North Africa

ALGERIA

Political Situation

During most of the period from July 1955 to the time of writing (December 1956), Algeria was torn by large-scale guerrilla warfare. While at the beginning of the period under review fighting was confined mainly to the Aures mountains, it subsequently extended to almost every part of Algeria. By the end of 1955 the situation had become so disturbed that it was impossible to hold elections for the thirty Algerian members of the Chamber of Deputies at the time of the French general election of January 2, 1956. The seats of the Algerian deputies were left vacant until the "pacification" of the country had been accomplished. In December 1956 there still seemed no immediate prospect that they would be filled.

The ending of the war in Algeria was made a major election issue by the coalition of the Socialist Party, headed by Guy Mollet, and the Radicals of Pierre Mendes-France. Mollet formed a government after the elections, and visited Algiers at the beginning of February 1956, apparently with the intention of announcing far-reaching reforms. But Mollet was greeted by stormy demonstrations of the European colonists. These apparently dissuaded him from offering any concessions to Algerian nationalism. On February 9 he appointed Robert Lacoste to govern Algeria as resident minister, succeeding Governor General Jacques Soustelle. The government announced that its policy would be one of restoring order by the massive use of French troops, while at the same time introducing reforms and working for a political settlement. Both then and subsequently, however, the Mollet government emphasized its rejection of any solution involving Algerian independence, and gave primacy to the military suppression of the rebellion. To implement this program, the Mollet government put through the National Assembly on March 13, 1956, a bill granting Lacoste broad powers to issue decrees for the suppression of the rebellion, the reorganization of the Algerian government, and the introduction of various reforms, mainly in the economic sphere. The French government also rapidly increased the number of French soldiers in Algeria from 190,000 in March 1956 to 373,000 at the beginning of June, and an estimated 500,000 in December—roughly one soldier to every four adult Algerian males.

Economic Reforms

The most important of the reforms announced in March provided for the gradual Algerianization of the civil service by reserving half of the competi-
tive and two-thirds of the noncompetitive vacancies in the government service for Algerian Moslems. This reform aroused the resentment of the French colonists, but did little to satisfy the discontent of the Algerian Moslems; when in May the French students at the University of Algiers struck in protest against the Algerianization of the civil service, the Moslem students issued a statement that their continued attendance at class should not be interpreted as implying support of a reform which they regarded as worthless.

A provision that sharecroppers should not have to give the landlords for whom they worked more than half of their crops, in accordance with a plan announced by Soustelle in November 1955, represented a beginning step in land reform. On July 13, 1956, the government announced that it was expropriating 247,000 acres from large estates for distribution among the landless peasants who constituted the majority of the Algerian population. This land, somewhat less than 2 per cent of the total agricultural area in Algeria, was to be supplemented by additional amounts from the state domain and from land reclaimed by irrigation. At the time of writing, however (December 1956), the distribution of the first 247,000 acres was just getting under way.

**Political Reforms**

In the political field, the only reforms introduced were of a negative sort. After it had been boycotted by its Moslem members, the Algerian Assembly was dissolved on April 12, 1956. A similar fate befell the regional and municipal councils on December 5. In the Algerian Assembly and some of the municipal councils, Europeans and Moslems formerly had equal representation, irrespective of their numbers, while in others the Europeans held three-fourths of the seats. In almost all cases, the Moslem members had withdrawn before the councils were abolished. Their abolition left both the Moslem and European populations without elected representatives on any level. In protest against the government's failure to introduce reforms simultaneously with military measures, Pierre Mendes-France resigned from the French cabinet in April 1956, and his Radical Party was thereafter very critical of the government's policies. These circumstances also aroused substantial opposition in Mollet's own Socialist Party, and from Justice Minister François Mitterand and former Premier René Pleven, leaders of the third government party, the Democratic and Socialist Union of the Resistance. However, the Algerian policies of Mollet and Lacoste had the firm support of most of the right-wing opposition.

**Military Developments**

The increased number of troops in Algeria did not accomplish the pacification of the country, as Lacoste had hoped. The number of casualties was extremely high; according to Lacoste, the number of rebels killed up to October 1, 1956, was over 18,000, while Algerian estimates placed the dead at 200,000 Algerians and 40,000 Europeans. While the second figure was certainly an exaggeration, the first figure seemed to represent an absolute minimum. Yet it represented a higher proportion of the population than did United States losses in either world war. At the time of writing (December 1956), Algerian casualties appeared, on the basis of French communiqués, to
be averaging about a hundred a day. French casualties, both military and civilian, were also substantial. On both sides the war was fought with great savagery, and the victims included many noncombatants. The rebels did not confine themselves to ambushing French troops; they also threw bombs into theaters and cafés, and wiped out entire rural families. French troops (and frequently French civilians) engaged in indiscriminate reprisals, on the assumption that the whole Algerian population in the area where an attack had occurred was guilty. The torture of prisoners was also frequently reported.

A strict censorship was imposed in Algeria, and some effort was also made to censor reports from Algeria in French publications. A number of individuals were expelled or barred from Algeria by administrative orders as a security measure. These included a few of the most extreme leaders of the European colonists; most of them, however, including a number of priests, were charged with sympathizing with Algerian nationalism. On May 9, 1956, Guy Gomis, president of the Junior Chamber of Commerce of Algiers, was expelled from Algeria on the charge that he had been in contact with American special services. This turned out to mean that he had been in contact with Irving Brown of the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations, and had helped in the establishment, under the auspices of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), of an Algerian trade union federation. At the same time, the French government refused to permit Brown to visit Algeria as a member of an ICFTU delegation; the ICFTU thereupon canceled its plans to send a committee to Algeria. The independence movement led by Messali Hadj had been illegal since 1954, and on September 12, 1955, the government of Edgar Faure outlawed the Algerian Communist Party. But these measures did little to strengthen the French position in Algeria.

The French efforts to suppress the rebellion brought them into conflict with even the most moderate Algerians, as was shown by the resignation of the members of the assembly and councils. Perhaps the most dramatic instance was that of Ferhat Abbas, who, as leader of the Democratic Party of the Algerian Manifesto, had been the only Algerian leader of consequence willing to accept a federative solution rather than complete independence. Abbas left Algeria in April, and on April 23, 1956, appeared in Cairo and joined the leadership of the National Liberation Front, which was directing the rebellion.

Meanwhile, the failure to secure a military decision led to increasing pressure for negotiations with the rebels. On several occasions, Lacoste flew to Paris to persuade the cabinet to give him more time to subdue the rebels by force before opening negotiations. While he succeeded in persuading the government to delay any official proposals for negotiations or any announcement of major political reforms, it did send out unofficial feelers to the rebels. Thus some leading French Socialists, including Senator Pierre Commin, did enter into tentative discussions with certain rebel leaders. And with French encouragement, the sultan of Morocco and Premier Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia attempted to mediate. But, on October 22, 1956, while five of the Algerian leaders were en route from Morocco to Tunis for a conference with Bourguiba and the sultan, traveling in a plane of the Moroccan airlines over
international waters, Lacoste had the French military authorities order the plane’s French pilot to bring it down in Algeria instead of Tunisia. It was reported that Lacoste arranged this kidnaping without consulting Mollet; when the latter found out about it at the last moment and wanted to countermand the order, Lacoste threatened to resign, and Mollet gave in. In the event, Alan Savary, also a Socialist and minister of Tunisian and Moroccan affairs, resigned in protest. Lacoste apparently thought that by seizing the rebel leaders he would end the rebellion; instead, it flared up with new violence, and French relations with Morocco and Tunisia were strained almost to the breaking point. For the time being it seemed to end any hope of negotiation, since neither the rebels nor any potential mediators felt they could trust the good faith of the French authorities. After this fiasco, Mollet announced on November 29, 1956, that France would agree to Algerian autonomy and the institution of a single electoral college for Europeans and Moslems on a basis of equality. This might have offered a basis for a satisfactory solution at the time of Mollet’s February 1956 visit to Algiers; it was very close to the program then advocated by Ferhat Abbas. But the effect of intervening events was such that it seemed doubtful, in December 1956, whether anything less than complete independence would any longer satisfy the great majority of Algerian Moslems.

