbi Elijah and his two companions.

Nurseries were established in the Jewish housing project at Rabat, the capital of Morocco, and in certain towns of the interior. It was estimated that about 10,000 persons monthly received aid from 26 OSE institutions scattered across the country. The ORT school near Casablanca gave full-time training to over 680 boys and 380 girls. The minister of labor visited it in March 1958 as "an expression of the personal interest that King Mohammed V takes in your work." ORT had another 1,200 persons enrolled in its various apprentice programs. It also established special courses for the deaf and dumb during the year.

Four Jewish loan funds operated in Morocco during the year, but the largest one—that of Casablanca—was in effect closed down by the authorities, when the ministry of the interior refused to approve the results of an election of the fund's board. Jewish leaders were left guessing whether this action represented a government policy, overzealous interpretation of government attitudes by local officials, or opposition to the personalities elected to the loan fund board.

There was some discussion of the "integration" of Jewish and non-Jewish welfare organizations and resources in Morocco, but less was heard of this in the last half of 1958. In the Moroccan Consultative Assembly toward the end of 1957, an Istiqlal member, Hamed Lalhou, declared that aid given by the JDC to Moroccan Jews had "deplorable consequences" on the integration of Jews in Morocco. He suggested that foreign aid received by local organizations be turned over to the national social-assistance organization, Entr'aide Nationale, and then be distributed among the nation's needy without reference to their religion. This point of view was later elaborated in an article in Al Istiqqlal. A lengthy reply by a Jewish Istiqqlal member pointed out forcefully that Moroccan Jews needed no lessons in patriotism, gave something of JDC's history, and pointed out that it was common practice throughout the democratic world for people to help their coreligionists. Al Istiqqlal refused to publish this reply, however. Instead, a brief article signed by Istiqqlal leader Mehdi Ben Barka attempted to smooth things over, but was noncommittal with regard to Istiqqlal's position. In February 1958, Al Istiqqlal published an interview with the Princess Laila Aicha, president of the Entr'aide Nationale. She said her organization's function was "to coordinate the efforts . . . exercise administrative and financial control, and see to a sensible and fair distribution of subventions" of 65 Moslem, 23 French, and 10 Jewish welfare organizations. Asked about the Entr'aide's relations with international welfare organizations, the princess replied: "They still have to be clarified. . . . We should like to see everything coming from abroad, no matter for whom it is intended, distributed under the supervision of the Entr'aide Nationale."

In the following months little was heard about this, perhaps because the
Education

The major Jewish educational institution in Morocco was still the Alliance Israélite Universelle, in whose 80 schools some 30,000 Jewish children were receiving both Jewish and secular education, including instruction in Arabic. Recognizing the value of these institutions, the Moroccan government supplied about two-thirds of the Alliance budget of some $2 million. There were 5,000 or so students in 32 centers operated by the Ozar Hatorah, and a little over 3,000 in 40 units run by the Lubavitcher group. In February 1958, Rabbi Azriel Chaikin, a United States citizen teaching in the Lubavitcher school of Agadir, was asked to leave the country by the authorities, on the ground that he had been helping Jews to emigrate illegally from Morocco.

The Département Educatif de la Jeunesse Juive (DEJJ) ran courses for adolescents and young adults in its chain of local community centers. Among the DEJJ groups was a Jewish Boy Scout movement. It was given official government recognition in February 1958 at the Moroccan National Youth Congress held under the presidency of Premier Si Bekkai, even though there was some pressure on it not to operate as a Jewish organization.

In December 1957, the governor of the city of Meknès ordered the closing of the Hebrew Institute in that city. There were rumors at first that the government did not want such an institution to exist, but it was later learned that the institute had been closed because certain administrative formalities had not been taken care of when it was founded, several years before. When these were satisfied, the institute was reopened, in the spring of 1958. The severity of the governor's action none the less occasioned surprise.

