

Middle East

INTRODUCTION

THE WAR launched by six Arab states—Trans-Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Iraq—when the state of Israel was proclaimed on May 14, 1948,¹ was halted by a series of armistices during the period under review.

But for the Arab world the war had laid bare two fundamental problems that were expected to harass the rulers of the several Arab nations for some time: first, the semblance of Arab unity, political and military, vanished with the disintegration of the Arab League in the face of the unexpected strength of Israel; and, second, the internal difficulties which beset several of the Arab regimes were aggravated by defeat. But while both these problems were for the most part of concern to the Arab world alone, the war also left in its wake several issues of international scope. Chief among these was the problem of the Arab refugees, who had fled from their homes and their land in Israeli territory and whose dire straits demanded immediate action.

Domestic Conditions

THE SPECTER OF COMMUNISM

As long as the war was of paramount importance, the several Arab regimes had succeeded in subordinating the fact of domestic instability to the immediate external conflict. The widespread poverty and misery were adduced by some observers as an explanation of the apparent lack of interest on the part of the Arab masses in the war; some even saw the Arab position on the refugees as an attempt to deflect attention from the discontent at home.²

But the Arab leaders could not evade the fact that their regimes were tottering. Throughout the Middle East there were rumblings of social and political revolution. The wretched conditions of the masses under the feudalistic order provided a fertile field for Communist agents. Indications that Communism had taken hold—among Egyptian students, at least—was borne out by the fact that more than 50 per cent of the students at the universities in Cairo and Alexandria refused to demonstrate against the United Nations decision to partition Palestine; their identification was held to be not with Israel but rather with the Soviet Union, which supported partition.

THE MOSLEM BROTHERHOOD

In addition to its anxiety about Communism, the Arab political hierarchy found itself threatened by the rapidly growing influence of the "Moslem

¹ See AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, Vol. 50, p. 434.

² For a discussion of the Arab refugee problem, see Israel and the United Nations, p. 379.

Brotherhood." A nationalistic, religious organization which was fanatical in its hatred of "Westernization," its creed was directed against all foreigners. The Brotherhood's stronghold was Egypt but it also had branches in other Arab countries.

The Aftermath of the War

Egypt signed an armistice with Israel on February 24, 1949, and the other Arab countries all followed suit³ by July 20, 1949. With the end of hostilities, the persecution and discriminations suffered by the Jewish inhabitants relaxed somewhat. However, at the time of writing, a feeling of insecurity still prevailed among Jews in Arab lands.

The major problem to emerge from the Arab-Israeli conflict was that of the Arab refugees. The United Nations, the United States government, the International Red Cross, and the American Friends Service Committee, as well as smaller groups, all joined in extending assistance to these Arab refugees. But the problem of caring for and resettling them was far from solved and remained an important barrier to the negotiation of permanent peace treaties between Israel and the various Arab countries.⁴

Perhaps the most significant outcome of the Arab war against Israel was the almost complete disintegration of the Arab League. Weakened from the very beginning by personal rivalries and ambitions and by nationalistic aims, the League was unanimous only in its opposition to the UN partition decision and the establishment of the state of Israel. The war with Israel revealed that each of the members of the Arab League was concerned only with its own material advantage. Each seemed to have its own ambitions for the outcome of the war.

Most important among these ambitions was the long-standing dream of Trans-Jordan's King Abdullah for a "Greater Syria" which would link his own country with Arab Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon, and with himself as ruler. All the other Arab countries with the exception of Iraq, which was ruled by another member of the Hashemite dynasty, vehemently opposed the project. Nevertheless, after the signing of a truce with Israel on April 3, 1949, Abdullah proclaimed Trans-Jordan as the Hashemite Kingdom of the Jordan.

The coup d'état in Syria by Colonel Husne el Zaim in March, 1949, further widened the gap in the League when Zaim aligned himself with Egypt in opposition to Abdullah because he had no intention of allowing Syria to fall within the orbit of the Hashemite dynasty.

EGYPT

THE LATTER half of 1948, following the creation of the state of Israel, was a nightmare of persecution, discrimination, economic deprivation, and general terror and insecurity for the Jews of Egypt. As the period under review came to a close however, anti-Jewish attitudes and anti-Jewish measures were

³ For a discussion of the armistices, see Israel, pp. 393-94.

