

# THE REGENERATION OF FRENCH JEWRY: THE INFLUX AND INTEGRATION OF NORTH AFRICAN JEWS INTO FRANCE, 1955-1965

Michael M. Laskier

*This article grapples with the impact of communal self-liquidation of North African Jewry in general and the Algerian diaspora in particular, during the 1950s and 1960s, based on new, primary source materials — the emigration destination being France. The influx and integration of North African Jews into France during this period provoked a revolution in the French Jewish community, leading to the demographic domination of the North African Jewish component of French Jewry, after that community was dominated for many years by the Germanic and Eastern European components. What were some of the causes for emigration into France? What challenges were posed by French society for the new arrivals? What were the emigrants' contributions to the geographical expansion of French Jewry, and to Jewish communal life in France? These and other aspects featured in this study are part of a book manuscript in progress, entitled: The Jews of France and their Social and Political Transformation: 1945-1995*

*Jewish Political Studies Review* 10:1-2 (Spring 1998)

## The Background

Jews from Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria began to settle in France as the Muslim nationalist struggle for North African liberation from France gained momentum. Firmly rooted in their milieu, the Maghribi Jewish communities were not politically or economically secure and the French colonial era in North Africa was drawing to a close. Beginning in 1955, an exodus of Jewish emigrants and refugees commenced in the direction of Israel and France. By 1962-63, emigration had become large-scale.

After France granted Algeria independence in the summer of 1962, integration of Algerian-Jewish emigrants emerged as the toughest challenge for the French-Jewish communities. Ninety percent of Algeria's Jewish population, 120,000 people, fled to France; they had realized that their prospects for a sound economic future in an independent Muslim Algeria were not good, and they were French citizens by virtue of the Crémieux Decree of October 24, 1870. In contrast, only 10,000 Jews headed for Israel.

In a matter of months, beginning in the latter half of 1962, a new geography of the French Jewish community was created. Communities which formerly numbered a modest 500 families or less expanded to include more than 4,000 families in 1963. While the overall population of France increased by less than 1.5 percent with the influx of French and other European repatriates from Algeria, by 1965 the French Jewish communities increased by 40 percent. This tremendous population growth, with the additional influx of Jewish refugees from Morocco and Tunisia, transformed French Jewry by 1970 into the second largest Jewish community in the Western World, with over 550,000 people.

What did French Jewry do to receive and absorb the Maghribi newcomers? Who financed their resettlement? Where did they settle and how did they coexist with the once predominantly Ashkenazi communities? After all, by the mid-1960s, after one decade of steady emigration to France, the Maghribi Jewish segment emerged as the majority of the French Jewish population.

The effort to assist the newcomers was largely undertaken by two organizations: the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) and the Fonds Social Juif Unifié (FSJU). The AJDC, whose main centers of operation were in New York, Paris, and Geneva, was created in 1914 by American Jews of German origin. Its functions, operating overseas, included subsidizing Jewish communal institutions throughout the world, financing Jewish emigration to Israel, Europe, and the United States, and providing assistance, food, and

clothing for impoverished Jews — refugees and non-refugees alike. It was funded largely by the United Jewish Appeal (UJA).

The AJDC had operated in France since 1944, commencing immediately after the country's liberation from the German occupation and Vichy rule. For the first year and a half it emphasized meeting emergency requirements in communities seriously devastated by World War II. By 1946, however, although the AJDC still encountered innumerable emergency problems, and contended with a large influx of refugees from Eastern Europe, it began working with leaders of French Jewry as well as with local welfare organizations to make their programs self-sufficient. In fact, the AJDC sought to promote in the French communities sophisticated fundraising techniques used in the United States and, simultaneously, to convey a clear message: AJDC operations in France would not continue indefinitely.

The combined efforts of the AJDC in France and local Jewry resulted in the establishment, in 1949, of the FSJU. Modeled to some extent on America's UJA, the FSJU's two major objectives were: to collect, on behalf of local Jewish agencies, funds for maintaining and developing activities as well as to seek other means of financing this end; and, as a central distributing body, to allocate the funds to affiliated agencies.

In March 1960, Baron Guy de Rothschild, president of the FSJU, acknowledged American Jewry's and the AJDC's contribution toward the development of this organization:

...basing ourselves more particularly on the American experience which is more complete, older and financially better supported, we thought that it would be wise to establish a unique association comprising if possible all social and cultural institutions which were not exclusively religious institutions, with a view to coordinating them in a collective and unified effort.

We understood what America had known for a long time already and was sharing with us. We understood that it was not possible to gather significant amounts of money without doing it in a logical and organized manner.... We understood that what no single one of the federated agencies could do on its own, we would be able to achieve by constituting a federation of the agencies.... The reason [our] tenth anniversary is an expression of real achievement, is that we had set ourselves the task of becoming the Jewish community of France — on the social plane as well as on the cultural plane — and we succeeded.<sup>1</sup>

The FSJU gradually adopted modern fundraising techniques, including benefit dinners, personal solicitations, mass appeals through letters and other printed materials, and publicity through *L'Arche*, the organization's monthly journal. Yet, notwithstanding the gradual expansion of the FSJU to the benefit of local communal agencies as well as refugees, in 1961 and 1962 French Jewry continued to depend considerably on the AJDC. In 1962, France remained the largest European operation of the AJDC. It had the largest budget and it assisted the largest Jewish community in Europe — 240,000 Jews in 1961 and 1962.

Indeed, the AJDC and FSJU were confronted by a serious challenge in France. Already in 1944 and 1945 the French Jewish communities, consisting of over 200,000 Jews, were the only ones outside Israel to be inundated by consecutive waves of immigrants. The French government's liberal policy of keeping the gates open to refugees meant that the Jewish communities in France became havens for those who had fled their homelands for Western Europe. Hundreds of thousands of refugees were granted temporary asylum, pending permanent resettlement elsewhere. However, tens of thousands preferred to make France their permanent home. Neither temporary asylum nor resettlement could have been undertaken had the French governments of the fourth and fifth republics not assisted. Not only had drastic changes occurred in French-Jewish geography and demography, but significant socioeconomic and cultural transformations created problems which remained unresolved for many years.

### **The Arrival of North African Jews in France, 1955-1965**

Although more than two-thirds of Morocco's and half of Tunisia's Jewry emigrated to Israel via Europe through the initiative of the Jewish Agency, many others settled in France and Canada. Algerian Jewry, on the other hand, settled after 1962 mostly in France, with only 10 percent having chosen Israel as their new permanent home.<sup>2</sup>

During the summer of 1955, when Tunisia was granted internal autonomy by the French as a decisive step toward full independence and in the wake of Morocco's struggle for independence, Jews left for France. They sought relief and assistance from French Jewish agencies subsidized by the AJDC and FSJU. Among these agencies were the Comité Juif d'Action Sociale et de Reconstruction (COJASOR), the Comité de Bienfaisance Israélite de Paris (CBIP), known since 1963 as the Comité d'Action Sociale Israélite de Paris

(CASIP), and the Service Social de Jeunes (SSJ), which attended to refugee youths.

The data available for 1955 is sketchy at this stage of our research. Nevertheless, this information is indicative of the socioeconomic challenges which confronted the subsequent Maghribi newcomers. Take, for instance, the fifty-nine newly arrived families, 196 persons, which approached the CBIP between July and October 1955. These families received cash relief benefits from the CBIP although they appeared to be employable and to have sufficient funds for living expenses. They had liquidated their assets in Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria in order to pay their passage to France, and the overwhelming majority had relatives in Paris who provided initial living accommodations. Moreover, the French labor market in 1955 was stable, many of these people who were skilled professionals managed to secure employment with relative ease.<sup>3</sup>

Of these 196 persons 60 percent were Tunisians, 30 percent were Algerians, and 10 percent were Moroccans.<sup>4</sup> It is unclear whether the Tunisian element included in its ranks several Jews who were French citizens even though most of them were doubtless Tunisian nationals. By virtue of the 1923 French Citizenship Law, one-fourth of Tunisia's Jewry obtained French citizenship during the French Protectorate era. Those who enjoyed this privilege also became beneficiaries of substantial French governmental assistance, the type of assistance French Jewish organizations or relatives could not always provide. Algerian Jews, French citizens, also became recipients of such aid. The Moroccan element, however, was completely dependent on relatives and Jewish relief agencies, for they were subjects of Morocco's Sherifian Sultan. The French officials in Morocco refrained throughout the colonial era from granting citizenship to the Jews.