ALGERIA

Political Background

This review covers the two years from July 1, 1956, to June 30, 1958. These years, the third and fourth of the Algerian conflict, were momentous for Algeria and France. The first year saw the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) reach the peak of its political and military offensive against France, and the second saw the French mount a determined counteroffensive which dealt severe blows to the FLN field forces and their terrorist cells throughout the country. On May 13, 1958, French Algerian anger exploded into a full-scale insurrection against the French parliament, setting off a political upheaval which ended the Fourth Republic and brought General Charles de Gaulle back to power.

Favored by the intense nationalistic ferment throughout the Middle East and Africa, the FLN achieved its greatest gains during the third year of its rebellion against French rule. The FLN was openly aided, morally and
materially, by many Moslem countries, which officially supported its claim for independence. Arms purchased by money raised in these friendly countries flowed to the FLN soldiers across the Tunisian and Moroccan frontiers. What had begun as a guerrilla band had become an efficient fighting army, led largely by French-trained officers and men, many of whom had seen action in Indo-China.

By the end of the third year of the war, it was estimated that the Nationalists had between 25,000 and 35,000 fighting men in the field. Quartered and fed by the friendly, or fear-ridden, population, this army moved confidently over difficult mountainous terrain and established almost undisputed control over large areas of the country. Facing them was a French army of approximately 400,000 soldiers and 100,000 policemen and gendarmes. Despite their overwhelming superiority in men and material, the French were unable to impose a military victory. Casualties on both sides increased sharply and it became clear to the French that other measures were needed if victory was to be won and the rebellion defeated.

Concurrently with the military campaign, the FLN terrorist organization stepped up its attacks, killing thousands of civilian and military victims and leaving other thousands horribly mutilated. Time bombs were placed and hand grenades thrown into crowded cafes, restaurants, cinemas, stadiums, buses, streetcars, and automobiles. Farms were burned, cattle slaughtered, bridges blown up, and trains derailed. On May 28, 1957, the massacre of the entire male population—about 300 boys and men—of the village of Melouze, in the Kabylie mountains, was attributed by the French authorities to the FLN. Coordinated bombing attacks on the civilian population of Algiers reached a crescendo during the month of June 1957, causing the deaths of some 30 men, women, and children and serious maiming of about 200 others. Martial law replaced civil administration and curfew began as early as 8 p.m. in many cities and towns. In many parts of the country travel was extremely hazardous. In others, trips could be made only under military convoy.

From Algeria the terrorism spread to metropolitan France. Between January 1, 1956, and December 31, 1957, more than 910 Algerians were killed and over 3,850 wounded in France by fellow Algerians. Neighborhoods inhabited largely by North Africans became unsafe after nightfall.

In the early summer of 1957 both the French and the Algerian Nationalists, recognizing the importance of world opinion, intensified their efforts to improve their military and political positions before the debate scheduled to open in the fall in the United Nations. The French army went over to the offensive and sent warplanes in large numbers to the support of its ground troops. Tough paratroopers and Foreign Legionnaires—many of them veterans of the defeat in Indo-China—were thrown into action.

To seal off the passage of arms and men at the Tunisian and Moroccan frontiers, the French army erected electrified barbed-wire barricades and elaborate radar devices. The offensive was carried into Tunisian territory when, early in February 1958, French planes—fired on from the border village of Sakiet-Sidi-Youssef—retaliated by bombing the village, leaving many dead and wounded (see p. 257).

In the big cities tough soldiers flushed the terrorists out of their hiding
On the political front, the sharpening struggle between the liberals and the diehards in Paris led to a succession of government crises and ministerial resignations. On October 29, 1957, Guy Mollet, after a record-breaking term as prime minister, was refused a vote of confidence, by 290 to 227, when he asked the deputies to foot the bill for the war. Maurice Bourgès-Maunoury, his successor, stayed in power for only 3½ months. He fell on a vote that beat down his plan for a loi-cadre (framework law) to give Algeria limited home rule. He was succeeded by Félix Gaillard, who was to fall in turn on April 15, 1958, over the recommendations of the Anglo-American mediators in France’s dispute with Tunisia over Sakiet-Sidi-Youssef (see p. 156; p. 258).