⁴ See also Israel and the United Nations, p. 388.

relaxed in almost every way, and, for Egypt at any rate, the problem of those subjects whom it labeled stateless persons appeared to be in the process of solution.

Population

The Jewish population of Egypt, numbering about 75,000 persons, was about equally divided between the two principal cities of Cairo and Alexandria. Although 90 per cent of Egyptian Jewry was native born, only about 5,000 Jews were Egyptian nationals.

Domestic Conditions

The military defeat of the Egyptian army in the war against Israel, and the insecurity of King Farouk and his government in the face of the rising tide of Communist propaganda and the opposition of the Moslem Brotherhood, created a state of near panic in the ruling class, leading it to seize upon every and any opportunity for the suppression of its subjects.

That the king and his political aides had reason to be anxious for their very lives was borne out by the assassination of Prime Minister Mahmoud Nokrashy Pasha. On December 8, 1948, Mahmoud Nokrashy Pasha had outlawed the Moslem Brotherhood, and thousands of its followers were arrested; on December 28, 1948, the Prime Minister was murdered by a member of the Brotherhood.

The declaration of war with Israel furnished the government of Egypt with the eagerly-sought excuse for the imposition of martial law and its attendant restrictions.¹

Branded as enemies of the country, accused of Zionist activities, denounced without evidence, Egyptian Jews had been confined in internment camps. In August, 1948, Eli Eliashar, leader of the Sephardic community in Israel, asserted that 3,000 Jews had been interned in Egypt. However, Egyptian Jewry was not the sole target of government attack. Much of the legislation and many of the decrees were actually directed against all foreigners, and hundreds of residents of different nationalities were rounded up as suspected Communists and placed in internment camps.

However, with the appointment of the new Prime Minister, Ibrahim Abdul Hadi Pasha, shortly after the assassination of Mahmoud Nokrashy Pasha, the situation of the Jews in Egypt was considerably eased. Because of pressure from outside sources, a marked change was evident in the attitude of some of the Egyptian newspapers after April, 1949. Inflammatory articles accusing the Jews of every offense from profiteering to treason no longer appeared in these publications. As the journalistic attacks subsided, public antagonism decreased and the government lifted some of the restrictions. Sequestration of property and arrests of Jews were halted, and most of the properties seized under the decree of May 31, 1948, were returned to their owners. The special office for sequestration of Jewish property was abolished.

¹ See AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, Vol. 50, pp. 442-445.

Communal Life

Despite the suffering and hardships to which they were subjected, especially in the early days of the anti-Jewish activity, the Jews of Egypt continued their communal life. Jewish schools remained open. Synagogue worship was not interrupted and the Chief Rabbi Nahoun continued to represent the government in all matters of personal status involving Jews. Furthermore, through a well-organized welfare system, the Jews were able to care for themselves without calling upon world Jewry for assistance.

Emigration

In 1949 the first group of fifty Egyptian Jews was released from internment on condition that they leave the country. Earlier, in August, 1948, a group of fourteen French Jews had been released, after representations by the French government. It was believed that by the end of 1949 all Jews remaining in the camps would be released on the provision that they emigrate. Release was granted only to Jews arrested for alleged Zionist activities and not to those interned as alleged Communists.

Future

Although the situation of Egyptian Jewry improved steadily during the first six months of 1949, it nevertheless could see no future for itself in the country. Certainly the government's insistence that Jews released from the detention camps leave the country added urgency to their need to emigrate.

IRAN

WHILE THE Jews of Iran had always experienced a certain amount of anti-Jewish prejudice, they did not suffer any unusual deprivations or discriminations arising from the Arab-Israeli war. Anti-Jewish feelings were intensified by the conflict, and occasional anti-Jewish articles began to appear in the press during the period under review, but on the whole the Jews did not face the hardships which beset their co-religionists in the neighboring Arab countries.

There was no official discrimination against Jews in Iran. Moreover, with the composition of the parliament determined by the proportionate strength of religious denominations, Iranian Jewry had one deputy.

Population and Economic Conditions

One of the oldest Jewish communities in the world, Iranian Jewry numbered about 90,000 (12,000 to 14,000 families) including 25,000 children between the ages of six and sixteen. Approximately 58,000 of Iran's Jews were concentrated in five cities: Teheran, Isfahan, Shiraz, Hamadan, and Kermanshah.