Whereas these fifty-nine families fared well and became integrated into French society, this was the exception rather than the rule. Already in 1955 the real problem facing newcomers was housing. The initial conditions under which they lived with relatives were extremely difficult, with eight to ten people per room; in one case, seventeen people were confined to one room. When their relatives could no longer host them, the North African newcomers were forced to rent hotel rooms for 10,000 to 12,000 Francs per month for one room. This meant that a disproportionate part of their budget was used for rent but living conditions remained crowded. The overcrowding resulted in a rapid deterioration in family relationships, a phenomenon rare in their countries of origin, as well as health problems. Furthermore, most hotels would not accept small

children and in numerous instances the families placed them with the French Assistance Publique.<sup>5</sup>

In May 1956, plans were drawn in the French Jewish community to absorb the growing influx of North African Jews. An emergency meeting was convened by Jacob Kaplan, the Chief Rabbi of France, held at Guy de Rothschild's office, and attended by representatives of the AJDC, FSJU and other major organizations. It was agreed that in light of the deteriorating conditions of the North African Jewish populations — especially in Algeria where a bloody civil war against French rule victimized the Jews as it did the Muslims and European settlers — a coordinating office for resettlement research would be established in Paris. The FSJU took the responsibility for finding a capable individual to head the office. Under the aegis of the Central Consistory, the leading Jewish communal and religious organization, a study of housing and employment opportunities in the provincial communities was to be prepared for families that were about to depart from North Africa. Once the data on these issues were compiled, it would be forwarded to the coordinating office which, in turn, would relay it to the North African communities for those anxious to reach France.<sup>6</sup>

It was hoped that the coordinating office would also serve as an information and guide bureau for newcomers and would help create a reception committee at the port of Marseilles, one of the main ports where the North Africans arrived. Already the leaders of French Jewry, like the French government, encouraged the resettlement of emigrants and refugees into the provinces rather than in Paris, hoping to avoid over-concentration in the capital where the housing shortage was particularly acute. More significantly, however, the Jewish leadership in France aspired to strengthen the small communities in the provinces.<sup>7</sup>

Present at the meeting was Eugène Weill, secretary-general of the Alliance Israélite Universelle. He maintained that as the number of North African Jewish newcomers would increase, the major challenge would be integrating the Moroccans and Tunisians, most of whom were not French citizens. On the other hand, Algerian Jews, French citizens for the most part, would become more integrated and could be eligible for substantial French governmental assistance. Weill predicted accurately that the largest group of North African Jews would not come from Tunisia and Morocco, but from Algeria. This, he attributed to the growing trend of Moroccans and Tunisians settling in Israel.<sup>8</sup>

We found no further evidence pertaining to the coordinating office and its goal of facilitating the absorption of North Africans into their new geography. What seems certain is that the economic

and political fortunes of North African Jewry, especially those in Tunisia, took a serious turn for the worse in 1961 and 1962. The anti-French manifestations of Tunisia's president Habib Bourguiba, and the continuing crisis in Algeria, resulted in a flood of refugees to France. This influx overwhelmed French Jewry and brought about demographic changes in their midst.

Although the Jewish communities in Tunisia were relatively well off under Bourguiba from the years 1956 to 1961, immediately following independence, and their freedom of movement was respected, this situation changed radically in the summer of 1961 in connection with the Bizerte crisis. In July, Bourguiba demanded that French President Charles de Gaulle evacuate France's bases at Bizerte, bases which represented the last vestiges of the colonial past. Tunisia's insistence over Bizerte developed into full-scale fighting and resulted in a massacre of Tunisian civilians, a military defeat for Tunisia, but no evacuation until de Gaulle's decision (which would probably have been made in any event) more than two years later.

For the Jews, the Bizerte crisis precipitated emigration. In 1960, only 1,800 left for Israel and France, but from the end of July until mid-September 1961, 3,500 arrived in France. This figure does not include 500 to 600 in transit at Marseilles on their way to Israel. The Mossad, Israel's secret service apparatus, in collaboration with French military personnel on active duty on Tunisian soil, evacuated numerous Jews from trouble spots and transported them out of the country. Of the 3,500 who arrived in France, 2,000 held French passports while the remainder were Tunisian nationals. The latter were categorized as refugees partly because Bourguiba prohibited export of possessions and capital. Jews with French passports, according to AJDC sources in Tunisia, were able to register their property with the French consuls and thus draw up an inventory. In some cases they opened bank accounts abroad or had families in France to whom they could turn for assistance. Jews of Tunisian nationality, on the other hand, had no consul to whom they could turn and were unable to take money with them upon departure.<sup>9</sup>

Actually, the French nationals who left Tunisia or were evacuated — Jews and non-Jews alike — also enjoyed certain privileges in France. The French government organized complete reception services that included emergency housing, financial aid, and employment assistance. Once employment had been procured, loans for independent businesses and assistance for government housing were granted. The French government established a Secretariat de Rapatriés to organize the integration process of French repatriates.<sup>10</sup>

Tunisian Jews of French nationality, then, did not pose particular problems for the local French-Jewish communities. With respect to the 1,500 Jews of Tunisian nationality who had reached France by September 1961, and subsequent newcomers, it was an entirely different matter. Government services were not available for refugees of Tunisian nationality, nor did the Service Social d'Aide aux Emigrants (SSAE) appear to possess the financial resources for them. A serious problem thus emerged: whereas Jews of Tunisian nationality had the right to work and did not have a language barrier, as did most immigrants from Eastern Europe, they nonetheless were excluded from governmental welfare, medical and similar assistance. Consequently, the support of the FSJU's and AJDC's subsidized aid organizations became necessary.<sup>11</sup>

According to information provided by the FSJU, its personnel had a modest booth at the port of Marseilles for the Tunisian refugees. On September 1, 1961, a joint venture of the Committee of North African Jews in France and FSJU created reception bureaus (*bureaux d'accueil*) in Marseilles and Paris. In later years the *bureaux* were instrumental in assisting the large-scale absorption of Algerian Jews. Eventually, the *bureaux* assisted the refugees in five areas: reception, housing, relief (cash assistance, care for the aged, child care), religious/educational/cultural endeavors, and employment. The French governmental connection here was indispensable in only one major aspect: the authorities granted the Tunisian (and Moroccan) refugees the "right of asylum," a moral protection rather than an effective administrative privilege. Some Tunisians arrived with visitors' visas granted by the French consulate in Tunis. The visas were valid for three months and were subsequently converted to residence permits.<sup>12</sup>

The activities of the *bureaux d'accueil* in Marseilles and Paris were similar, although the greatest responsibility rested on the bureau in Marseilles. About 85 percent of the Algerian newcomers, as well as the Moroccan and Tunisian refugees, entered France via Marseilles. Beginning in 1962, the reception of newcomers extended into provincial towns such as Lyon, Toulouse, and Strasbourg, where they were guided by representatives of the FSJU in cooperation with local veteran communities.<sup>13</sup>

Supplementing the role of the *bureaux* in 1961 and 1962 was the aforementioned CBIP/CASIP cash relief agency, subsidized by the FSJU and AJDC. Its role was of immeasurable importance to Tunisian Jews in Paris following the Bizerte crisis. For example, in August 1961, 106 Tunisian-Jewish families — 405 people — were assisted by this agency. Added to the sharp increase of new Tunisian refugees, the number of Moroccan and Algerian newcomers had also

increased. Whereas at the beginning of 1961 the CBIP/CASIP received an average of ten Algerian families per month. In August, CBIP/CASIP figures showed twenty-one Jewish families — 105 persons — who applied for cash relief<sup>14</sup> (see Table 1). During 1962, the CBIP/CASIP received in Paris nearly 2,700 Algerian-Jewish

Table 1

NORTH AFRICAN JEWS REGISTERED WITH CBIP:  
AUGUST 1, 1961 - NOVEMBER 30, 1961

Month	From Tunisia		From Morocco		From Algeria	
	Cases	People	Cases	People	Cases	People
August	108	405	21	105	40	188
September	154	498	221	63	27	141
October	201	585	20	56	60	240
November	153	612	16	64	70	280
Total	616	2,100	78	288	197	849

Source: E. Odenwald-Kremsdorf to Dr. Sidney Nelson, Paris, December 9, 1961, Arch. AJDC/Jerusalem, 382B.

families who represented 12,000 people, 1,000 Tunisian families consisting of 4,000 people, and 180 Moroccan families, totalling 600 people.<sup>15</sup>

The benefits granted to North African Jews as early as 1961 included medical and “medico-social” programs. While Algerian Jews were French citizens and thus eligible for the French social security system benefits that covered medical expenses, the Tunisians and Moroccans were aided by the French-Jewish medical Organisation aux Secours des Enfants (OSE) and the Tiomkine dispensaries. These agencies not only provided the necessary treatments but covered the expenses for drugs and appliances, dental care and eyeglasses. Additionally Tunisian and Moroccan refugees who desired to attend French universities were ineligible for the French governmental scholarships offered to Jewish and non-Jewish French nationals from Algeria. To ensure that they benefited from

higher education in their new surroundings, French Jewry created scholarship funds for them.<sup>16</sup>

In Paris, the Foyer Amical, a French Jewish AJDC-affiliated organization, operated a kosher canteen for refugees which had a capacity of 200 persons per seating. Whereas early in 1961 this canteen served 600 meals daily, in September of that year it made over 900 meals daily for persons who could not otherwise obtain complete kosher meals. This expansion was partly attributed to the influx of Romanian-Jewish refugees, but it was profoundly influenced also by the Tunisian-Jewish exodus during and following the Bizerte crisis.<sup>17</sup>

We already remarked that the AJDC and FSJU were the most vital organizations promoting and subsidizing the resettlement of North Africans and other Jews in France. Yet, how precisely did they operate financially? Which auxiliary agencies outside France supported them?