During this period, French Foreign Minister Christian Pineau and Minister of State Edgar Faure traveled extensively throughout the eastern and western hemispheres, seeking support for the French viewpoint before the opening of the United Nations Assembly. The Algerian Nationalists were likewise busy lining up support.

On December 11, 1957—for the third successive time—the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted a compromise resolution, amounting to the hope that “in a spirit of effective cooperation, ‘pourparlers’ will be entered into and other appropriate means utilized with a view to a solution in conformity with the purposes and principles of the charter of the United Nations.” The resolution did not mention Algerian sovereignty and merely took note of the offer by Tunisia and Morocco to mediate the dispute. The long interregnum which followed the fall of the Gaillard government in April reached a climax with the investiture of Pierre Pflimlin and open rebellion in Algeria on May 13. Shouting slogans against “le système,” against “abandonnement,” and for an “Algérie française”—some cries against “the Jews” were also heard—the howling mob stormed the gates. Very shortly after order had been restored, the news was blared forth from the loudspeakers that the army had joined in and that paratroop General Jacques Massu would head the newly-formed Committee of Public Safety. This committee at once sent a message to President Coty demanding that a Government of Public Safety, headed by General de Gaulle, be formed in Paris. (For other details, see p. 156).

**Economic Conditions**

On the economic front, in Algeria as in France, prosperity prevailed despite the terrible ravages of the bloody conflict. France continued to pour huge sums of money into the country to keep up with the increasing costs of the war. Estimates ranged from $350,000,000 to $1,650,000,000 for the year 1957, depending upon the political shade and source of the information. The impact upon the country’s economy of the very substantial sums of money spent by the troops was felt everywhere as commerce thrived and services expanded. The successful oil drillings in the Sahara and the optimistic prognoses about the extent of these deposits added to the boom atmosphere and the inflationary trend. European businessmen piled up handsome profits, much of which
they invested in real estate and farms in France or deposited in savings banks in both countries. Deposits in the Algerian savings banks increased by about 50 billion francs (in the neighborhood of $125,000,000) over 1956.

Stimulated by the needs of the army and the oil companies, local industry attained new records. Many sectors of the economy benefited, in particular food processing and handling, clothing, automobiles, household equipment, as well as everything which could prove useful to the oil companies. In 1957, there was an increase of 3,529 new establishments over 1956 and the registration of only 217 bankruptcies as against 285 for 1956.

Jewish Population

According to government estimates, the population of Algeria totaled about 9,700,000, composed of 1,200,000 Europeans and about 8,500,000 Moslems. The rate of increase of the Moslem population was estimated at 250,000 per year. Included in the European group, the Jews numbered between 120,000 and 130,000.

Population surveys were made during the past year by the North African office of the World Jewish Congress (WJC) and the Federation of Jewish Communities of Algeria, which was aided by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). Between the two, information was received from 62 out of a total of 68 communities.

Except for approximately 2,500 Jews living in the M'Zab area of the country, whose civil status was unclear, the remainder were French. The capital city of Algiers led with 30,000 Jews, followed by Oran with 29,500, Constantine with 17,000, Tlemcen with 5,500, and Bône with 3,800. Mostaganem and Sidi-bel-Abbès each had about 2,500. The others had fewer than 1,000.

Some of the better-known cities of the interior, such as Ghardaia and Afflou, appeared to have lost as much as 50 per cent of their Jewish population, through emigration to Israel or France or to the larger cities in the north of the country where greater security was assured. In the once-flourishing community of Médéa only a few families remained, following the assassination of Chief Rabbi Jacob Chekroun by FLN terrorists in April 1957.