Nor did any political settlement seem likely by itself to assure Algeria’s tranquility as long as economic conditions did not substantially improve. The total of permanent and seasonal unemployment among Algerian Moslems was estimated by the French government at 940,000. In proportion to the population, this was comparable to the situation in the United States at the depth of the depression in the 1930’s. In addition, 300,000 Algerian Moslems, largely men who were unable to take their families with them, were under the necessity of going to France in order to find work. To meet this problem, the French government announced a ten-year capital investment program totaling $8,400,000,000. The actual amount provided in the 1956–57 budget for this purpose, however, came to only $162,000,000; in 1955–56 it had been $115,000,000. It seemed doubtful whether this amount would be sufficient to compensate for more than a part of the loss through war damage and the export of capital by European colonists. (Purchases of land in France by the latter were on so substantial a scale that the price of land had shot up, and a proposal was actually introduced in the National Assembly to prohibit French colonists from buying land in France.) Certainly the current rate of capital investment was insufficient to provide for the annual 1.8 per cent increase in the population, let alone for any absorption of the unemployed or a rise in the standard of living.

Jewish Population

The last census of Jews as such was taken by the Vichy government in 1941. It reported a Jewish population of 130,000. The figure in 1955–56 had probably reached 150,000. More than half the Jews lived in the cities of Oran, with 40,000; Algiers, with 36,000; and Constantine, with 18,000. Approximately 10,000 Jews had emigrated to France, where they had founded
small communities in Lyon, Clermont-Ferrand, Saint Fons, Marseilles, and Paris. Only 3,000 had emigrated to Israel.

More than a third of the Jewish population was engaged in trade and handicrafts. There were about 250 Jewish physicians, about the same number of lawyers, and numerous teachers. There was a fairly large number of Jewish farmers and manufacturers; a majority of their employees and workers were Arabs.

**Civic and Political Status**

Most Jews had possessed full rights as French citizens since the Cremieux Decree, except for the Vichy period. Occupying a position intermediate between the Moslems and the Christians, they had sought to find a pacific solution of the present crisis. In particular, the dozen Jewish members of municipal and departmental councils had worked to preserve the unity of all sections of the population.

No progress was made during 1955-56 toward the solution of the problem of the 1,500 "native Jews" of the Southern Territory, the M'Zab, who had never benefited by the application of the Cremieux Decree because the Southern Territory was not included in the three départements of Algeria (see American Jewish Year Book, 1956 [Vol. 57], p. 452-53). The majority of them were planning to emigrate to Israel.

**Community Organization**

The consistories of Oran, Algiers, and Constantine, established in 1845, had organized the "Jewish nation" down to the last detail. The law of personal status had been applied by rabbinical courts. After the Cremieux Decree the community was secularized. As in France, the process of assimilation followed that of emancipation. Nevertheless, the Jewish community remained strongly organized.

The Federation of Jewish Communities of Algeria, now under the presidency of Benjamin Heler, was established in 1947. During 1955-56 the Federation worked together with French religious and secular Jewish organizations, as well as with the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), the World Jewish Congress, the Jewish Agency, the Alliance Israélite Universelle, the American Jewish Committee, and the Anglo-Jewish Association.

**Jewish Education and Youth Activity**

Education, as in France, was financed by the communities. There were about sixty Talmud Torahs located in all the significant communities, headed by Secretary General Albert Confino in Algiers. These schools, which met three times weekly, had about 8,000 students. Most teachers and local rabbis had up to now been trained in local yeshivot, or had come from Morocco. But their training had remained on an elementary level. Girls had only begun to receive instruction in Judaism and in Hebrew, and unfortunately this had not yet become general.
The ORT schools in Algiers and Constantine, and most recently, Oran, made it possible for the young people to learn trades. They developed artisans suited to the needs of the country, and with the most modern training. In 1955 a total of 508 young people were enrolled in the ORT schools. The capacity of the school in Algiers was 150; that of Constantine, 80; and that of the school installed in Oran early in 1956, 60. Courses in Algiers included sheet metal work, electricity, carpentry, automobile mechanics, dressmaking, and garment cutting; in Constantine, sheet metal and plumbing; Oran had a general pre-apprenticeship course.

It should be noted that a majority of the Jewish young people preferred to pursue their studies in one of the five universities of metropolitan France. The majority of them studied in Paris.

The Scouts (Éclaireurs Israélites de France) had a membership of close to 500 boys and girls. There were about 200 members in the Union of Jewish Students of Algeria.

**Zionist Activity**

The Women’s International Zionist Organization (WIZO) and the Jewish National Fund continued active during 1955–56. The latter raised approximately 13,000,000 francs (about $35,000). In Oran, the departmental committee of the Jewish Agency conducted a collection for Israel with the assistance of Raoui Ami.

A large number of girls, as well as boys, had joined the Zionist youth groups Maccabi, Dror, and Bene Akiba. The Jewish Agency had organized courses in collaboration with the communities, and had sent teachers and youth leaders for this purpose, as well as to help train young people to become *chalutzim*, agricultural pioneers in Israel.

**Religious Affairs**

A number of young Algerian Jews were preparing themselves for the rabbinate or for careers in Jewish studies in Paris at the Seminaire Israélite and the Institut International des Études Hébraïques.

In March 1956 the cornerstone was laid for the Rabbinical School of Algeria.

**Interfaith Relations**

The three religions have had almost the same rights in Algeria, except that the heads of the Moslem religion had been named by the governor general. But aside from official visits, relations between them have been almost nonexistent. No attempt had been made to develop the sort of moral and spiritual rapprochement among them which could have been of assistance in periods of extreme political tension. Nevertheless, individual Jews in numerous cities and villages had been able to develop better relations with the Arabs.
Cultural Activity

The only Algerian Jewish periodical was the six-page bulletin Information Juive, edited by Jacques Lazarus and published by the Comité Juif Algérien d’Études Sociales. It maintained an attitude of great discretion on current political and social questions.

ANDRÉ ZAOUI

TUNISIA

Political and Economic Background

During the period under review (July 1, 1955, through June 30, 1956) Tunisia passed from local autonomy to a de jure status of independence, whose precise meaning was in dispute with France. The situation at the end of June 1956 remained confused pending further negotiations between the two countries.