There were three main sources of funding in favor of the North African and other newcomers. The Pool Budget which the FSJU shared with the AJDC, had a budget in 1963 of more than 7,500,000 New Francs (NF henceforth), of which the AJDC invested 3,500,000 NF and the FSJU contributed the balance. This source allocated funds to the diverse agencies which dealt with cash relief, canteens, child care, medical and medico-social programs (e.g., OSE), vacation camps, day schools, and youth centers.<sup>18</sup> educational and cultural projects (schools as well as religious and secular centers) were supported by the Jewish Claims conference (an international organization created in 1952, which used German post-World War II indemnification funds to subsidize institutions in Israel and the Diaspora) as a supplement to the Pool Budget.<sup>19</sup>

The Common Fund was created by the AJDC/FSJU during the early 1960s. The AJDC participated with the FSJU in conjunction with various European Jewish communities, the French government, and the Jewish Colonization Association (ICA) to advance funds for the North Africans. In 1963 the Common Fund budget was set at 10,000,000 NF, but available funds amounted to only 7,500,000 NF. The AJDC invested 2,000,000 NF, the FSJU an additional 2,000,000 NF, and the European Jewish communities and the French government provided a combined 1,300,000 NF. There was also a carryover from 1962 of approximately 2,200,000 NF, making a total of 7,500,000 NF. However, it was agreed that the AJDC would hold a reserve of 2,000,000 NF and the FSJU a reserve of 500,000 NF in case actual expenditures would exceed these 7,500,000 NF.<sup>20</sup>

The Common Fund provided financial allocations for the reception bureaus in Paris and Marseilles which, in October 1963, for

instance, received 100 people daily from North Africa. In December 1963, the Common Fund assisted a total of 1,379 North Africans in France; in January 1964 the number reached 1,481, and in February 1964, 1,517.<sup>21</sup>

As noted, the bureaus provided a wide variety of services and emerged as the backbone of activity, including support for housing and job placement. In 1962 and 1963 the bureau's housing departments helped 800 families, representing over 3,500 persons. They provided interest-free loans for housing (rent or purchase), although outright grants were also given. From November 1962 to March 1963, 630 housing loans based on the Common Fund were granted, amounting to 1,900,000 NF, benefiting 3,170 persons.<sup>22</sup> between March and October 1963, an additional 170 housing loans were disbursed, benefiting another 330 North Africans.<sup>23</sup>

Another notable contribution of the Common Fund was the work of CBIP/CASIP which, between January and August 1964, provided cash relief to 2,100 Tunisian Jews as compared with 2,005 during the entire year of 1963 (see Table 2).<sup>24</sup>

Third, the Special Programs assistance fund, an exclusive initiative of the AJDC, provided assistance to Egyptian and East European Jewish refugees who arrived in France beginning in the mid-1950s, escaping instability and persecution.<sup>25</sup> According to Dr. Sidney Nelson, the director for AJDC operations in France, in 1963 there was still a group of Egyptian Jews in France classified as "integration cases." Since the Sinai/Suez War of 1956, 6,000 families, or over 23,000 Jews, had been received by the AJDC-sponsored COJASOR agency.<sup>26</sup> From January 1 to March 31, 1964, a monthly average of 871 refugees from Egypt and Eastern Europe were assisted in France with AJDC funds, compared to a monthly average of 1,278 during the first quarter and 998 during the fourth quarter of 1963. Thus, the Special Programs fund was not meant for the Moroccans, Tunisians, and Algerians. For the supporting agencies it was the least burdensome fund of the three, for it was decreasing following the departure of East European and Egyptian transients to other lands or their settlement in France.<sup>27</sup>

Table 2  
 1964 MONTHLY CASH RELIEF LOAD:  
 TUNISIANS (CASIP)

Month	Number of Beneficiaries Families	People	Amount NF
January	188	719	44,356
February	192	733	39,436
March	160	624	32,262
April	188	694	39,743
May	203	741	37,474
June	208	767	41,714
July	195	712	36,406
August	157	699	39,013
September	215	825	44,646
October	347	1,493	104,818
November	315	1,318	86,684
December	317	1,308	96,988

Source: Budget and Finance Department, AJC, to Charles H. Jordan Regarding Development in Tunisian Caseload in France, Arch. AJDC/Jerusalem, 382B.

## **The Pains of Absorption and Integration into the New Geography — Emphasis on Algerian Jewry: 1962-1965**

In the latter half of 1962 there was an overall temporary slow-down in the arrival and registration of Tunisian and Moroccan Jewish refugees and emigrants, whereas the number of Jews coming from Algeria increased. As early as January-February 1962 the number of Algerian Jews who turned to the FSJU in Marseilles exceeded that of their Tunisian and Moroccan coreligionists (see Table 3).

Table 3

## FSJU/MARSEILLES - SOCIAL SERVICE INTAKE

Month	Refugees from Algeria		Refugees from Tunisia		Refugees from Morocco	
	Cases	People	Cases	People	Cases	People
Jan. 1962	37	175	18	55	10	42
Feb. 1962	24	119	9	42	6	40
Total	61	294	27	97	16	82

Source: E. Odenwald-Kremsdorf to Dr. Sidney Nelson, Paris, March 2, 1961, Arch. AJDC/Jerusalem, 5A.

As French citizens, the Algerian Jews who left their war-torn country were classified as "repatriates" like the European citizens of Algeria, and not as refugees, the classification of most of their Moroccan and Tunisian counterparts. This administrative measure (*statut de rapatrié*), distinguishing Algerian from Moroccan and Tunisian Jews, was retroactive to March 1, 1962. According to the French administration dealing with the repatriates (the *Secrétariat d'Etat aux Rapatriés*), between January and March 1962 an average of 300 families from Algeria arrived in Marseilles; it was estimated that at least one-third were Jewish families.<sup>28</sup>

Whereas during the first half of 1962 Algerian Jews and non-Jewish Europeans arrived in steadily increasing yet moderate numbers, the pact of departure from Algeria beginning around June and July 1962 in the aftermath of Algerian national independence was enormous. Fleeing from political and economic uncertainties and the influence of the revolutionary National Liberation Front (FLN), tens of thousands of Algeria's Jews headed for France. More than their Tunisian, Moroccan and Egyptian brethren, the Algerian newcomers often spoke French fluently. Just as the French government was unprepared in 1962 for absorbing 800,000 Algerian Europeans (French nationals), French-Jewish organizations, the FSJU included, apparently did not foresee the arrival of 120,000 Algerian Jews from 1962 to 1965. Prepared for 25,000 to 30,000 repatriates, they were overwhelmed.

As Claude Kelman, vice-president of the FSJU, revealed, French Jewry was confronted by the Algerian influx when the renewal of the Jewish community was already in motion, after years of exposure to French cultural assimilation. The principal factors in this renewal were the establishment of the State of Israel and the need of devoted Jews to identify with her, the augmentation of the French-Jewish communities by successive waves of immigration from Eastern and Central Europe, and the clear indication that troubled and disenfranchised Jewish youths were returning to Judaism in search of answers. The impact of the Algerian repatriates interrupted but did not halt the process of ideological, intellectual, and structural rebuilding begun by the French communities after the traumatic experience during World War II under Vichy and the German occupation.<sup>29</sup>

Kelman further disclosed that one advantage enjoyed by the newcomers, unlike previous emigrants, was their linguistic assimilation into French culture. This situation relieved French Jewry of a major educational obligation. Yet there were other problems to contend with, over and beyond the pace of immigration. In the first place, any action on behalf of the Algerian repatriates, as well as the Moroccans and Tunisians, had to account for their primary need to give their lives an underlying religious structure: places of worship, rabbis, kosher food, and rabbinic schools known as *Talmudei Torah*. The dispersion of the repatriates throughout France, albeit a prudent measure, made the cumbersome tasks of providing personnel and material facilities for this purpose more difficult.<sup>30</sup>

Secondly, the reorientation of the youths was more problematic. Conditions in Algeria, Kelman maintained, were harsh during the period of the revolution, between 1954 and 1962. Jewish youths arriving from this milieu in France, affected by Algerian terror and French counterterror, were sometimes politically extreme. In France they could become easy prey to extremist political philosophies. Therefore, it was incumbent upon French Jewry to provide them with communal cultural facilities and effective Jewish schools.<sup>31</sup>

Kelman sought to dispel the widespread notion in French society that the public authorities accepted the entire responsibility for the social welfare problems confronting the North African Jews. Although governmental agencies afforded large-scale assistance, it was largely bestowed upon the Algerian Jewish repatriates. The refugees from Morocco received no state aid given their non-French citizenship status and many of them could only turn to the local Jewish communities. At the same time, however, because segments of Algerian Jewry — like the Moroccans and Tunisians — were religiously oriented, certain social responsibilities in the new geo-

graphical surroundings usually undertaken by the state devolved upon the FSJU and AJDC. Particularly noteworthy in this context was the case of children in Jewish youth homes, as well as the placement in homes for the aged abandoned elderly persons who in 1962-65 were still in Algeria or scattered in hostels across France.<sup>32</sup>

Similarly, Julian Samuel, the executive director of the FSJU, acknowledged that the assistance provided by the French government was generous. The authorities did care for the Algerian repatriates and offered them basic opportunities for integration. The FSJU, he observed, had no intention of duplicating in any way French governmental efforts for repatriates who were French citizens, *as long as it was made available* (author's emphasis). The role of French and international Jewish organizations in this respect was to assist the Jews in obtaining the various allowances and case bonuses to which they were entitled from the authorities. The repatriates needed Jewish organizational intercession in dealing with the French government's bureaucratic red tape.<sup>33</sup> It does appear, nonetheless, that Jewish organizations like CBIP/CASIP did duplicate or supplement French governmental cash assistance.