Estimates by different Jewish sources, including a study made in Constantine in June 1958, showed the following approximate vocational distribution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workers, skilled and unskilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce and small business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil service and clerical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal professions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Having lived with the war for almost four years, Algerian Jews, like other Algerians, had made their adjustment to its daily hazards and to the tragic loss of lives and property. FLN terrorism spared no one, Christian, Jew, or Moslem. Many Jews believed, however, that groups within the terrorist organization were directing some of their heaviest attacks against certain Jewish communities, especially those of Batna and Constantine. In Batna at least
80 per cent of the fatalities at the hands of the terrorists were Jewish. In Constantine repeated grenade attacks against Jewish stores had driven most of the small Jewish shopkeepers out of business.

Confronted by an apparently endless war and mindful of what had happened in Tunisia and Morocco, many Jewish families solved their personal problems by leaving Algeria for France or Israel. Others made preparations to leave if things got worse. In general, a wait-and-see attitude prevailed.

Early curfew hours in some cities and towns made it impossible to hold evening religious services. Since synagogues and Talmud Torahs were often located in the old neighborhoods, largely populated by Arabs, access was dangerous and attendance fell off. In Algiers the main synagogue was closed down because it was located in the casbah. Annual pilgrimages to the tombs of venerated rabbis were suspended, thus depriving some communities of one of their main sources of revenue.

In November 1956 and June 1958 Algerian Jewry thought it should make clear where it stood in relation to the war, which it did by declarations in Information Juive, the monthly bulletin of the Comité Juif Algérien d’Etudes Sociales (Algerian Jewish Social Studies Committee).

1. November 1956

Certain newspaper articles, referring to the position of the Algerian Jewish community under present circumstances, offer an opportunity to the Algerian Jewish Social Studies Committee to call to mind certain facts and to express certain principles which are contained in the following declaration:

The Jewish community of Algeria is made up of various religious and cultural organizations. It does not, and has never claimed to, constitute a single political entity.

The rabbinate and consistories are strictly religious institutions solely concerned with religious practices and the management of religious affairs. It is therefore an error to assume that they could, or would wish to, express the opinion of the general Jewish public.

Furthermore, no secular Jewish organization or Jewish individual is entitled to speak in the name of a community which, like other groups, embraces all types of political opinion.

Indeed, the Jews of Algeria are sufficiently mature politically and hold so many different points of view that it is inconceivable that they would ever accept the imposition of any given political line—particularly in the present circumstances.

Nevertheless, we believe that we are not violating the spirit of this statement when we declare, in accordance with the well-known tenets of Judaism, our fervent wish for the return of peace and our desire that the rights of man be assured on a basis of human dignity.

As members of a people which has suffered more than the average from humiliation, persecution, and racial hatred, and in the name of a religion which has always insisted on justice and the equality of all human creatures, we remain firmly attached to these principles.
During the dramatic hours through which we are now passing, when the breach is steadily growing wider between the different elements of the Algerian population, the Jews of this country, where they have lived for over two thousand years, profoundly grateful to France, to whom they owe so much, attached to the country for whose prosperity they have always labored, intend to remain faithful to the commandments that bind them to the two other religious communities, Moslem and Christian.

Their firm hope is to continue to live in close friendship with both.

As regards the Moslem community, and although so many of our fellow Jews, innocent victims, have fallen during recent months, we must recognize the excellent relationship prevailing in the past between Jew and Moslem in Algeria, particularly during the Vichy régime.

Present events in the Middle East should not mar the friendship existing here between Jew and Moslem.

In this respect, we should like to emphasize that the principles which, in the past, dictated the attitude and action of Algerian Jewish organizations vis-à-vis the Moslem community were set forth in 1944 and reiterated in 1952 by one of our most eminent professors, the late lamented Raymond Bénichou, who, expressing the general feeling, stated: "The higher those responsible for the destinies of France may wish to raise the Moslem population, the deeper will be the satisfaction of all those of Jewish origin in our country."

That is why, while strongly appealing for a peaceful end to this painful conflict, we fervently hope for a just solution that will ensure the liberty and equality of all inhabitants of this country.

2. June 1958

In these exceptional hours, when the will for union and fraternity is being proclaimed in Algeria, the Algerian Jewish Social Studies Committee wishes to recall to its readers its declaration of November 1956, calling for such union and fraternity.