Political developments moved with startling rapidity. On June 3, 1955, the Franco-Tunisian conventions according internal sovereignty to Tunisia were signed and submitted to the French parliament. They were ratified by the National Assembly on July 6 by a vote of 538 to 44, with 29 abstentions. On August 4, the Council of the Republic approved them 253 to 26. Eight months later, on March 20, 1956, an accord was reached whereby France recognized the independence of Tunisia. It provided:

1. The Treaty of Bardo signed between France and Tunisia on May 12, 1881, would no longer govern the relations between the two countries.
2. Articles of the conventions of June 3, 1955, incompatible with the new status of Tunisia as an independent and sovereign state would be modified or abrogated.
3. Tunisia received the right to conduct its foreign affairs, its security, and its defense, and to establish its own army.

Both countries agreed to define the future ties of “interdependence” and to cooperate in the areas where their interests coincided, notably defense and foreign affairs.

Shortly after Foreign Minister Christian Pineau and Premier Tahar Ben Amar signed the March 20 agreement, a divergence of views on its meaning emerged. Tunisia insisted that as of that date it had become an independent and sovereign nation; that the Treaty of Bardo of 1881 had been abrogated; and that the articles of the conventions not reconcilable with complete independence were null and void. While agreeing that the Treaty of Bardo could no longer govern the relations between the two countries and that the articles of the conventions not reconcilable with complete independence would be modified or abrogated, France insisted that the agreement constituted the framework within which the future negotiations would fix the facts of independence.
On August 27, 1955, the Bey of Tunisia affixed his seal to the ratification of the conventions. Four days later, Resident General Pierre Boyer de Latour left Tunis for Rabat, Morocco, to take up his post as resident general of Morocco. He was succeeded by Roger Seydoux, who was given the new title of French high commissioner to Tunisia. Later, Seydoux became the first French ambassador to Tunisia. On September 14, 1955, Premier Tahar Ben Amar was asked by the Bey to form the first new all-Tunisian government.

Within the triumphant Neo-Destour Party the conflict between Salah Ben Youssef, general secretary, and Habib Bourguiba, president, broke out into the open and led to the expulsion of Ben Youssef by the political bureau of the party. Ben Youssef violently denounced the Franco-Tunisian conventions, calling for immediate outright independence. Bourguiba supported the conventions, declaring that they constituted an important step towards independence. On November 17, 1955, in the city of Sfax, the Neo-Destour Party held its first postconvention congress, approved the conventions, and repudiated the position of Salah Ben Youssef. Resolutions were passed affirming the ultimate goal of complete independence and the continued struggle to revise those sections of the conventions regarded as incompatible with the aspirations of the Tunisian people. The congress approved the election of a constituent assembly by direct universal suffrage to give the country a constitution under a system of constitutional monarchy.

By a beylical decree published on March 1, 1956, Tunisia was divided into eighteen electoral districts and the number of deputies to the assembly set at ninety-eight—one for each 35,000 Tunisian citizens. The three lists of candidates for election to the constituent assembly held on March 25, 1956, were: the Front National—made up of the Neo-Destour Party, the UNAT (Union Nationale de L'Agriculture Tunisienne), the UGTT (Union Générale des Travailleurs Tunisiens), and the UTAC (Union des Travailleurs Artisans et Commerçants); the Communist Party; and the Indépendants. The Front National, headed by Habib Bourguiba, swept the election and won all ninety-eight seats.

The assembly convened on April 9, 1956, and by a unanimous vote elected Bourguiba president. On April 13, after having validated the mandates of the ninety-eight deputies, the assembly unanimously voted for Article 1 of the future constitution, declaring:

1. Tunisia is a free, independent, sovereign state, religion Islamic and language Arabic.
2. The Tunisian people are the legal depositors of the sovereignty which will be defined by the new constitution.
3. The state will assure the liberty and practice of all religious creeds, conforming to the spirit of the law.

Under the pressure of the UGTT, which had in the meantime launched a series of strikes, the government of Tahar Ben Amar submitted its resignation to the Bey. The executive bureau of the constituent assembly unanimously asked Bourguiba to form a new government. By April 15, 1956, a government, with Bourguiba as president, and composed of fifteen ministers and two secretaries of state, was formed and accepted by the Bey. André Barouch was appointed minister of reconstruction and housing, replacing Albert Bes-
sis, who had served in the previous cabinet. Thus, the Jewish community of Tunisia continued to be represented in the government.

On April 24, 1956, President Bourguiba informed the members of the foreign diplomatic corps of the desire of his government to establish diplomatic relations with their countries. By the end of June 1956 more than twenty nations, including the United States and Great Britain, had recognized the independence of Tunisia and raised their consulates to embassies or legations.

At the invitation of French Premier Guy Mollet, President Bourguiba left for Paris on May 8, 1956, to begin discussions on the future ties with France in accordance with the agreement of March 20, 1956. The negotiations progressed slowly. Bourguiba made several trips to consult with his government; and on May 29, in a speech before the constituent assembly, declared that no negotiation was possible before the abrogation of the Treaty of Bardo. He informed the assembly that a Tunisian army of 3,000 men would be created before June 16. On Bourguiba's return to Paris on June 25, 1956, to resume the discussions with the French, Foreign Minister Pineau declared in a speech to the Council of the Republic: "It is out of the question to envisage the departure of the French army from Tunisia and Morocco. The presence of the French army in the two former protectorates is not contrary to the independence of these countries." The negotiations were broken off when Bourguiba affirmed: "We will never admit that on the pretext of Western strategy or the defense of the free world, the presence of French military forces in our country—particularly at Bizerte—can assume a permanent character." The Tunisian delegation then returned home.

Economic Situation

Economically, Tunisia passed through a very difficult year. Drought and an unusually severe winter in 1955-56 resulted in a deficit of 100,000 tons of wheat. An appeal was made to the United States and France to cover this deficit in order to feed the hard-hit southern and central parts of the country. Unemployment plagued Tunisia; the number of idle was estimated by the government at approximately 500,000. Capital investments dropped sharply, while the flight of capital skyrocketed. Among those transferring huge sums abroad were wealthy Arabs whose confidence in the future of the country was shaken by the recent political events. The Arab newspapers cried out against the "hemorrhage" inflicted on the country by this flight of capital, and appealed to the government to punish the guilty ones.

The UGTT, led by its young and dynamic president, Ahmen ben Salah, urged the government to recognize the right of state employees to belong to a trade union. Statutes regarding working conditions, salaries, and severance pay for agricultural workers, were prepared by the UGTT and accepted by the government in April 1956. Some 300,000 workers paraded under the banner of the UGTT on May 1, 1956. An accelerated Tunisification of personnel in the various ministries and administrative services was begun by the government, which wiped out 1,500 jobs and transferred 3,000 French government employees to the charge of the French government.

The budget for the fiscal year 1956-57 was set at 41,000,000,000 francs ($117,-
New taxes were imposed on tobacco, alcohol, and gasoline. Income taxes were increased by 10 per cent, and a tax of from 22 to 32 per cent was imposed on all businesses. A salary cut of from 4 to 12 per cent was imposed on government employees earning more than 360,000 francs ($1,028) per year. Family allowances were leveled down, to provide for a maximum of four children. Thus, a teacher with seven children, who had been receiving 120,000 francs ($342.85) a month including family allowances, lost about 50,000 francs ($142.86) a month. The beylical family's budget was drastically reduced.