Moreover, Samuel did not overlook the potential shortcomings of public assistance. Indeed, he raised the possibility in 1962 that the authorities might eventually discontinue their subsidies for all repatriates. While many Algerian Jews could by then integrate into French society, there was no guarantee that assistance to a core of needy people would be forthcoming. He then informed the representatives of the FSJU and AJDC:

...our community cannot fail to take care of heads of families over fifty years of age who may have been small tradesmen and who are unable to re-establish themselves in France or find remunerative employment. We must also look after the problems of women who have the responsibility for children, and for those aged persons who may not wish to enter public institutions or who may prefer to remain independent as long as possible. These are the social welfare problems which will be the responsibility of our communities whatever the system and the policies of the governmental authorities in the next few months.<sup>34</sup>

Even more concerned about the preservation of the Jewish cultural heritage than Kelman, Samuel believed that it was impossible, dangerous, "and even criminal" not to conserve the socio-religious structures and the traditions of all the North African Jews at a time when they were affected by this "brutal transfer." French Jewry, in his opinion, had to be extremely cautious not to harm the ethical system

from which these structures had grown. Genuine social and economic integration had to be based on a two-fold alliance consisting of preserving the newcomers' religious identity while, simultaneously, providing physical, economic and material integration.<sup>35</sup>

Kelman's and Samuel's assertions were translated into action. Between June and October 1962, 150 elderly repatriates were placed in Jewish institutional homes, most of them in the Rothschild Hospice of Paris. An additional thirty were placed temporarily in non-Jewish homes, for existing facilities in 1962 were far from sufficient to meet the new needs. In October 1962, 250 elderly repatriates were awaiting vacancies in existing Jewish homes or facilities under construction. Among them were a number of religiously observant individuals, temporarily sheltered in government institutions where kosher food and other religious facilities were unavailable. About 50 percent of the 250 elderly were infirm-disabled or semi-disabled, most of them blind.<sup>36</sup>

To accommodate the educational needs of repatriates' children, existing schools had to be expanded. The three major Jewish day schools in Paris were filled to their capacity of 1,000 people. The Yavné school, with a previous enrollment of 250-300, was completely remodeled to accommodate 400 children. The cost of the project was covered by the Jewish Claims Conference and the FSJU. The Ecole Maïmonide was renovated in 1963 to add five more classes, a gymnasium, and new boarding facilities imperative to increase the capacity of the school by 120 pupils, including twenty-five additional boarding students. The Ecole Lucien de Hirsch added a new building and renovated the old one to absorb additional pupils. The Claims Conference covered 50 percent of all costs.<sup>37</sup>

Though as late as 1961 the Jewish day school network was primarily centered in Paris and Strasbourg, by 1962 Otsar ha-Torah — an organization founded in the 1940s by American Sephardim to disseminate Jewish religious education in France and the Mediterranean basin countries — opened schools in Lyon.<sup>38</sup> Whereas in 1951 only 8 percent of Marseilles Jewish children frequented some form of religious schooling, by 1965 the ratio tripled.<sup>39</sup> In Paris, the Central Consistory also created day schools and supplementary educational institutions, while the Alliance Israélite Universelle, active in educating North Africans and Middle Eastern Jews in their countries of origin since 1862, expanded its work in France; in 1963 and 1964 it opened schools in Nice and an excellent institution at the Paris suburb of Pavillion-sous-Bois — which was still operating effectively in 1990. Moreover, the Yeshiva in Aix-les-Bains added a new wing and built a kitchen and dining room.<sup>40</sup>

The proliferation of educational facilities was largely underwritten by Claims Conference grants funnelled to the FSJU and the Central Consistory. The Claims Conference also subsidized a publication program for textbooks, reading material for children, adolescents, and adults. A complete educational program was initiated with lectures, meetings, publications by various local organizations, and correspondence courses in isolated communities. Funds were allocated to improve Jewish libraries as well as to provide new ones in communities where none existed before the Algerian influx. This financial assistance also enabled French universities to commence lectureships in Hebrew language and literature, provide Hebrew teachers for government Lycées, and open evening Yeshivot.<sup>41</sup>

In the very small provincial communities where the repatriates resettled, the correspondence courses would not suffice. In 1962 and 1963, the FSJU and the Claims Conference established the Fonds Temporaire, a fund to salary rabbis and teachers. The purpose was to strengthen communal life in the newly created or regenerated Jewish geographical areas. Among the beneficiaries of the fund were the communities of Avignon, Belfort, Le Havre, Montpellier, Nîmes, Reims, Perpignan, Aix-en-Provence, and Valence.<sup>42</sup>

It was Claims Conference funding that permitted the construction of Jewish community centers, an innovation heretofore unknown in Europe. Devised along the American model, these buildings went up throughout France in the 1960s and 1970s. With their attractive premises and broadranging social and cultural programs, they became important magnets for younger North African Jews, who traditionally regarded themselves as a separate community rather than as members of a "cult."<sup>43</sup>

The youths among the repatriates were beneficiaries of French Jewish summer camps and vacation colonies. Prior to 1962, enrollment in these facilities amounted to approximately 6,000 youths. During the political crisis which engulfed Algeria from the summer of 1962, these facilities accommodated an additional 3,000 repatriates, necessitating the creation of temporary colonies. Assisting youth activity was the French Jewish youth movement network, called the Département Educatif de la Jeunesse Juive (DEJJ). A network of DEJJ youth clubs was extended from Paris to the south of France — to Valence, Lyon, Grenoble, Nice, Marseilles, Nîmes, Montpellier, Avignon, Toulouse, and Perigueux. The program expanded to accommodate 5,000 youth repatriates in 1963 from 3,000 in 1962, a development that prompted French Jewry to train additional personnel and build suitable premises to contend with the large-scale influx of youths.<sup>44</sup>

In the 1970s and 1980s the North Africans were more solidly integrated within the French economy, as Howard M. Sachar notes in his analysis of the repatriates' occupational structure. Their success was visible in Belleville, once the heart of the Paris Jewish ghetto, in which few North African Jews lived by 1980 but where they still operated thriving businesses:

In addition to hundreds of retail shops, workshops, and warehouses, there have also sprung up many scores of little restaurants, bakeries, and butcher shops, all flashing neon Stars of David. The names are classically Maghrib Jewish — Zeitoun, Zeinati, Benhaim, Romani — and the proprietors are largely Tunisians. Parisians of all backgrounds come for the couscous, arissa, addas, and other spicy Maghrib dishes.<sup>45</sup>

This assessment is accurate in regard to the Algerian repatriates for the post-1965 period, just as, as early as the late 1950s, Moroccan and Tunisian Jewish refugees adjusted successfully to the French labor markets in clothing, manufacturing, plumbing, mechanics and electricity.<sup>46</sup> Unfortunately, from 1962 to 1965, this certainly was not the case for many of the Algerian repatriates.

Like the hundreds of thousands of Algerian Europeans who dotted the French labor market in search of suitable employment, their Jewish counterparts soon discovered that, in numerous cases, their level of training and qualifications was considerably different from and inferior to the French level. Of the 120,000 Jewish newcomers, approximately 35,000 were employable in the following categories:<sup>47</sup>

- less than 5 percent in the liberal professions, including lawyers and physicians;
- 35 percent petty merchants, shopkeepers, and artisans;
- 20 percent lower-level administrative functionaries having served the French colonial administration in Algeria at the ministries of finance, national education, post office/telegraph/telecommunications;
- the rest: salaried employees with ill-defined qualifications, considered by French society as completely "inadaptés" to economic life.

Interestingly, the employable repatriates often included in their ranks individuals whose salaries were considerably better in Algeria than the salaries offered in France. As French citizens, the repatriates were offered professional retraining by governmental agencies.