We express the fervent hope that, under the leadership of the most illustrious of France's children—the man who was the symbol of the fight against the oppressor; who, at the worst period of Nazi persecution, swore to restore the Republic with its ideals of equality of rights and obligations for all citizens in French territory—France will bring forth, in this land to which the Jewish community has been attached for thousands of years, a total reconciliation of soul and heart so that, once again, Christians, Moslems, and Jews can live together, indissolubly united in renewed peace and unity, in liberty and complete equality of rights and obligations and mutual respect of conscience.

Whilst again emphasizing that no organization or person can speak on behalf of a whole community, which, like other spiritual families, includes a multitude of different opinions, we are nevertheless persuaded that we express the feelings of the Jewish people of Algeria who, in accordance with their religion and commandments, have never ceased to believe in the principles of justice and equality for all mankind.
Emigration

During 1957, 863 Jews emigrated to Israel, as against 1,518 in 1956, and in the first half of 1958 there was a monthly average of about 15 emigrants to Israel. Some of the explanations put forward to account for the fall-off were these: 1. letters from recent arrivals in Israel recommending postponement of emigration plans until housing and employment improved; 2. full employment at good wages in Algeria, and 3. the inability of the Jewish Agency's emigration director to travel freely throughout the country. (On February 17, 1958, the Jewish Agency's emigration director, Jacob Hassan, and his co-worker, Raphael Benghera, were kidnapped by the FLN about 16 kilometers north of Afflou. Despite promises by prominent FLN leaders—including Ferhat Abbas—that they would be freed, both men were murdered. Hassan was succeeded by Samuel Markuze, former Jewish Agency director for Tunisia.)

The overwhelming majority of the emigrants who left in 1956 came from the interior and were mainly artisans and poor workers. In 1957 and the first half of 1958 the emigrants were about evenly divided between workers and small businessmen. All of them paid their own fares to Israel.

Departures to France were believed to have increased, although exact figures were not available. From French sources it was known that as many as 30,000 Jews had arrived in France from North Africa over the past three years and that about a third were from Algeria.

The Comité de Bienfaisance Israëlite de Paris (Jewish Welfare Committee of Paris) stated in its 1956 report that Algerians accounted for 40 per cent of its total caseload, a substantial increase over the previous year. In addition, it was common knowledge that many Algerian Jewish families who settled in France never came to the attention of any Jewish welfare organization.

Communal Affairs

All Jewish communities in Algeria were organized into legally constituted consistories, with governing bodies elected for two or four years, according to the size of the community. Communal property, such as cemeteries, synagogues, and religious schools, belonged to the consistories.

The consistories' main source of income came from taxes collected by the government on kosher meat (droit de couteau). Funds were also received from contributions made in the synagogues, religious rites and services at the cemeteries, and special appeals during Passover and the High Holy Days. The consistories concerned themselves chiefly with religious matters and religious teaching in the Talmud Torahs. Numerous small local organizations carried on specialized programs of aid to the sick and infirm, distribution of clothing, aid to mothers, summer camps, and the like. These organizations were financed by membership fees, social affairs and bazaars, and, in some instances, municipal and governmental grants. Many received substantial help from the JDC in the form of supplies, cash, or technical assistance.

The consistories, sometimes directly, but mainly through the Federation of Jewish Communities of Algeria, maintained active contact with many foreign
and international Jewish organizations. These included the JDC, the Jewish Agency, the World Jewish Congress (WJC), the Women’s International Zionist Organization (WIZO), the Organization for Rehabilitation Through Training (ORT), and the Alliance Israélite Universelle.

The Federation of Jewish Communities of Algeria was established in April 1947. The Federation’s purposes were: 1. representation of the interests of Algerian Jewry and the constituent organizations; 2. coordination of their activities; 3. defense of their common interests; 4. support and development of religious institutions, creation of a rabbinical school, and administration of teaching in the elementary (Talmud Torah) schools, and 5. establishment of a statute for rabbinical personnel.