The Jewish population, composed in large part of small businessmen and a large artisan class, suffered severely from the impact of the economic crisis. Many Jewish businesses closed down, and fifty-one Jewish artisans, members of the Caisse Israélite de Relèvement Économique (loan society) maintained by the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA), closed their workshops and emigrated either to Israel or to France during 1955–56, as did some 200 apprentices organized in the Organization for Rehabilitation Through Training (ORT) apprenticeship program, who found themselves without possibilities of work. The income of doctors, lawyers, dentists, and other professionals declined markedly. Some of them began to look to France as a possible way out of their difficulties. Few considered Israel as a solution.

**Jewish Population**

Between February 1 and 18, 1956, the government carried out a population census, the first since 1946. Results were published early in March, but it was pointed out that the figures were approximate, and that a margin of error of up to 6 per cent would have to be allowed. The population of Tunisia was broken down as shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tunisian Moslems</td>
<td>3,372,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisian Jews</td>
<td>58,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French and other nationalities</td>
<td>370,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,800,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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It was estimated that there were 18,000 to 20,000 Jews of French and other nationalities. Thus, allowing for the margin of error, a figure of about 85,000 Jews seemed probable. It was noted that the community of Tunis arrived at the figure of about 73,000 Jews through the distribution of matzot. Since this figure did not include the small children who were not receiving the rations, as well as some 2,000 to 3,000 who did not take the matzot, the census figure of 80,000 Jews resident in Tunisia seemed confirmed. About 80 per cent of the Jewish population resided in Tunis and its suburbs, such as Hammam-Lif, Ariana, La Goulette, and La Marsa.

There had been no government figures on the occupational distribution of
the Jewish population since 1946. Since emigration to Israel and France had been between 6,000 to 7,000 yearly for 1954 and 1955, it was clear that any estimate would be approximate. The overwhelming majority of the Jews who emigrated during 1955-56 were workers and artisans, although increasing numbers of small businessmen and professionals left. Based on the government figures of 1946, about 46.5 per cent of the gainfully employed Jews were in shoemaking, the needle trades, woodworking, and the light metal trades. Commerce and small business employed 31.1 per cent, while 8 per cent were in the liberal professions, and the remainder in transportation, government service, fishing, domestic work, and other miscellaneous occupations.

Discrimination and Anti-Semitism

Tunisian government officials publicly and privately assured the Jewish population that they had nothing to fear. The infrequent anti-Semitic manifestations were publicly condemned. While the Jews were thankful that no serious anti-Semitic acts had occurred, they were apprehensive about their future security because of the attitude of the Tunisian people and the Tunisian government toward Israel and Zionism. All the Arab newspapers, whether government-owned or not, supported the Arab League and Radio Cairo’s sharp attacks against Israel and Zionism. The rapid Tunisification of government services was another cause for worry by the Jews of French nationality. Along with French non-Jews, they were replaced by Arabs. Particularly was this true of the doctors in some of the government hospitals.

Civic and Political Status

The conventions of June 3, 1955, guaranteed the rights of religious minorities in Tunisia, and the new Tunisian constitution declared that the state assured the liberty and practice of all religious creeds conforming to the spirit of the law. In a speech in the constituent assembly, President Bourguiba reaffirmed that the Jewish population had the same rights and obligations as all other Tunisian nationals.

However, there was deep concern in Jewish circles over the fact that Arabic would become the official language of Tunisia, since most of the Jewish population could not speak, read, or write classical Arabic. For the Jewish lawyers, this would be tantamount to complete exclusion from the practice of law, since, with the passing of the courts to Tunisian jurisdiction, all cases would have to be pleaded in classical Arabic.

Jewish apprehension was also aroused by the press conference held in Damascus on April 21, 1956, by Sadok Mokkadem, former Tunisian minister of health. Mokkadem stated that Tunisia would join the Arab League and participate in the struggle against Zionism, which was one of the aspects of imperialism. Jewish reaction to Mokkadem’s press conference was immediate and panicky. The same day an emergency audience was requested with President Bourguiba. During this meeting with the representatives of the Jewish community of Tunis, Bourguiba counseled them: “Do not have your body in Tunisia and your heart elsewhere.” Secretary of State for Information ben
Yahmed, speaking for the government, declared that politically Tunisia would look toward the West, despite its ties of tradition, religion, and culture with the East. As for Israel and Zionism, he reiterated the statements made by Bourguiba and Mokkadem. He assured the Jews, however, that Tunisia would not take any measures which would interfere with the free emigration of any national from the country.

**Emigration**

Despite these official assurances, the Jewish population remained skeptical, and emigration to Israel increased, as did emigration to France. While exact figures were not available, it was estimated that during 1955-56 between 100 and 150 Jews per month left for France. Fairly accurate estimates were obtainable in the case of the ORT apprentices, the artisans of the Caisse Israélite, the Alliance Israélite Universelle schools, and a case-by-case check made by the Jewish Agency of prospective emigrants to Israel who had not responded to sailing dates. It was established that about 25 per cent of the apprentices, about 50 per cent of the artisans, and about 20 per cent of the persons registered for Israel had departed for France.

From the Jewish organizations in Paris confirmation was received that of every 100 North African Jews arriving in Paris, between 50 and 60 came from Tunisia.

In April 1956, the United HIAS Service opened an office in Tunis with Frederic Fried as director. Emigration services to countries other than Israel were opened, and it was for emigration to France that the heaviest registration was noted. Registrations for Canada and South America were processed in anticipation of the arrival of government missions from those countries.

The cumulative population loss weakened the Jewish community structures, since rabbis, teachers, and *mohalim* and *shochetim* (ritual circumcisers and slaughterers) also departed, leaving no available replacements to carry on.

The little village of Tamazred, located in the mountainous region near the Algerian border, was emptied of its Jewish population when the remaining ten families, comprising sixty-one persons, emigrated to Israel. There was also a steady movement of Jewish families from the small towns in the interior to the larger cities in the central and northern parts of the country. Continued emigration to Israel from the towns of Hara Srira and Hara Kebira, on the island of Djerba, led to the sale of Jewish dwellings to Arabs. In Hara Kebira the rabbinate forbade such sales, forcing emigrants to sell their homes to other Jews at much lower prices in order to maintain the completely Jewish character of the village. Hara Srira was less successful. The town ceased to be a completely Jewish community. In other towns and villages the same phenomenon was repeated. In the large ghetto of Tunis more and more Arabs installed themselves in houses vacated by Jews, while there was a steady exodus of Jewish families from the ghetto to the European Jewish quarters.

During 1955-56, 6,250 Jews emigrated to Israel, an increase of 1,378 over the preceding twelve months. About 65 per cent came from the larger cities of Sfax, Sousse, and Tunis; the rest originated from the towns and villages of the interior. While the overwhelming majority were poor workers and
artisans, larger numbers of middle-class people and businessmen emigrated during 1955–56 than formerly. About seventy *chalutzim*, agricultural pioneers trained by the various Zionist youth movements, left for *kibbutzim*, or collective settlements, in Israel. About 200 children between the ages of ten and twelve left under the auspices of the Youth Aliyah of the Jewish Agency. The children stayed at the Herbert H. Lehman home in Cambous in southern France for several months undergoing orientation training before departing for Israel.