For instance, the newcomers who had worked as clerks and administrative functionaries had neither a knowledge of finance nor did they know how to type.<sup>48</sup> According to an AJDC official, a man who was the manager of a chain of foodstores in Algeria could not get a job in Valence as the manager of a single food store. The storeowner would say he was too old to be brought into the system, suggesting that he purchase a *tabac* — a combination cigarette-candy-refreshments shop — instead. Another man, formerly employed as a chief accountant in Algeria, did not qualify as an assistant accountant in Paris. Those classified as *representants* — agents of French business firms in Algeria or commercial intermediaries — were automatically disadvantaged, for there was no such profession in France.<sup>49</sup>

The unqualified or underqualified heads of families who earned monthly salaries in Algeria between 400-600 NF could only hope for laborer jobs, at an average rate (even in Paris and Marseilles) of 260 NF per month. Many repatriates initially refused to accept a lower standard of living. In Toulouse, for example, most repatriates were unemployed at the beginning of 1963. Based on the information forwarded by the Jewish Agency representative on the scene, the heads of families spent their days in cafes waiting for their government allocations and gambling. They preferred this lifestyle over going to another city to seek employment. He described them as “spoiled,” reluctant to accept inferior jobs, and unwilling to cope with the hardships. One repatriate in Toulouse accepted a job offer in Nantes in the north of France. He was a shoemaker (*cordonnier*) in Algeria, one of the main manual occupations among Algerian Jews. Upon arrival in Nantes, he discovered that payment was at piece-work rates, a system he never encountered in Algeria. After two days he deserted his job and returned to Toulouse, where he continued to receive government allocations.<sup>50</sup>

Nevertheless, repatriates who specialized in specifically “Jewish” activities, such as kosher meat butchers and cuisine, found in major centers such as Paris and Marseilles a large Jewish and non-Jewish North African clientele.<sup>51</sup>

Beginning in 1963, most of the repatriates demonstrated realistic attitudes by accepting modest jobs as workers in the textile, clothing, and other industries before starting to ascend the ladder of social mobility. This was not usually the case, however, with family heads between the ages of fifty and sixty-five: those not old enough to get retirement pension benefits but because of their age were unable to find work.<sup>52</sup>

Algerian repatriates, Jews and non-Jews, were entitled to government assistance for housing. Because of their French citizenship

status, the authorities helped them settle in provisional housing facilities until they found suitable accommodations.

From the outset the government saw to it that the majority of the Jews did not migrate only to the Paris area. Faced with a tidal wave of nearly one million Europeans and Jews from Algeria, the ministry of absorption was determined not to allow the continued overconcentration in the capital. Rather, by offering housing elsewhere in France, it induced the repatriates to disperse more widely throughout the provinces. This is why barely 30 percent of the Algerian Jews settled in Paris.<sup>53</sup>

Whereas French governmental assistance for housing proved advantageous for numerous repatriates, our archival sources reveal that many families were turned down after their dossiers were examined and it was disclosed that their financial resources were too limited to guarantee payments of the rent.

The FSJU sought to partially remedy this anomaly by creating the Service-Logement du Bureau d'Accueil in order to guide the newcomers in their search for housing. The Service analyzed with each family which turned to it the diverse legal, financial, or technical aspects of obtaining housing. One of its duties was to convince clients not to purchase an apartment which cost 40,000 NF when the family had only 3,000 NF in savings and earned 500 NF per month. According to Henri Slama, working for the FSJU:

J'ai sous les yeux le détail d'une opération traitée par un rapatrié qui avait acheté un logement de 15m<sup>2</sup>, une pièce et cuisine pour 33,000 francs sont 2,500 Francs comptant, ses seules économies. Il devait continuer à payer plus de 1,000 Francs par trimestre dont 690 Francs d'intérêt et 350 Francs comme amortissement du capital. Vu son faible salaire, il ne pourra pas continuer longtemps à honorer ses échéances et sera expulsé, il aura perdu dans l'opération les quelques milliers de francs accordés par de Ministère des Rapatriés.<sup>54</sup>

The FSJU confirmed the fact that the public authorities did disqualify many repatriates who wanted to rent apartments. It also noted that other repatriates were quite often expelled from their apartments because they could not afford the rent. To assist them, the FSJU's Common Fund (which included a special housing fund program) provided interest-free loans and even grants to Algerian repatriates and both Moroccan and Tunisian refugees. The local *bureau d'accueil* administered the dossiers of the Paris region while local social workers attended to those dossiers in the provinces and small cities. The loans distribution was decided by a commission

consisting of members from the CBIP/CASIP, SSJ, FSJU, AJDC and the Association des Originaires d'Algérie. The loans ranged mainly from 4,000 NF to 7,000 NF.<sup>55</sup>

The demographic evolution of the repatriates was a major challenge for both French Jewry and the government. Our data not only reveals the geographical redistribution of the Jewish newcomers into former Jewish communities that ceased to exist, or were very small, but provides information on the geographical redistribution of the non-Jewish Algerian European repatriates as well. According to Pierre Kaufmann, a leading representative of the FSJU, the redistribution process from June and July 1962 to the end of April 1963 was as follows:<sup>56</sup>

- 25-30 percent of the Jewish repatriates in the Paris region, as compared with 17 percent of non-Jews;
- 25-30 percent of the Jewish repatriates in southeastern France as compared with 37 percent of non-Jews;
- 10-15 percent of the Jewish repatriates in southwestern France as compared with 18 percent of non-Jews;
- 10-12 percent of the Jewish repatriates in Lyon and Grenoble in equal numbers to their non-Jewish counterparts; and
- 10-15 percent of the Jewish repatriates in other regions as compared with 17 percent of non-Jews.

The major complaint of the Jewish repatriates was not economic but cultural, due to their inability to live as Jews in a non-Jewish environment. They found it difficult to maintain their traditions in small towns and hamlets of rural France to which so many of them were directed. Most of the isolated areas had no more than a handful of Jewish families to begin with; some had none. Hence, whereas non-Jewish repatriates had had little difficulty in settling in rural areas — with few problems relating to community living, houses of worship, availability of clergymen, or religious education — many Jewish repatriates were still searching as late as 1964 and 1965 for facilities that would enable them to maintain their Jewish identity.

In a French-Jewish community of 100 families that had a synagogue and a rabbi, Jewish life centered around observances of the high holidays, a communal passover *Seder*, and some preparation for *Bar Mitzvahs*. *Kashrut* existed only in exceptional cases. Generally, the inhabitants of these small communities, mainly traders, artisans and manufacturers, were reluctant to be conspicuously Jewish. Most repatriates voiced indignation at the extent to which the Jews in France had assimilated; the French Jews, on the other hand, were

equally indignant at the repatriates' insistence on *kashrut* and their exuberance at religious services.<sup>57</sup>

Because of different ritual practices, it was inevitable that the Ashkenazim and Algerian Jews would be drawn into a conflict. In Reims (northeastern France), where religious services were conducted in accordance with Alsatian rites, Algerian families would neither come to the synagogue nor sent their children to the local Talmud Torah. In Tours (northwestern France), on the other hand, where the repatriates conducted Sabbath services according to the Algerian rites, it was the indigenous Jew who expressed dissatisfaction. Since two separate services were rarely possible, each group sometimes modified its services to accommodate the other.<sup>58</sup>

In my research on North African Jewry during the period which preceded the emigration trend to France, I found that similar communal tensions were then part of the demographic and geographic redistribution process. In Morocco, for instance, Jews belonged to three categories: *Sephardim* from northern Morocco (descendants of the *megorashim* from Spain); Berberized Jews from rural Morocco and the Atlas and Rif mountains; and Judeo-Arab Jews who spoke Judeo-Arabic. After 1850 there was a gradual but steady migration of Jewish families from the interior and the south of Morocco to the coastal towns of Tangier, Mogador, Casablanca and Rabat. Jews moved to these important coastal and port towns to take part in commerce, encouraged by the emerging European economic presence, or simply to seek refuge and relief among the local Jewish communities. There Muslim tribal tensions did not interfere with economic transactions.

These migrations coincided with the penetration of French Jewry's Alliance Israélite Universelle schools into Morocco. And, as migration clustered Jews of diverse background into different communities, the Alliance schools unified elements otherwise indifferent or hostile to each other. Unlike French-speaking North African Jews in France during the 1950s and 1960s, Jews in Morocco migrating from different parts of that country to Casablanca or Tangier found linguistic barriers; and like the conflict between French Jews and North African repatriates/refugees in France during the 1960s, the tensions in Morocco were over diverse customs of the various migrants. These clashes in nineteenth-century Morocco, as in France of the 1960s, constituted an obvious obstacle to the integration process.