The Federation’s chief source of funds was a tax of 15 francs on each kilogram of matzot sold during Passover. This produced about eight million francs ($20,000) annually. The Federation also received gifts and contributions. Until the outbreak of the war in November 1954, the chief rabbi of Algeria, on behalf of the Federation, went on yearly field trips to Jewish communities throughout the country to appeal for funds. The sums raised in this manner were substantial. After the war began this source of income dried up.

For several years before February 1957, the Federation had maintained a loose contact with the JDC. Responsibility for the JDC program in Algeria had been divided between the JDC offices in Tunisia and Morocco. In February 1957 the JDC program for Algeria was centralized and an office opened in Algiers.

The JDC adopted the policy of working primarily through the Federation. Continued and encouraging progress was made during the past two years. An administrative secretary was hired and the office was reorganized. Agreement was reached with the Jewish Agency to channel its funds for cultural and religious activities in Algeria through the Federation. All requests for assistance originating from the consistories were also channeled through the Federation. This centralization helped to strengthen the Federation’s ties with the consistories and to reduce disorder and overlapping. It also led to joint planning for future undertakings. The communities responded by showing increasing awareness of the advantages of a central organization.

For the first time in the history of Algerian Jewry, a national conference, to discuss and evaluate the situation of Algerian Jewry, was held in Algiers on March 12 and 13, 1958, under the sponsorship of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Algeria, the WJC, the Zionist Federation of Algeria, the Algerian Jewish Cultural Commission, and the Algerian Jewish Social Studies Committee. It was attended by representatives of the principal communities of Algeria, the JDC, and the Jewish Agency, and by David Askénazi and Rachmim Naouri, the chief rabbis of Oran and Bône. Georges Wormser, president of the Consistoire Central of France and Algeria, addressed the group, as did Julien Samuel, director of the French Fonds Social Juif Unifié (United Jewish Appeal).

The conference decided to establish a study commission to deal with educational, cultural, and youth questions, and to take steps toward the creation of a central fund-raising organization. It also adopted resolutions calling for cooperation among Jewish communities and organizations in Algeria in de-
fense of Jewish interests. Greetings were sent to the State of Israel on its tenth anniversary.

Social Services

The consistories were restricted by law to religious affairs. Health and welfare services were responsibilities of the state and persons of all creeds and religions were eligible to benefit from them. Traditionally, however, small local Jewish organizations supplemented the help given by government agencies and assisted those who could not or would not avail themselves of public assistance. Special help was given in cash or food for Passover.

Many of these organizations were helped in their work by regular subventions from the JDC, which also arranged for them to receive United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) gifts of powdered milk, flour, cheese, and cooking oil. About 500 children received new issues of winter clothing and hundreds of layettes were distributed. In Constantine a canteen was opened, where morning and afternoon snacks and a hot lunch were served daily except Saturdays to 250 Talmud Torah children. In Bône and Oran, afternoon snacks were served to 450 children attending the Talmud Torahs in both cities. All of these feeding programs received regular financial subventions from the JDC.

Summer-camping programs accommodated about 600 children, not including those sent by the Jewish Boy and Girl Scouts. Because of the war, the children had to be sent to camps in Europe, which meant additional financial burdens on the local organizations and the JDC.

In Constantine first, and later in Algiers, the JDC induced the consistories to set up social-service departments attached to the local Jewish welfare committees established by the consistories. Social workers were trained from among local Jewish girls and placed under the supervision of an experienced graduate of the Paul Baerwald School of Social Work. Both departments were very successful in introducing modern principles and standards. Many who had been unaware of their right to receive government aid were referred to public welfare agencies. The social workers were paid jointly by the local committees and the JDC, and expansion was planned.