Until March 1956 the Jewish Agency requested all emigrants to make some contribution toward the expenses of their voyage to Israel. Likewise it enforced the rather strict selective criteria adopted in November 1954 (see *American Jewish Year Book*, 1956 [vol. 57], p. 462). The sudden action of the Moroccan government in stopping the organized mass emigration of Moroccan Jews to Israel and closing the office of the Jewish Agency (see p. 355) led the agency in Tunisia to liberalize its eligibility requirements and to insist less on part payment by the emigrants. The quota limitation for Tunisia, which had been around 600 per month, was eliminated for fear that the Tunisian government would also introduce restrictive measures.

**Community Organization and Communal Affairs**

On August 4, 1955, after several years of conflict, the two rival federations of Jewish communities merged. Isaac Hayat, president of the community of Sousse, was chosen as first president to hold office until April 1956, to be followed successively by Charles Haddad, president of the Tunis community, and Charles Saada, president of the Sfax community. An executive bureau of ten members was elected, made up of representatives from different communities throughout the country. A varied program of activities was projected, and budgets of all the communities were drawn up for submission to the government.

At the first annual meeting held on April 22, 1956, Haddad succeeded Hayat as president. The chief topic of discussion was the difficult financial position of the communities, caused by the failure of the government to pay the annual subventions promised. Haddad pointed out that government subventions had decreased sharply over the past years, and cited the example of the Tunis community, which had received 21,000,000 francs ($60,000) for 1952, but only 9,800,000 francs ($28,000) for the year 1955–56. The executive committee was directed to pursue this matter with the government. At the end of June, despite numerous meetings with government officials, the subventions remained unpaid.

The Jewish communities' main income came from taxes collected by the government on kosher meat and Jewish sacramental wine. The government allocated this money on the basis of Jewish population. In order to make up for the decrease in the government's subvention, the Jewish community of Tunis requested an increase from 15 francs per kilo of meat to 20 francs per kilo and an increase in the wine tax. The government took this request under consideration, but by the end of June 1956 no reply had been received. The communities also received funds from contributions made in the synagogues, from religious rites and services at the cemeteries, and from spe-
cial appeals made during Passover and the High Holy Days. While the communities concerned themselves specifically with religious matters and with financial assistance to the poor, a multiplicity of small local organizations carried on specialized programs, such as summer camps, kindergartens, can- teens, and the provision of trousseaus, bar mitzvah clothing, and blankets. These organizations were financed by membership fees and periodic social affairs, as well as small grants from the government. All of them received substantial assistance from the JDC in the form of either supplies, technical assistance, or cash.

The Jewish communities of Tunisia maintained very active contact with many foreign and international Jewish organizations, notably the Jewish Agency, the JDC, the World Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, the World Sephardi Union, ORT, Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants Israélites (OSE), and the United HIAS Service. At various meetings called by some of the above-mentioned organizations, delegates from Tunisia attended.

Social Services

All the communities continued to look after their poor with regular weekly or monthly financial grants and with special assistance in cash and food supplies for Passover holidays. Many of the communities assisted emigrants for Israel either with cash grants or with clothing. Local Nos Petits organizations fed about 5,500 needy children daily hot lunches and morning and afternoon snacks in thirty-one canteens throughout the country. A new canteen was opened in the town of Le Kef for about fifty children. The JDC, which received from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) surplus supplies of butter, cheese, powdered milk, cottonseed oil, rice, and lima beans, reinforced the menus of the canteens with these products. Several of the large communities opened distribution centers from which hundreds of needy families received regular allotments of the USDA supplies. About twenty tons of these food items were distributed by the JDC monthly. Other food products imported into the country by the JDC were turned over to Nos Petits in Tunis, which distributed them to all of the canteens. To provide storage space, Nos Petits purchased a large warehouse, JDC paying one-third of the cost.

New summer and winter clothing was distributed to about 20,000 children and adults. A clothing depot, opened under the auspices of the Women's International Zionist Organization (WIZO), supplied complete outfits of clothing to all of the emigrants leaving for Israel. The clothing for this distribution center was contributed by the JDC and WIZO branches in France and the United States.

The summer camping program accommodated about 1,500 children. The Zionist Youth Federation sent 500 children to camps in France, rather than abide by the government's request not to display the Israel flag or to conduct programs of Hebrew songs and dances. All of the local organizations operating camping programs, such as Nos Petits, the Union Universelle de la Jeunesse Juive, and the Zionist Youth Federation, received the greater part of their funds and supplies from the JDC.

The Tunis community began the construction of a large community cen-
ter, to be completed by the end of 1956. Construction costs, including equipment, were estimated at 45,000,000 francs ($128,569), two-thirds to come from the community and the government, and one-third from the JDC. The center was to include several Hebrew classes, two kindergartens, a large auditorium and snack bar, and offices for the chief rabbi and the president of the Jewish community.

The Tunis community's social service department struggled with an ever increasing volume of work as unemployment became more widespread. The community agreed to engage additional social workers, and to integrate into the department the personnel responsible for the weekly financial grants which, under the name of hallouk, still remained the traditional method for dispensing cash assistance. The department moved into larger offices more centrally situated. Care for the specialized categories of relief recipients, such as the tubercular, the aged, the blind, abandoned children, etc., continued, and the new approach of individual case work set an example which was followed by other communities such as Sousse and Sfax. The distribution center for USDA surplus foods served about 10,000 needy persons, and extended its activities to include the suburbs of Hammam-Lif, Ariana, La Goulette, and La Marsa. Needy students and all artisans belonging to the Caisse Israélite were also given these foods. Stocks of new clothing were given to the center by the JDC for distribution on an individual case basis. In addition, hundreds of meal tickets were distributed to families who were hard hit by unemployment. These meal tickets were paid for by the community and the JDC.

OSE-Tunisia moved into its new modern three-story dispensary in the Hara, completed in March 1956. Except for the milk processing and distribution plant, for which the machinery had not as yet been installed, the dispensary contained the latest in modern medical equipment. It cost 25,000,000 francs ($71,428) to build, half of which was contributed by JDC and the balance raised locally by OSE-Tunisia. Another dispensary was opened in La Goulette, in a building belonging to the community, adjacent to the Hebrew school. Medical services were thus made available to this suburban Jewish concentration, which had previously had to depend on the center in Tunis, a distance of eleven miles. In Sfax, in addition to the children, all needy adults were admitted to the clinic. The inclusion of the adults represented the initial step in a plan to give medical care to the entire needy Jewish population of the country. Hitherto services had been restricted to the tubercular, pregnant women, venereal cases, and trachoma patients. The experiment was highly successful, and it was planned to extend these services to all the clinics.

In OSE's thirteen clinics throughout the country, about 15,000 children and 2,000 adults received various medical services. The medical services were carried on by a staff of sixty doctors and twenty-six nurses, aided by twelve social workers. Infant mortality continued to decline, and the over-all health of the children continued to improve. The infectious diseases of tinea and trachoma were no longer widespread among the children in the northern part of Tunisia, and were decreasing in the southern and central parts.

During 1955–56 there was a marked increase in the number of Arab clients requesting medical services. With the opening of the new dispensary in the
Hara, this became quite a problem, and the government was asked to increase its subvention.

The Caisse Israélite, financed by the JDC and the Jewish Colonization Association, granted loans totaling 15,855,000 francs ($45,299) to 282 artisans. The maximum limit for a loan was increased from 50,000 francs ($142) to 100,000 ($285).