In Morocco, the Judeo-Spanish elements looked down on the Judeo-Arab and Judeo-Berber Jews, insisting on their own cultural superiority. As late as 1906, it was discovered in Casablanca that the AIU schools were frequented by only thirty-four children of

Casablancon parents (from the veteran community), while seventy-five were migrant youths from northern Morocco, twenty-three from the Atlas mountains (Judeo-Arabs and Judeo-Berbers), twenty-six from Marrakesh, forty-four from other parts of the interior, and eighteen from unspecified places. This led to an important development: by sitting together in the same classroom, children of diverse cultural backgrounds developed the habit of speaking French (the language of instruction), and this united them and helped eliminate communication barriers, thus contributing to the reconstruction of the Casablanca community.<sup>59</sup>

In the short run, however, the difficulties of integration were far from over in the case of Casablanca. The biggest obstacle involved the Jews from the north, who spoke Judeo-Spanish and/or Spanish, and the Judeo-Arabs from the interior. In 1902, the principal of the boys' schools remarked that the schools were required to employ a rabbi-teacher versed in Judeo-Spanish for youths from the north, and another who was versed in Judeo-Arabic. Considering that teaching Hebrew and biblical studies often required translations of texts, the parents had insisted that this be done in the language of their tradition. The AIU in Casablanca complied.<sup>60</sup>

Time, then, was a decisive factor in the Moroccan and French cases. Communal integration was inevitable. In the later case of the Algerian repatriates and other North Africans in France the integration process not only took place, but gradually Judeo-Arabic replaced Yiddish as the French Jewish communities' second language.

The only places in France where little or no conflict existed were tiny communities of twenty to fifty families — and for a good reason. Before the arrival of the repatriates they had little Jewish community life. Orléans, Le Havre, and Amiens had synagogues but they were only open for the high holidays. In other communities where there were no synagogues, temporary facilities were rented. With the arrival of North African Jews, Jewish life in these tiny communities was revitalized. Synagogues were no longer closed, religious services were conducted every week, and rabbis were appointed in Orléans and Le Mans for the first time in many years. There was kosher meat in Caen and Le Havre, while in Amiens the communities for the first time in several decades organized, and financed, a Talmud Torah.<sup>62</sup>

Cultural and ritual conflicts aside, the repatriates were welcomed more enthusiastically than the Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe who fled the pogroms from the 1880s until World War I. Because the repatriates were French-speaking and in many instances western oriented, "civilized" French Jewry did not have the condescending attitude toward them as toward the "inferior" and "barbaric"

Eastern European Jews. Why? Just as Israeli leaders today regard the Soviet Jewish emigration into their country as a source of strength, French Jewish leaders considered the Algerian influx as a source of communal demographic expansion. As one leader noted in 1963:

Twenty years after the Nazi Holocaust, the Jewish community of France has been given a tremendous opportunity for growth by the arrival in their midst of Jews from North Africa. The integration of this new and vital force poses formidable, but by no means insoluble problems. It is our duty to give them all the help we can, especially the means to live as Jews.<sup>62</sup> (See Table 4 on the Jewish population expansion between 1957 and 1963).

## Conclusion

As Sachar explains, it would be wrong to classify North African Jews as uniformly traditional and religious.<sup>63</sup> The evidence indicates that since World War I Algerian Jewry in their native cities of Algiers and Oran were increasingly acculturated to French lifestyles and secular ideas, whereas those of Constantine, Tlemcen and the south were far more traditional. At the same time, regardless of how modernized Algerian (and Tunisian) Jews were, they adhered to Jewish religious principles more than the indigenous French Jews. The latter's Jewish identity was more political; they were united by the Holocaust of which they were victims, Vichy's anti-Semitic laws, and the German occupation from 1940 to 1944.<sup>64</sup>

Furthermore, if the North African repatriates and refugees searched for a more intense religious life in their new surroundings, it was partly because, uprooted from the Maghribi milieu, they turned to Jewish religious traditions and identity as the best values to embrace at a time of crisis.

Eventually, an increasing number of Algerian and Tunisian Jews attended French secular schools in their new land. Among them were those who drifted from Jewish tradition altogether. Still, we find that even within these segments, Jewish identity was not lost. They embraced the veteran communities' approach of political Jewish awareness and identity, but with greater vigor, demonstrating interest in Jewish political developments and solidarity with Israel. Among the Moroccans, on the other hand, we find that they were quite eager to combine political and religious Jewish identity by supporting Israel and other Jewish causes while preserving their religious life. Some of France's best educators in religious schools are Moroccan.

Table 4  
THE JEWISH GEOGRAPHY OF FRANCE

City	Population	
	Feb. 1957	Feb. 1963
Agen	250	480
Aix-en-Provence	265	1,200
Albi*	0	160
Aix-les-Bains	77	160
Amiens	140	440
Angers*	0	180
Anncey*	0	260
Ancerre*	0	80
Avignon	700	1,200
Bayonne	420	600
Beauvais*	0	320
Belfort	350	1,300
Besanson	420	600
Beziers	160	280
Blois	0	250
Bordaux	3,500	6,400
Bourges	0	89
Brest*	0	100
Caen	125	320
Cannes	455	880
Carpentras	55	140
Castres	70	160
Chalons sur Marnes	80	100
Chalons sur Soane*	0	140
Chambery	0	150
Chateauroux	30	150
Cherbourg	0	40
Clermont Ferrand	265	800
Colmar*	0	800
Compiègne*	0	104

Table 4 (con't)

## THE JEWISH GEOGRAPHY OF FRANCE

City	Population	
	Feb. 1957	Feb. 1963
Creil*	0	320
Dijon	490	720
Evreux*	0	350
Grenoble	1,190	2,800
La Rochelle*	0	260
Le Havre	265	520
Le Mans	80	360
Lille	2,275	3,200
Limoges	350	560
Luneville	250	360
Lyon	6,300	25,000
Macon	0	200
Marseilles	12,000	50,000
Meaux*	0	350
Metz	2,800	3,220
Montauban	105	320
Montargis*	0	60
Montpellier	525	2,300
Mulhouse	1,800	1,920
Nancy	2,625	3,320
Nantes	100	320
Nice	2,100	6,400
Nimes	350	1,040
Orleans	80	600
Pomiers*	0	60
Paris (Seine)	175,000	300,000
Pau	320	600
Perigueux	210	480
Perfignan	350	1,300
Poitiers*	0	200

Table 4 (con't)

City	Population	
	Feb. 1957	Feb. 1963
Reims	+	200
Rennes	0	160
Roanne	400	520
Rouen	600	800
Saint Etienne	350	800
Sedan	180	240
Strasbourg	10,000	14,000
Tarbes*	0	240
Thionville	480	520
Toulon	525	1,280
Toulouse	3,500	14,000
Tours	350	600
Troyes	245	460
Valence	105	600
Valenciennes	200	240
Versailles	315	800
Vichy	350	540
Total	235,027	461,023

\* Completely new community.

+ No figures available.

Source: Arch. AJDC/New York, 309, February 1963.

It would be convenient to compare the influx of North African Jews to France in the 1950s and 1960s with the current Soviet Jewish exodus to Israel. However, the comparison must be treated cautiously. True, there are certain similarities. Both types of newcomers had to be professionally retrained or needed supplementary education in their existing professions in order to adapt to the more progressive economic and social systems. A Soviet Jewish engineer or physician was not as qualified as his Israeli counterpart, just as

the chief accountants among the Algerian repatriates could not measure up to French accountants. In both cases aid and subsidies were granted to ease the pains of absorption, although the housing shortage in Israel is as bad, if not worse, than in France of the 1960s.

Similarities aside, Soviet Jews who came to Israel in 1989 and 1990 were often completely removed from their Jewish traditions. They needed Jewish cultural guidance whereas North African Jews in France helped to revitalize Jewish life in small provincial communities. Moreover, it remains to be seen whether Soviet emigration to Israel will continue, providing the demographic strength needed by the Jewish state. Should the trends continue, Soviet Jews may settle in Israel's Galilee region, where the majority of the present population is Arab, or elsewhere where Israelis are reluctant to live or settle in insignificant numbers. Thus, while the North Africans expanded and changed the Jewish geography in France, former Soviet Jews may contribute to similar developments in Israeli society.

Thirdly, refugees and displaced persons in a new environment, whether transient or seeking permanent resettlement, have difficulty coping with emotional stress or failure. For example, many immigrants to other lands were unable to adapt to their new land and committed suicide. In France comparatively few cases of suicide among the North Africans were reported by the government or Jewish organizations. But as Gerard Israel, a prominent French-Jewish leader of Algerian background, noted, the few cases of suicide among the Algerians were also attributed to the inability to adapt:

It is rare that suicide is provoked by hunger or by slum living. It is hopelessness, the inability to adapt socially, [or] professional failure that leads the desperate ones to give up on life. The several cases of suicide among the repatriates recorded to this day do not seem to have other origins except the belief in the impossibility to find a respectable and comfortable place in French society.<sup>65</sup>

One final point should be raised. The main gap in our study at this stage of writing is the lack of information concerning French governmental support after 1964 and 1965 for Algerian repatriates. The same applies to the extent of Jewish organizational assistance for repatriates and refugees alike.