There were between 25,000 and 30,000 Jews in Teheran of whom 8,000 to 10,000 lived in the ghetto. Emigration from the provincial towns brought an increase of several thousand since 1942. Some 7,000 to 8,000 Jews lived in Isfahan, and about 15,000 in Shiraz, of whom 90 per cent were in the ghetto, as compared to 70 per cent in Isfahan and Hamadan, and from 30 to 35 per cent in Teheran. There were approximately 5,000 Jews in Hamadan, 4,000 in Meshed, and about 2,500 in Yezd.

The Jews were still in the process of migrating from the provincial towns to the cities and from the farms to the provincial towns.

Living among the Iranian Jews were about 1,500 Iraqi Jews who maintained few contacts with them but who were among the most liberal contributors to Jewish community funds in Iran. There was also a small number of European Jews in the country.

As in other Moslem countries, the vast majority of Iranian Jews earned scarcely enough for their meager subsistence. In fact, living conditions for almost half of the Jewish population were below the minimum existence level, compared even with the low Iranian standard, and disease was rampant among them. According to the government doctor, 2,000 of the Jewish children suffered from trachoma and skin diseases.

Approximately 1 per cent of the Jews of Iran were in the upper economic class. These made the bulk of their fortune during World War II as large importers of radio parts, ointments, and medications, and as large exporters of rugs and skins. Ten per cent belonged to the middle class; approximately 30 per cent lived a marginal existence. In all, about half of the Iranian Jews had a living standard below the minimum. About half of the Jews of Shiraz were in need of relief.

Communal Organization

There had been no improvement in the organization of the Jewish community in Iran since 1941. At the time of writing the Jews of Iran were appealing for greater funds for their social services, which consisted of education, school lunches, clothing for the poor, and similar assistance. The Committee of the Jewish Community of Iran and the local communal committees were totally inactive in Teheran and the provincial towns. They had formerly raised funds for philanthropy and for the maintenance of schools, bath houses, and cemeteries. As a result of the inactivity and lack of influence of these moribund Jewish organizations, the government had requisitioned the old cemeteries, grounds, and communal buildings belonging to the Jewish community.

Iran's Jews were scattered throughout the cities and villages of the country, and many of those in the outlying villages had drifted completely away from Judaism in the course of centuries. This trend was arrested in the middle of the nineteenth century when Jews in other parts of the world began to take some interest in their Persian brethren. One of the most effective influences was that of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, which succeeded in establishing some schools and organizing a semblance of community life in Iran. Ozar Hatorah, the religious education organization, was also important in the re-

surgeance of Jewish consciousness among Iranian Jews. During the period under review the Alliance and Ozar Hatorah were providing for the schooling of about 10,000 of the 16,000 Jewish pupils in Iran. Enrollment at the Alliance's twenty schools was 6,600, and at Ozar Hatorah's twenty-eight schools, 3,800; 4,500 were attending government schools, 1,500 were enrolled at missionary institutions, and some 8,000 Jewish children were not attending any schools whatsoever.

IRAQ

IN SOME respects the Jews of Iraq suffered more than any of their Middle Eastern brethren from the rise of anti-Jewish sentiment throughout the Arab and Moslem World. Among the reasons for this were the magnitude of their numbers, their importance to Iraq's economy, the severity of the measures taken against them, and the extreme difficulties involved in communicating with and aiding them.

As the period under review came to a close, several hundred Iraqi Jews arrested during the past year were still in prisons and internment camps. There was slight prospect that the anti-Jewish activities which had begun in 1933 would abate. It was declared openly that the policy would be a long-term one: While overt acts and violence would be discouraged, a definite pattern was being established for the elimination of Jews from the economy of Iraq.

Population

There were about 110,000 Jews in Iraq, 60 per cent of whom lived in Bagdad. The rest were scattered in Basra, Mosul, Kirkuk, and other smaller towns. In addition, there were some tribes of Kurdish Jews living in the mountains of Iraq, about whom very little was known except that they continued to practice Judaism, and were engaged in agriculture.