**Education**

The conventions of June 3, 1955, prepared the ground for the separation of the Mission Culturelle Française from the National Ministry of Education. A division of school properties was made and curricula formulated for both operating school systems. During the school year 1955–56, the Mission Culturelle conducted 800 classes, with about 40,000 students, of whom 30,000 were in the primary schools, 5,500 in the secondary schools, and 4,500 in the technical schools. The ministry of education took over as its responsibility the primary and secondary schools for Arab pupils, who numbered somewhat more than 200,000. The conventions had foreseen the gradual Arabization of the Tunisian schools with the continued employment of all teachers irrespective of nationality. The conventions, however, were by-passed under the pressure of the Tunisian teachers to take over more and more of the teaching jobs held by French nationals. The ministry of education reflected the intense desire for rapid Arabization of the school system by its replacement of teachers of French nationality by Tunisians, and by its promulgation of a decree requiring all children to take a complete Arabic program at the age of six, beginning in October 1956.

The Mission Culturelle Française requested France to allocate 300,000,000 francs ($857,130) for the construction of new classrooms, and a budget of two billion ($5,714,200) for its operating budget. The five Alliance Israélite Universelle schools were not affected by the changeover, since their legal status remained in dispute between the mission and the ministry of education. The Alliance Israélite had hoped to remain attached to the Mission Culturelle. The Tunisian Ministry of Education refused to agree to this, on the grounds that at least 90 per cent of the 4,000 Jewish students were of Tunisian nationality.

ORT-Tunisia was faced with a similar problem of affiliation with the mission or the ministry of education. The number of students in the ORT boys school increased to more than 400 during the year 1955–56. About 15 per cent of the students were non-Jewish, and the number of applications from non-Jews for admission to the school was increasing. Besides academic subjects, the school offered three years of vocational instruction in electricity, machine mechanics, carpentry, automobile mechanics, plumbing, and light metal work. The needle trade school for girls offered a three-year course and had eighty students.

The apprenticeship program operated by ORT-Tunisia began with a registration of 700 apprentices, but lost about 200 because of emigration to Israel and France. A new building was purchased and classes opened for pre-apprenticeship training and elementary academic subjects. In addition, ac-
celerated short courses were begun in electricity, carpentry, and tailoring for adults planning to emigrate to Israel.

**Jewish Education**

The fifteen Hebrew schools in the south, which had been organized by the JDC and the communities, were handicapped by the loss of teachers through emigration. The situation became critical in some of the small towns, where schools were left completely without qualified teachers. It became clear that a complete reorganization of these schools would be necessary to cope with the problem.

Interest in Hebrew education was widespread, because of the preparation of thousands of families for emigration to Israel. Evening courses, organized by the communities for youths and adults, were held in the larger cities, such as Gabes, Sfax, Sousse, and Tunis. In Tunis more than 1,000 attended the courses. The Zionist youth movement sent 70 students to Israel for a two-month seminar, and conducted evening classes in Hebrew and Jewish history for about 1,200 students. Three hundred boys attended the Tunis community's Or Thora school full time. A new Hebrew school was opened for the first time in the city of Ferryville.

**Religious Life**

Strict observation of all traditional Jewish customs and Jewish holidays, and pilgrimages to the tombs of venerated rabbis, continued to characterize religious life in Tunisia. The Mosaic law governed marriages, divorce, dowry, and inheritance. The government respected religious communal life and contributed financially to its upkeep. The rabbinical court in Tunis provided itinerant rabbis to serve communities in the south, left without rabbis because of emigration to Israel. Rabbi Meis Cohen, chief of the rabbinical court, continued as provisional grand rabbi of Tunisia.

The rabbinical court continued its activities, and the Mosaic laws governing personal status for such matters as marriage, divorce, and inheritance remained expressly reserved to this court. The rabbis were appointed by the state to apply the Mosaic law, and had the right to decide on questions of fact and law. These decisions were enforced by the Tunisian government.

**Zionism and Relations with Israel**

Shortly after the press conference of Sadok Mokkadem in Damascus on April 21, 1956 (see above), the president of the Zionist Federation of Tunisia, Meyer Bellity, resigned. The federation became completely inactive after his resignation. WIZO continued to carry on its various activities, but much more discreetly than heretofore. Anti-Zionist and anti-Israel propaganda originating from Radio Cairo increased markedly during the past year. All of the Arab newspapers manifested their sympathy with the Arab League and with Egypt in frequent articles and editorials, serving to increase the feelings of insecurity and apprehension for the future of the Jewish population.

The Israel fund-raising campaign ran for five months in 1955-56, and
raised 13,500,000 francs ($38,571), 1,500,000 francs ($4,286) less than in 1954-55. Because of the uncertain conditions, many of the cities in the interior were not visited by the campaign representative.

**Cultural Activities**

Two Jewish theatrical groups, Ha-Kol and Les Compagnons des Arts, carried on very active programs during 1955-56. Each group presented several plays, as well as lectures on literary and religious subjects. The weekly Jewish half-hour on the Tunis radio continued, but changed its name from *The Voice of Israel* to *Images et pensées Juives.*

**Personalia**

Rabbi David Bokobza, grand rabbi of the Sousse community since 1940, died in November 1955. Rabbi Bokobza was respected and honored for his great moral stature.

*Henry L. Levy*

**MOROCCO**

Sultan Sidi Mohammed Ben Yousef returned from his two-year exile in Madagascar in November 1955. The arrival of the sultan, the symbol of Moroccan independence, restored a measure of peace to the country, which had been torn by violence, dissension, and fighting between French troops and nationalists. Sporadic violence continued during the year that followed. Many supporters of Thami el Glaoui, the pasha of Marrakesh who had been largely responsible for the exiling of the sultan, were killed by mobs or nationalist extremists. (El Glaoui himself, who had kissed the sultan's feet as a sign of submission, died in February 1956, at the age of eighty.) Riots and killings sometimes followed disputes between adherents of the Istiqlal and the Party for Democratic Independence (PDI), the two leading political parties. The Liberation Army of nationalist guerrillas remained active in the Riff mountains for months after the sultan's return, and controlled large parts of French Morocco, while awaiting the results of Moroccan negotiations with the French and Spanish. Bandits and terrorists sought private gain under the cover of patriotism. But, by and large, Moroccans heeded the sultan's appeals for peace and order. In December, Ben Yousef appointed a cabinet including members of the Istiqlal, PDI, and independents, under the premiership of Si Bekkai. A Jew, Leon Benzaquen, was minister of post, telegraph, and telephone. With the sultan's active aid, the government began establishing order and working for full Moroccan independence.

On March 2, 1956, French and Moroccan representatives in Paris signed a protocol ending the Treaty of Fez, by which the French protectorate had been established in 1912. Full Moroccan sovereignty was further confirmed in July, when the Security Council voted unanimously to recommend Morocco's entry into the United Nations.
In January 1956 Spain's dictator Francisco Franco complained that France was proceeding too far, too fast, with Moroccan independence. A short outbreak of terrorism that month in Tetuan, capital of the Spanish zone, and the resignation of two Moroccan ministers of the zone's caliphate government quickly changed Franco's mind. Spain followed the French lead, and gave up its protectorate over the northern part of Morocco in June 1956. In October 1956 eight of the nine powers responsible for the administration of the international zone of Tangiers gave de jure confirmation to the de facto control by Morocco. The whole country was thus brought under the sultan's direct rule. The United States, in the fall of 1956, gave up extraterritorial rights it had held since 1787. Moreover, the Moroccan government told the United States it must renegotiate rights to American air bases in the country, since Morocco would not recognize French "alienation" of Moroccan territory. Certain nationalist leaders, such as Si Allal el Fassi, head of the Istiqlal, also laid claim to the Sahara desert down to the Senegal, a claim quickly rejected by France.