## Notes

1. "A Special Report on the Fundraising Activities of the FSJU (1949)," Archives of the AJDC (Arch. AJDC henceforth), New York, 359.
2. On North African and Egyptian Jewish emigration to Israel, see Michael M. Laskier, *The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Jewish Communities of Morocco: 1862-1962* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), pp. 212-211; *idem.*, "Political and Organizational Aspects of Immigration to Israel from Morocco: 1949-1956," *Zionism: Studies in the History of the Zionist Movement and the Jewish Community in Palestine* XII (1987):333-367; *idem.*, "Jewish Emigration from Morocco to Israel: Government Policies and the Position of International Jewish Organizations, 1949-1956," *Middle Eastern Studies* 25, no. 3 (July 1989):487-528; *idem.*, "Political and Social Developments in the Jewish Communities of Morocco: Twenty Years Since Independence (1956-1976)," *Middle Eastern Studies* 26, no. 4 (October 1990):330-375; *idem.*, "Zionism and the Jewish Communities of Morocco: 1956-1962," *Studies in Zionism* 6, no. 1 (Spring 1985):119-139; *idem.*, "The Instability of Moroccan Jewry and the Moroccan Press in the First Decade After Independence," *Jewish History* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1986):39-54; *idem.*, "From Hafsia to Bizerte: Tunisia's Nationalist Struggle and Tunisian Jewry, 1952-1961," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 2, no. 2 (December 1987):188-222; *idem.*, "Egyptian Jewry under the Nasser Regime (1956-1970)" [Hebrew], Y. Chetrit, ed., *Miggedem Umiyyam III: Tradition and Modernity Among North African and Oriental Jewry* (Haifa: Haifa University Press, 1990), pp. 213-252; *idem.*, "From War to War: The Jews of Egypt from 1948 to 1970," *Studies in Zionism* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1986):111-147.
3. Auren Kahn, AJDC director for France, to Charles H. Jordan, Paris, 14 November 1955, Arch. AJDC/Jerusalem, 5A/43.095.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.* The FSJU's children's home admission committee refused admission for children for economic reasons alone. Thus, the North African children were ineligible for placement in FSJU-supported homes. Furthermore, the homes of the FSJU agencies were full in 1954 and 1955, and only a few children were admitted.
6. Auren Kahn to Charles H. Jordan, Paris, 17 May 1956, Arch. AJDC/Jerusalem, 5A.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. Michael M. Laskier, "From Hafsia to Bizerte: Tunisia's Nationalist Struggle and Tunisian Jewry, 1952-1961," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 2, no. 2 (December 1987):212-213.
10. Report on Tunisian Refugees in France, 21 September 1961, Arch. AJDC/Jerusalem, 382B.
11. Dr. Sidney Nelson, AJDC director for France, to Charles H. Jordan, Paris, 25 April 1963, Arch. AJDC/New York, 309.

12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*
14. E. Odenwald-Kremsdorf to Dr. Sidney Nelson, Paris, 4 December 1961, Arch. AJDC/Jerusalem, 382B.
15. Nelson to Jordan, 25 April 1963, Arch. AJDC/New York.
16. *Ibid.*
17. E. Odenwald-Kremsdorf to Dr. Sidney Nelson, Paris, 19 October 1961, Arch. AJDC/Jerusalem, 382B.
18. Proceedings of AJDC Country Directors Conference, Geneva, Switzerland, 30-31 October 1963, p. 24.
19. Nelson to Jordan, 25 April 1963, Arch. AJDC/New York. Even prior to the large influx of Algerian Jews and other North Africans into France, between 1957 and 1962, the Claims Conference and the FSJU spent the equivalent of \$2,500,000 on cultural, religious and educational programs. See Rabbi Hugo Gryn to the AJDC, Paris, 24 July 1962, Arch. AJDC/New York, 315.
20. Proceedings of AJDC Country Directors Conference, 30-31 October 1963, pp. 23-24.
21. "Refugees in France," Report from 27 May 1964, Arch. AJDC/New York, 327.
22. Nelson to Jordan, 25 April 1963, Arch. AJDC/New York.
23. Proceedings of AJDC Country Directors Conference, 30-31 October 1963, p. 24.
24. Budget and Finance Department, AJDC, to Charles H. Jordan, Regarding Developments in Tunisian Caseload in France, January 1965, Arch. AJDC/Jerusalem, 382B. About half of the Tunisians who turned to CBIP/CASIP for assistance and cash relief had been assisted by the United HIAS Service (UHS), the international Jewish immigration society, in the payment of their passage to France. About 75 percent of the UHS-assisted refugees turned to the French communal agencies within the first months of their arrival in France.
25. On Egyptian refugees, see Michael M. Laskier, "Egyptian Jewry Under the Nasser Regime: From the Sinai War to 1970," *Jewish Social Studies* (forthcoming).
26. "Refugees in France," 27 May 1964, Arch. AJDC/New York. This is the breakdown on monthly average of assisted refugees from Egypt and Eastern Europe:

	1st Quarter 1964	1st Quarter 1963	4th Quarter 1963
Eastern Europe	589	931	685
Egypt	282	347	313
Total:	871	1,278	998

27. *Ibid.*
28. E. Odenwald-Kremsdorf to Dr. Sidney Nelson, Paris, 2 March 1962, Arch. AJDC/Jerusalem, 5A.
29. Claude Kelman at the Second Plenary Session of the Seventeenth Annual AJDC Overseas Conference in Geneva, 4-6 November 1962, p. 42.
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Ibid.*
36. Nelson to Jordan, 25 April 1963, Arch. AJDC/New York.
37. *Ibid.*
38. *Ibid.*
39. Howard M. Sachar, *Diaspora: An Inquiry Into the Contemporary Jewish World* (New York: Perennial Library, 1985), p. 121. Partly resulting from the Algerian influx, the population in Marseilles, only 10,000 strong in 1951-52, soared to 50,000 in the 1960s and to 85,000 during the 1970s.
40. Rabbi Hugo Gryn to AJDC, 24 July 1962, Arch. AJDC/New York, 315.
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Ibid.*
43. Sachar, *Diaspora*, pp. 121-122. Between June 1962 and April 1963 such centers were being constructed in southeastern and southwestern locations such as Valence, Perigueux, Avignon, Toulouse, Grenoble, and Cannes; in the western communities of Rochelle and Angers; and in the north at Blois, Evreux, Tours, Orléans, Meaux, and Caen.
44. Nelson to Jordan, 25 April 1963, Arch. AJDC/New York.
45. Sachar, *Diaspora*, p. 122.
46. *Ibid.*
47. S. Castro, Paris, FSJU Meeting of General Assembly, 28 April 1963, Arch. AJDC/New York, 327.
48. *Ibid.*
49. Irving Dickman, Report on Algerian Jews in France, Geneva, 5 April 1963, Arch. AJDC/New York, 327.
50. *Ibid.*
51. Castro, 28 April 1963, Arch. AJDC/New York.
52. Dickman, 5 April 1963, Arch. AJDC/New York.
53. Sachar, *Diaspora*, p. 120.

54. H. Slama, Speech at FSJU Meeting, 28 April 1963, Arch. AJDC/New York, 327.
55. "Refugees in France," 27 May 1964, Arch. AJDC/New York.
56. Pierre Kaufmann, speech at FSJU Meeting, 28 April 1963, Arch. AJDC/New York, 327.
57. "Refugees in France," 27 May 1964, Arch. AJDC/New York.
58. *Ibid.*
59. Michael M. Laskier, *The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Jewish Communities of Morocco: 1862-1962* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), pp. 124-126.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 126.
61. Report on Algerian Jews in France, 10 September 1964, Arch. AJDC/New York, 327.
62. *Ibid.*
63. Sachar, *Diaspora*, p. 121.
64. Julian Samuel, speech at FSJU's 14th General Assembly Meeting, 28 April 1963, Arch. AJDC/New York, 327.
65. Gérard Israël, "Éléments pour un portrait-robot du rapatrié," *L'Arche*, no. 7-8 (July 1963), p. 50.

## APPENDIX 1

Bureau Européen du Rabbi M.M. Schneersohn de Lubawitz pour  
L'Aide aux Réfugiés  
770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A.  
Fondé de Pouvoir pour l'Europe: Grand Rabbin B. Gorodetzki  
Bureau Central: 80, Rue Saint-Antoine,  
Paris (IV) — Tél.: TUR. 87-12

Synagogue & Talmud-Torah  
34, Rue du Goulet (Esc. 2)  
Aubervilliers (Seine)

November 22, 1962

Yechivah Tomchei-Tmimim  
2, Av. du Petit-Château, Brunoy (S.-&-O.)  
Tél.: 922-86-26

Séminaire Beth-Rivkah  
3, Av. Raymond-Poincaré, Yerres (S.-&-O.)  
Tél: N° 101

**MEMORANDUM ON THE SITUATION OF  
RELIGIOUS-CULTURAL WORK IN FRANCE  
IN BEHALF OF JEWISH REFUGEES FROM ALGERIA**

King Salomon says: "Nesayim, Veruach, Vegeshem Oyin" (Clouds, winds, but no rain — Proverbs 25/14).