The pattern of the economic structure of Iraqi Jewry was similar to that prevailing in all the other Arab countries and to that of the population of the Middle East as a whole, with but one difference: Whereas the largest number of Arabs lived from hand to mouth, they were mostly peasants and nomads; in the Jewish population, there was a considerable number of rich landowners and wealthy businessmen, though a substantial majority which subsisted on its daily earnings was composed of small traders, artisans, and peddlers.

Anti-Jewish Acts

Rumblings of anti-Jewish sentiment were heard in Iraq much sooner than in any of the other Arab countries. Anti-Semitic activities began in 1933 after the death of King Feisal and increased in June, 1941, during the rebellion instigated by Haj Amin el Husseini, former Mufti of Jerusalem. Over 120 Jews were killed, many hundreds were wounded, and Iraqi Jewry suffered heavy losses of property in the course of the rebellion.

When Iraq joined the other Arab nations in the war against Israel in May, 1948, the antagonism and bitterness, which had been stored up against the Jews of Iraq during the six months that followed the United Nations decision to partition Palestine, found an outlet. There were demonstrations by angered mobs and riots in some of the smaller towns in Iraq which resulted in some loss of life and damage to property. But for the most part Iraqi Jewry suffered from forms of official persecution, such as travel restrictions, dismissal of Jewish government officials, excessive taxation, and "voluntary contributions" to "general welfare" causes.

All Jews were classed as enemy aliens, and all Zionist activities were characterized as treason. Imposing martial law, the government embarked on a program of searching Jewish homes "for illegal weapons," since, under martial law, arrests or searches could be made on the sole basis of suspicion. Many Iraqis found this a convenient way of settling long-standing personal feuds with their Jewish neighbors. All in all, 310 Jews were arrested in Bagdad alone during the initial period of the war; about half of these were released after questioning, and the rest were held for trial. Similar acts occurred in other towns and villages.

The anti-Jewish repressions also served as a lucrative source of income for the government, which imposed heavy fines upon arrested Jews, thus replenishing its treasury and helping to finance the cost of the war. In addition, the government requisitioned buildings owned by the Jewish community, as well as some Jewish-owned private buildings, to house Arab refugees from Palestine. The sequestration of Jewish property and business, and blackmail, official and unofficial, proved profitable undertakings. The Jews found themselves forced to become the heaviest contributors to government campaigns for funds to continue the war and to provide for the Arab refugees, as the alternative to being branded enemies, Zionists, Communists, or spies. Thus, the wave of arrests of wealthy Jews was especially productive financially. The dismissal of almost all Jewish officials from government jobs, to "insure the better guarding of state secrets," proved of benefit to the large number of Iraqi Moslems who replaced them. Jews were also prohibited from enrolling in government schools of higher education.

The anti-Jewish persecutions reached their height with the arrest and execution of Shafiq Ades, an Iraqi Jew, on the charge of dealing with the enemy by selling arms to Israel. Surplus material which Ades had purchased two years previously from the British army was found in Palestine during the fighting. Ades claimed that he had sold the equipment to Italy. Because Ades threatened to expose several Moslem high government officials as having been involved in the deal, his trial was held behind closed doors. He was convicted in September, 1948, and his hanging in the public square in Basra was followed by the confiscation of his property, officially valued at \$20,000,000. The execution of Ades was a shock to most Iraqis, Jews and non-Jews alike, because he had never associated himself with the Jewish community or contributed to its institutions.

No Jew was spared in the outburst of Iraqi antagonism, not even Chief Rabbi Sassoon Kadourie, who was arrested in October, 1948, allegedly for having, in the course of his Yom Kippur sermon in the synagogue, exhorted the Jews to "acts contrary to the safety of the state."

Fear and tension continued among the Iraqi Jews, and most of them felt that their only salvation lay in emigration. The necessity for leaving the country was heightened by open indications that the Iraqi policy of repression of the Jews would be maintained for some time. Young Arabs were to be trained to replace Jews in important positions and the Jewish population mulcted of its resources.

LEBANON

DURING the wave of anti-Jewish feeling which swept the Middle East, the Jews of Lebanon fared considerably better than Jews in any of the other Arab countries. There were some restrictions, but they were limited in scope. Furthermore, the Lebanese government supplied police protection for the Jews when matters threatened to get out of hand. As a consequence, Jewish communal life continued much as it had before the Arab-Israeli war.