All the sultan's prestige and skill were needed to maintain a balance among the elements jockeying for power. The real military force in the country, the Liberation Army, was only with difficulty incorporated into the new royal army headed by Crown Prince Moulay Hassan. The breakdown of the former French-Moroccan administration of caids and pashas meant that the sultan's authority, while unchallenged, could not always be implemented; trained personnel was seriously lacking in all branches of the government. Economically, Morocco was still dependent on French aid, a position galling to nationalists.

By August 1956 Istiqlal, probably the strongest single force in the country, wanted to withdraw from the Si Bekkai cabinet, claiming it alone should hold power. The PDI and certain Berber chiefs charged Istiqlal with seeking a dictatorship. The presence of French troops in Morocco caused constant irritation. Above all, the fighting in Algeria had direct repercussions in Morocco. It strengthened sentiments of Moslem unity, led to increased anti-Western acrimony, and strengthened extremists who wished Morocco to turn completely to the Arab League and to reject the West and democracy.

As could be anticipated, Moroccan relations with Israel were affected. Moroccan ministers called for an end to all trade arrangements previously made between their country and Israel by the French. The Istiqlal and the PDI denounced Zionism as a form of colonialism which it was the "duty of every Moslem to combat." Israelis and persons who had any connection with Israel were asked to leave the country in June 1956.

Civic and Political Status

The legal status of Morocco's Jews, the only native minority in the country, was still in doubt after the nation achieved independence. Historically, Morocco had been a theocratic state governed by Koranic law, with the sultan as temporal and spiritual ruler. The Jew was a *dhimmi*, or "protected one," who could not be forced to convert, and whose person and property had to be respected, but who could not attain equality with a Moslem. Sultan Ben Youssef, on his return in November 1955, declared: "Jews will enjoy full
rights with absolute equality and will be associated with every aspect of national life." Premier Bekkai told the American Jewish Committee in January 1956: "Moroccan Jews will enjoy the same rights and duties as their fellow citizens of the Moslem faith." Similar positions were taken by the Istiqlal and PDI. The appointment of Benzaquen as a minister, Sam Benazareff as assistant to Finance Minister Abdel Kadel Benjelloun, Meyer Toledano as a legal assistant to Foreign Minister Ahmed Balafrej, of a Jewish judge, M. Ibguy, and a Jewish counselor to the Court of Appeal, M. Azoulay, were tangible steps toward fulfillment of these pledges. But as Morocco took no action to establish a constitutional regime during 1955-56, a legal basis for the equality of Jews as citizens was still nonexistent. Theoretically, Koranic law still prevailed, and there could be no doubt that the great mass of strongly traditionalist Moroccans still considered Jews as inferior beings. As the future of democracy and constitutional government remained in doubt in Morocco, so, too, did the status of the Jew.

**Jewish Population**

The number of native Jews in Morocco in October 1956 was estimated at 190,000: about 170,000 lived in the former French zone, 10,000 in the former Spanish zone, and 12,000 in Tangier. There were some 10,000 non-Moroccan Jews in the country. The year saw a continuation of large-scale movement of Jews from villages and small towns in the interior, where they felt more exposed, to the larger cities. Casablanca, with 75,000, was by far the most important Jewish center; Marrakesh, Fez, Rabat, and Meknes each had some 12,000 to 14,000 Jews.

**Emigration**

Jews had shared in the general feeling of insecurity during the previous years of upheaval, with the additional fear that Moslem religious extremists or frustrated mobs might turn on them. Moroccan leaders took positive steps to keep their followers from anti-Jewish attacks. But Jews, conscious of Arab League pressure, the impact of Cairo-inspired propaganda, and the growing virulence of anti-Zionist and anti-Israel expression, wondered how long the Moslem masses would make a distinction between anti-Israel and general anti-Jewish feeling. Jews had been particularly hit by the disorder of previous years, which reduced commerce to a standstill. They also faced the competition of a rising Moslem middle class, and a growing sentiment that Moslems ought to take their business to Moslems. For such reasons, and because many Orthodox Jews saw in Israel the fulfillment of a Biblical promise, emigration to Israel rose steadily. Only 2,423 in 1953, it jumped to 10,261 in 1954 and 26,555 in 1955. At the beginning of 1956, there were some 70,000 Jews registered for emigration with the Jewish Agency. Because of Israel's limited absorptive capacity, the agency set the migration of 40,000 Moroccan Jews as its 1956 goal. It was progressing steadily toward this objective when, in the middle of May 1956, the Moroccan government intervened. The Moroccan security office refused a group visa requested by Cadima, the agency's representative organization in Morocco, for the exit of some 3,000 Jews.
During the next three weeks some 1,500 persons nonetheless embarked for Israel, using visas previously issued. During this period Alex Easterman, political director of the World Jewish Congress, negotiated with Moroccan Security Director Si Mohammed Laghzaoui to permit Cadima to continue operating for at least three months, until arrangements could be made for the migration of Jews who had already declared their intention to leave Morocco. On June 11, 1956, however, Laghzaoui issued orders that Cadima should cease all activity within twenty-four hours and liquidate all its affairs by midnight of June 20; that twenty Israelis connected with Cadima should be expelled (along with an Israeli working for the American Joint Distribution Committee [JDC]); and that Moroccan frontier authorities should prevent the departure of all Jews, even those with previously granted exit visas.

These orders were a profound shock to Moroccan Jews, who, whether they intended to emigrate or not, had always considered the government attitude toward migration as a test of Moroccan determination to create a democratic state with protection of basic human rights. There was an immediate rush of Moroccan Jews from all parts of the country to the Cadima processing camp, about twenty kilometers south of Casablanca. Camp population spurted in a few days from 2,000 to well over 6,000.

After months of arduous negotiation by Easterman and Jewish Agency representatives, the Moroccan government permitted the departure of the 6,325 people from the camp, which was becoming a menace to public health. Movement finally began on August 12, 1956, after several boats chartered by the Jewish Agency had come to Casablanca and gone away again empty; it was completed by the end of September. The plight of the Jews in the camp brought international press attention, and led to a stirring plea by Benzaquen to his Moroccan cabinet colleagues to empty the camp. Various governments intervened informally with Morocco on humanitarian grounds. As the price for emptying the camp, Moroccan authorities sought a commitment from Jewish groups not to discuss future migration from Morocco. Later, however, this demand was dropped; negotiations for continued migration were in progress at the time of writing (October 1956). During the first nine months of 1956, over 25,500 Jews left for Israel, making a total of 80,000 since 1949.