Since about ten months, and especially during the last few months, Jewish public opinion, community leaders as well as Jewish organizations in the Western world have been preoccupied with the problem of North African Jewish refugees and particularly of the over 100,000 Jewish refugees from Algeria who recently arrived in France.

What are the problems?

These people had been settled for many centuries in the larger or smaller cities of Algeria. Economically, the great majority of them belonged to the so-called middle class, although some of them were counted among the rich and even among the very rich, and others among the poor or the very poor. Their spiritual life was based on Toranic laws and precepts; some of them were very orthodox, others a little less orthodox, but all observed the Sabbath, Kashrut, "Taharat-Hamishpacha" (Mikvah), "Chinuch" and general Jewish traditions.

Unfortunately, the blow has come and these people had to flee the country in which they had been settled for so many centuries and leave behind everything they had to become displaced persons. Their situation is tragic and the problems they are facing cannot be solved by their own means, they have to be helped to do so by others who are in a more fortunate situation. From the economic point of view they are mainly helped by the French Government. However, their spiritual needs must become the responsibility of the Jewish communities all over the world and not only of the Jewish community in France. This latter community is too small to be able to solve the cultural-religious problems of the over 100,000 Jewish refugees from Algeria. Jewish public opinion all over the world must be alerted and mobilized, and great efforts invested in favor of our refugee brethren from Algeria.

However, before the big job of cultural-religious absorption can be undertaken, there are certain needs which cannot wait. We realize that schools, Talmudei-Torah, Synagogues, Mikvot, Kosher butchers cannot grow overnight in the many places of France where the Algerian refugees are dispersed. This will take time and perhaps a lot of time. But, on the other hand, one cannot sit down and wait until all the necessary institutions be created (as is now the case). If we see a wounded man bleeding, we do not tell him that we cannot do anything for him until the physician and the proper medicaments will arrive — we must give him first aid, put a bandage around his wound, wash it and try to stop the blood so that he can survive until the physician will be able to give him the proper medical treatment and he can recover again. The same applies to the religious and cultural life of a Jew.

Talmudei-Torah, Synagogues, Mikvot, Kashrut are vital institutions, but one cannot, for instance, tell a refugee not to eat until he can find Kosher meat. On the other hand, there is the danger — according to the Talmud as well as according to what we see in practical life — of “*Avar Neshina Naasé Lo Ke’Heter*,” if someone gets used to non-observance of religious precepts, they no longer seem to him necessary. It is therefore imperative that immediate first aid should be organized and given in such a way that when the time comes and the necessary institutions are created, there will still be people requiring such institutions, as they were used to in their homes for many generations.

What are the suggestions?

1. A fund should be allocated to have Rabbis and other appropriate people visit the places where there are refugees to give them moral, spiritual and practical guidance in all religious problems. For instance, I know of many facts where families began to eat non-Kosher (first only the small children and then also the adults) because they believed that in order to buy Kosher meat they would have to go very far out of their way to look for it, while in reality Kosher meat could be purchased at a relatively small distance from their place. When our people told them that they could buy Kosher meat so near, they were truly surprised and shocked and immediately returned to Kashrut.

In another instance, people were wrongly informed that the price of entering a Mikvah was N.F. 20 per person, which they could, of course, not afford to pay and had to resign from going to Mikvah. However, when they later found out that the highest price was only N.F. 3, and that, if necessary, they could use the Mikvah free of charge, they were greatly surprised and began to attend regularly the Mikvah. Other people did not send their children to Talmud-Torah because they did not know that in a nearby place, which could be reached by bus in half an hour, there was a Talmud-Torah functioning.

All this shows that if the refugees could be visited and guided by appropriate people, the above-mentioned instances could easily have been avoided, and one must not forget that there are thousands of such instances occurring now. In addition, such visits of Rabbis and appropriate people would strengthen the morale of the refugees in general, since it is a known fact that refugees and migrants in a new country do require moral support.

2. To start immediately organizing on a reduced scale every institution possible: a small Synagogue, a small Talmud-Torah, to send a Shochet to visit several places — each place knowing in advance on what day the Shochet will arrive — to appoint a Rabbi for several places to give them guidance, to organize an itinerant Kosher butcher shop which will distribute Kosher meat in several places, etc. In general, to start doing something practical, and later on the work itself will show what is necessary and what is possible to be done further.

3. It is very important that the fund distributing organizations should give more consideration to and encourage the people who do and are able to do something in this field. Moreover, they should even look for such people, especially among the religious section, and entrust to them the

work in full confidence, give them the financial possibility and authority to do a fine job. This does not mean that there should be no financial control over them, but they should not be treated like domestics, since this kind of treatment can give no positive results.

In view of the above it is clear that the financial means for such work has to be provided at once and not, as I know of cases, months pass by after a Talmud-Torah or another institution has been organized, but no funds are received because of the red tape of the organizations which are supposed to provide the funds, or, in another instance, where a Director of such a fund providing organization declares that a Yeshivah of 20-30 students should better be closed down. Such a procedure and attitude of so-to-say responsible people can only give the results as quoted after King Salomon — "Clouds, wind but no rain."

I want to hope that the large majority of Jewish leaders do not belong to this category, but are truly interested in the development of Jewish cultural life and particularly when this is connected with such tragic events, when our brethren suffer and when the future of the Jewish youth in the Western World in general is exposed to the danger of complete illiteracy with regard to Jewish culture and of assimilation, not to speak already of the situation of the Jews in Eastern Europe. I am therefore confident that my present appeal will not be a "Kol Korei Bamidbar" and that all truly interested Jewish community leaders and the responsible people of the fund distributing organizations will give very serious consideration to this memorandum and see to it that something concrete should finally and immediately be done.

Grand Rabbi B. Gorodetzki  
Director-General for Europe  
Israel and North Africa

[Source: Arch. AJDC/Jerusalem, 382B.]

## APPENDIX 2

### HOW THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF STRASBOURG WELCOMED JEWS FROM ALGERIA — JUNE 1963

The city of Strasbourg on the Rhine, 10,000 strong in 1962, met the influx of Algerian refugees in the summer of 1962 with generosity and warmth. As early as January 1962, the community organized a welcoming committee to receive the repatriates. An emergency campaign raised \$45,000 while the community also appealed to the FSJU which, in partnership with the AJDC, established a Common Fund to aid North African Jews in France. In 1963, Strasbourg's leaders contended with the challenge of

solving the complex problems created by the overnight influx of 2,000 newcomers into a community of 10,000. Some problems — housing, employment, relief — this is what Strasbourg faced in common with other French Jewish communities which absorbed newcomers in far greater numbers. But two unique aspects existed in Strasbourg: the absorption of 400-500 Jews from the villages in southern Algeria, and the case for hundreds of children still separated from their parents.

When asked by an AJDC representative why the Jews of Strasbourg made such exceptional efforts on behalf of their Algerian counterparts, a community leader responded: "Because all of us in Strasbourg know what it means to be refugees." He explained that in 1940, before France was occupied by the Germans, everyone in a strip of land twelve miles wide along the German border, including the Jews of Strasbourg, was evacuated by the government as a protective measure. Nevertheless, many of them ultimately met their death at the hands of the Germans.

Made up of men in their forties and fifties, the Welcoming Committee was strongly supported by the new president of the Jewish community, a lawyer named René Weill, a survivor of Auschwitz. Strasbourg was somewhat better off than most French Jewish communities. Prosperous and traditionally religious, this community long supported a comprehensive group of Jewish institutions. It prided itself on the fact that nowhere else in France could a Jew live such a rich and intense Jewish life. This was one factor which prompted so many Algerian Jews to settle there.\*

As the structure of the Strasbourg community had been substantially expanded to meet the needs of the newcomers, existing facilities were badly overcrowded. The Welcome Committee created two new youth centers for unaccompanied children; a social worker was added to the staff of the local Assistance Sociale Juive; new teachers and administrative personnel were found for the Hebrew school, whose enrollment had jumped from 300 to 450; a new synagogue-center was constructed in an area where there was a high concentration of North African Jews so they would have a place to meet and worship. Two special classes were created to help the Algerian Jewish youth to catch up educationally to their French contemporaries, subsidized by the local government.

As elsewhere in France, finding employment and housing for the repatriates and refugees had not been easy. Of the 2,000 newcomers to Strasbourg, it was estimated that approximately 15 percent were well-to-do or affluent; 20-25 percent had moderate means; the remainder were poor.

---

\*The Jews who settled in Strasbourg originated from religious communities in southern Algeria.

Source: Strasbourg: How One Community Welcomed Jewish Refugees, by Lois Hacett, June 6, Arch. AJDC/New York, #327.