Population

There were about 6,000 Jews in Lebanon, concentrated almost entirely in Beirut. Some Jews also lived in Tripoli in the north and in Tyre and Sidon in the south.

Intergroup Relations

With more than 50 per cent of its population Christian, Lebanon appeared less averse to the establishment of the state of Israel than its Moslem neighbors. Many Lebanese Christians, in fact, appeared to welcome the idea of a strong minority group which would help to bolster their own feeble position in the vast Moslem ocean of the Middle East. After the United Nations partition decision and the establishment of Israel, the Jews were permitted to continue their business activities. However, they were prohibited from leaving the country without permission and were required to obtain licenses to engage in importing and exporting. On the advice of government officials who were relatively sympathetic and anxious to prevent violence and persecution, the Jewish community adopted a policy of unobtrusiveness.

There were only a few instances of violence. One followed the entry of a large number of refugees from Palestine and the occupation of some southern Lebanese territory by Israeli forces. In retaliation, Lebanese in the Sidon area seized Jewish property and homes and turned them over to the refugees. However, within a few days, the government ordered the police to provide protection for the Jews and to restore their properties.

Communal Activity

Although travel was restricted, it was not prohibited, and a certain amount of travel for business purposes was allowed, particularly between Lebanon and Syria. Thus, the president of the Jewish community of Beirut, Joseph

Dichy Bey, and his son were granted travel permits to visit other Arab countries, and the chief of staff of the government hospital, a Jew, was granted permission to study in the United States.

Lebanese Jewry, which was under pressure to contribute large sums to aid the Arab refugees from Palestine, also continued to provide extensive welfare services to the needy of its own communities. It maintained a number of schools, clinics, and centers, as well as places of worship. In addition to giving assistance to the Jewish needy, Lebanese Jews sent part of their own funds to help the Jews in Syria.

SYRIA

THE SITUATION of Syria's Jews, who had been the target of several violent outbreaks in 1947, improved somewhat after the coup d'état by which Colonel Husne el Zaim took over the reins of government on March 30, 1949. However, as the period under review drew to a close there was uncertainty as to whether the status of the Jews might not again deteriorate. At any rate, there was reason to hope that, barring unforeseen circumstances, the improved political situation of the Jews would continue under the regime which replaced Zaim's in August, 1949.

Population and Economic Status

There were some 9,000 Jews in Syria, almost equally distributed between the two main cities of Damascus and Aleppo. In Syria, as in the other Arab countries, the Jews belonged to the impoverished class of peddlers, small shopkeepers, and artisans. There was a small minority of wealthier bankers and merchants, most of whom emigrated to neighboring Lebanon and to Israel, as well as to other parts of the world, after the first outbreaks of anti-Jewish violence.

Anti-Jewish Acts

The boycott and discriminatory acts which accompanied the conflict with Israel brought economic ruin to the great majority of Syrian Jewry. After the pogrom in Aleppo,¹ the Syrian government provided police protection for the Jews; but this protection was accompanied by restrictions on travel and proved an economic disaster for most of the Damascan Jews who derived their livelihood from peddling and working throughout Damascus and the outlying villages. Thus, the "protection" actually led to suffering and hunger. The Jews of Aleppo also suffered from the boycott. Some financial assistance was extended to these communities by other, more fortunate, members of the communities, and by the Jewish community of Lebanon. But on the whole, their lot was miserable.

Under the short-lived regime of Colonel Zaim, many of the restrictions which had previously been imposed were relaxed. Jews were again permitted

¹ See AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, Vol. 50, p. 441.

to circulate freely within the country and to emigrate. But whether Zaim's successor regime would respect the lifting of these restrictions was a subject of speculation as the period under review closed.

YEMEN AND ADEN

ADEN, YEMEN's biggest port, continued to serve as the springboard for emigration to Israel for Jews fleeing Arab persecutions. Included in this emigration were several thousand Jews who risked their lives to escape from Yemen's despotic regime. In Yemen the economic and social conditions of its estimated 40,000 Jews showed no improvement during the period under review. A state of uneasy quiet hovered over Aden after the violent pogroms of the Winter of 1947-48;¹ Aden's Jewish community of approximately 8,000 Jews were uncertain when and where the next Arab outburst might erupt.