Jewish Education

The critical shortage of rabbis, teachers, and other professional community workers was a major obstacle to Jewish education. There were also strong and deep-rooted assimilationist tendencies, and many consistory officials were either ignorant of the cultural and religious needs of their communities or completely uninterested. Salaries for teachers and rabbis were very low and working conditions uniformly poor. Over the years, dissatisfaction had led to the departure of the most competent to France or, more recently, to Israel, while others had left for better jobs. Few qualified rabbis and teachers remained. In many towns, both in the north and in the interior, the Talmud Torahs had been closed down. In the capital city of Algiers, with 30,000 Jews, the Talmud Torah had a registered student body of about 300 boys. In Oran, with almost the same number of Jewish families, the number enrolled was
about 325. There were no facilities for girls except in Algiers, where a woman teacher from the Jewish Agency conducted one class for about 20 girls. In Tlemçen, the fourth largest Jewish community, the Talmud Torah—renovated and modernized two years ago—had been unable to open its doors for lack of teachers. The only bright spot was Constantine, where some 700 boys attended Talmud Torah classes during the school year and about 1,000 attended during the three summer-vacation months.

In an attempt to meet the need for qualified teachers, the Federation of Jewish Communities of Algeria built the Algiers Rabbinical School, which was completed in January 1958 at a cost of 40,000,000 francs (about $100,000), half of which was contributed by the JDC. Original plans envisaged the creation of a Jewish day school for about 100 boys, with boarding facilities for 35 other students who would pursue advanced rabbinical studies. But the school could not be opened, because neither a competent director nor experienced instructors could be found.

The two educational departments of the Jewish Agency were very active among the Algerian youth. Evening Hebrew courses were conducted throughout the more populated areas in the north of the country, but not in the south and the interior, because of the political situation. The JDC provided hundreds of Hebrew books and, together with the Jewish Agency, helped to pay the salaries of some of the teachers. The Alliance Israélite Universelle sent an experienced teacher to direct the Talmud Torah in Algiers.

The Organization for Rehabilitation Through Training (ORT) operated schools in Algiers, Oran, and Constantine, with student bodies of 75, 58, and 59 boys, respectively. The Algiers and Constantine schools gave a three-year vocational course; in Oran lack of facilities limited the course to two years. The subjects taught were carpentry, mechanical trades, electricity, auto repairs, and plumbing. There were facilities for girls in Algiers, where 22 studied dressmaking and 15 stenography. All of the ORT schools received substantial subventions from the government.

**Zionism and Relations With Israel**

The Zionist Federation of Algeria, led by the young lawyer André Narboni, carried on a very active program. All Zionist organizations, including WIZO, dedicated a full month to various types of public functions to celebrate Israel's tenth anniversary. Four Zionist youth movements—B'nai Akiba, Dror, Gordonia, and Hashomer Hatzair—had a total active membership of about 500.

The Israel fund-raising appeal collected 50,000,000 francs (about $125,000) during its 1958 campaign and the Keren Kayyemet le-Yisrael 21,000,000 francs (about $50,000).

**Cultural Activities**

Community centers for Jewish adolescents were opened in Oran, Constantine, and Sétif, the cost being shared by the JDC, the Jewish Agency, and the consistories. Under the leadership of Jacques Lazarus, the WJC and the Algerian Jewish Cultural Commission organized exhibitions of Jewish books
and lectures on Jewish subjects by prominent Frenchmen in the principal cities of Algeria. Lazarus also published the monthly newspaper *Information Juive*.

**Personalia**

In 1957–58 Algerian Jewry suffered the loss of some of its outstanding rabbis and lay leaders. In April 1957 Jacob Chekroun, rabbi of Médéa and brother-in-law of Benjamin Heler, president of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Algeria, was assassinated by the FLN. Frej Halimi, chief rabbi of Constantine, and Henry Aboulker, head of the Zionist Federation of Algeria in 1950 and militant fighter against Vichy during the war, both died in September 1957. In December 1957 Chalom Guedj, chief rabbi of Sétif, died and Maurice Moïse Eisenbeth, chief rabbi of Algeria—one of the country's most eminent personalities and author of several books on Jewish subjects—died in January 1958.

*Henry L. Levy*