Yemen

One of the most downtrodden Jewish communities in the world, the Jews of Yemen suffered persecution long before the creation of the state of Israel aroused the Arab world. Scattered in towns and villages throughout the country, the Jews were represented principally by the rabbinate and several of the leading families. They were intensely religious, and most of the Jews of Yemen were literate, in contrast to the Yemenite Arabs, 95 per cent of whom were illiterate.

The economic, social, and legal status of Yemenite Jewry was defined by a host of discriminatory measures imposed by the Turks and enlarged by the Arabs when they gained control of the country after World War I. Agricultural work was proscribed completely; Jews were forbidden to ride camels or donkeys in the cities; most of the jobs open to them were those which the Arabs considered humiliating to handle.

In spite of the extreme penalties which accompanied the prohibition on emigration, many Jews escaped to the British protectorate of Aden en route to Israel with their belongings on their backs. A large number of those fleeing concentrated in the small town of Sheikh Osman near Aden, from which point they were flown to Israel.

Aden

Under the impact of recent developments the plight of the Jews of Aden became even worse than that of the Jews in other Arab countries, despite the fact that they were British subjects.

Although the Jewish community was not organized, direction of communal affairs was in the hands of an unofficial council of sixteen. The Beth Din and the rabbinate centralized religious activities and conducted certain charitable activities. In addition, some of the leading families represented the Jews when unified action was necessary.

¹ See AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, Vol. 50, p. 440.

Half of Aden's 8,000 Jews were Adenites and the other half were Jews from Yemen. Only about a third of the Jews of Aden were gainfully employed, of whom the largest group was engaged in trades, crafts, and services.

Following the pillaging, destruction, and slaughter of the Winter of 1947-48, many Jews fled to Israel. After the first wave of emigration the rate of exodus declined. A slight improvement in the economic situation in Yemen also induced some of the Yemenite Jews in Aden to return to their native country, but they returned to Aden after a short stay. The Hashid camp was set up to accommodate Yemenite Jews stranded in Aden en route to Israel. However, the British Governor of Aden prevailed upon the Yemen government to halt the immigration of Jews into Aden (March, 1949). On December 15, 1948, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) began an emergency operation to bring Yemenite refugees from Aden to Israel by air; by November, 1949, JDC reported, 29,000 Yemenite Jewish refugees had been evacuated.²

The Jews in Aden received a substantial amount of financial assistance from world Jewry for housing, clothing, education, and food, as well as for a special rehabilitation loan fund, during the period under review.

AFGHANISTAN ¹

THE 5,000 Afghan Jews who belonged to the Bene-Israel—a Jewish group of uncertain historical origin—continued to face restrictions and oppression during the period under review, as a result of the policy of isolation and confinement initiated in 1933 by the new Afghanistan regime. Although emigration was strictly prohibited, some Afghan Jews managed to make their way into India where many of them found a temporary abode on the road to Israel. In fact, a group of 70 Afghan Jewish refugees, from among about 200 living in India on temporary visas, left for Israel in April, 1949.²

Concentrated in the northwest region of Afghanistan, the Jews were forced by the government to lead a ghettoized existence in three principal cities. The largest Jewish community, consisting of about 2,500 persons, was in Herat, while Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, contained 400 Jews, and Balkh had 200.

The Afghan Jews earned their living as tradesmen, by and large, but the restrictive laws introduced in 1936 had made steady inroads upon the permissible areas of activity, such as the export-import trades. Thus, in a country in which commerce was of central concern, the Jews found their ventures proscribed. There were a small number of artisans and a few farmers and cattle-breeders. However, there were a few Jewish farmers in Herat, Balkh, and Shiburgan, who operated their own vineyards or leased them to non-Jews. The production of wine and arrack was a virtual monopoly of the Jews because Islamic law prohibited Moslems from making or selling spirituous liquors.

In the Jewish communities a patriarchal system prevailed. The heads of

² See also Israel, p. 379.

¹ Based on Brauer, Erich, "The Jews of Afghanistan," *Jewish Social Studies*, IV, 2, April, 1942.

² *JTA*, January 25, 1948; April 3, 1949.

families formed the community councils, and each council elected a leader who represented the Jews vis-à-vis the government and who received a salary from both the community and the government.

There were eight synagogues in Herat and several in Balkh, but none in Kabul.