The Moroccan nationalist attitude toward Jewish migration—expressed for example, by Istiqlal leaders Omar Abdjellil and Abdelkhaled Torres before a Jewish gathering in April 1956—was that “the Jews of Morocco who emigrate to Israel are bad citizens,” and that transferring capital to Israel was “double treason” against Morocco. Nonetheless, Moroccan authorities always insisted, even after shutting off mass emigration, that they would not block the free movement of Jews from Morocco, as individuals. The security office orders of June 11 that all Jews be stopped at the frontiers, even if they held individual passports (a clear act of anti-Jewish discrimination that violated promises of Jewish equality) were revoked after a few weeks. There were reports in August 1956 that the Casablanca authorities would not issue any passports to Jews. The authorities denied this, saying that the delay in issuing passports was due to a lack of administrative personnel. The United HIAS Service, which established offices in Morocco in July 1955 to help individual Jews emigrate to countries other than Israel, moved 192 persons during the following twelve months,
while another 1,500 registered. There was a possibility of increased movement to Canada and Brazil during 1957. But there seemed little chance for mass Jewish movement from Morocco on the scale of the previous two years, unless the Moroccan government radically changed its attitude.

Community Organization and Activity

Jewish welfare and educational organizations still operated in much the usual fashion during 1955–56. There were clear indications, however, that they might be seriously modified in nature with the passage of time. Moroccan nationalist leaders asserted on several occasions that Jewish institutions in Morocco (except for purely religious bodies) would eventually have to be “integrated” with non-Jewish institutions, so as to form over-all Moroccan organizations. So far, such “integration” was much more talked about than practiced, however. Whether Jewish institutions could maintain their identity and standards if so altered was questionable.

Complicating the already difficult position was the ambiguous status of Jewish community organization in Morocco. The Central Council of Jewish Communities of Morocco, rent by internal strife, attacked vigorously by Jewish groups outside it, and practically ignored by the new government, was dormant and indeed virtually nonexistent after February 1956. The individual community councils in the different cities did not fare much better, though some of them continued to function.

Local Jewish community councils had first been recognized by the French in 1918 and given a legal personality in 1931. They had fallen into apathy, however, because of the limitation of their activities to charity matters only. A reorganization in 1945 expanded their function, giving them the responsibility of aiding the poor, supervising religious affairs, and advising the government on all matters of interest to Jews. A General Assembly of Jewish Communities was created, consisting of the presidents of the different communities, who were supposed to meet once a year. In practice, however, this general assembly developed into the permanent Central Council of Jewish Communities, whose executive head was Secretary General Jacques Dahan of Rabat; it was recognized as the representative body of Moroccan Jews by the French and sherifian administrations, although it never received that legal status. At the same time, the government maintained a special inspector, Maurice Botbol, who served as adviser and supervisor on all matters affecting the Jewish communities.

This system ended when Morocco became independent. On January 23, 1956, the office of inspector of Jewish affairs was abolished and the rabbinical courts—dealing with matters of Jewish personal status, such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance—were placed under the jurisdiction of the minister of justice. Jewish schools came under the minister of education; other aspects of Jewish community life came under various ministries.

The Council of Communities did valuable work in Jewish welfare, education, and health. It cooperated with welfare organizations such as the JDC. But it was accused of representing only a small minority of Jewish “notables” that controlled council elections. Young Moroccan Jewish nationalists called the council an agent of French rule in Morocco, and denounced it for not
leading the Moroccan Jewish masses into the struggle for independence. Internal jealousies among council leadership had a disruptive effect. Finally, at the end of 1955, there was acrimonious dispute among the council members, many of whom had been candidates for the ministry of post, telegraph, and telephone in the new Moroccan government. These disputes fragmented the council, and cost it such prestige as it had with Moslems, Jews, and the leaders of the new government. One-third of the council’s members were supposed to be elected in December 1955; but at the request of the government this was not done. In February 1956, Secretary General Dahan resigned. An attempted reorganization at that time did not help. Though the council still existed in theory, it became completely dormant. Some Jews felt that it should again become an assembly of presidents, and no more. The young Jewish nationalists who led the attack on the council held that there was no need for any Jewish representative body in Morocco, since Jews were no longer a minority apart.

The situation of the local community councils varied. There was a marked decrease in efficiency in almost all; some practically ceased functioning. Many members of the former Casablanca Jewish Community Council, the most important in the country, resigned after receiving anonymous threats. These ostensibly came from a Moroccan terrorist group—but later were learned to have been the work of rival Jewish elements. In September 1956, after several months of confusion, Governor Bargash of Casablanca appointed a new council headed by David Benazareff to act until the government took action on the status of the Jewish community bodies. Similarly, a new community council in Marrakesh was appointed by the local governor. Jews in the Istiqlal Party seemed likely to play an increasingly preponderant role in the direction of Jewish communal organizations. This group was also active in WIFAO, an organization of Moslems and Jews established during the year to promote better understanding and increase cooperation among the different elements of the Moroccan population. At the time of writing (October 1956), it had not attracted any large number of Jews.

Social Service

The departure of breadwinners for Israel left many Moroccan Jewish families without support, and welfare loads increased or remained stable, despite the decreased population. The JDC occupied itself increasingly with adult care, and had about 7,500 people on its rolls by October 1956. This admittedly only scratched the surface of Moroccan Jewish misery. JDC’s primary program was directed at children and youth. Of the 35,000 children in 184 JDC-subsidized schools, some 24,000 benefited from a canteen and school-aid program, about the same number as in 1954–55. The JDC estimated that in 1955 about 600,000,000 francs ($1,750,000) was received from all sources by the agencies it aided, with JDC providing half, local contributions about 20 per cent, government subsidies 15 per cent, and other foreign sources 17 per cent. Local contributions were expected to fall sharply in view of the general flight of capital from Morocco. There was also doubt about the extent of government support, because of the complications of the change-over from French to Moroccan administration and Morocco’s difficult economic position. Food and
clothing supplies given by the United States Department of Agriculture, as part of the United States surplus disposal program, were of considerable assistance in relief operations.

The health organization Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants Israélites (OSE) operated six dispensaries in the former French zone of Morocco, and reorganized its service in Tangier. It reported giving 58,000 general medical treatments, plus 54,000 treatments for trachoma and 14,000 for tinea in Casablanca alone; its five milk stations reached 6,800 children. In June 1956 OSE began a medical program aimed at the children attending the usually filthy private chadarim of the Casablanca mellah. OSE also established a new center for prenatal and well-infant care in the Casablanca dispensary, and started a social hygiene service to provide in-service training for nursing personnel and preventive health work. Jewish antituberculosis organizations continued to function in Casablanca, Fez, and Rabat.

Jewish educational institutions experienced a high turnover of students and a falling-off in enrollment. Alliance Israélite Universelle schools reported 26,500 children in June 1956, a drop of about 4,500 from November 1955; several schools in smaller communities closed. The Alliance introduced the teaching of Arabic in its schools during the year. Enrollment in the two Organization for Rehabilitation Through Training (ORT) schools in Casablanca dropped about 20 per cent, to 650. Ozer Hatorah had to close almost a score of its smaller institutions, and had about 4,000 children. It opened a Jewish day school in Tangier, and a girl's seminar for the training of future teachers. Hebrew evening courses, which in recent years had become a major educational activity for children and adults, as many persons prepared to go to Israel, still reached some 3,000 people. The Lubavitcher schools, attended by about 3,000 children, were less affected than the others by changing conditions in Morocco. The Department for Education of Jewish Youth (DEJJ), the leading youth group in the country, successfully undertook a major reorganization because of Jewish population shifts. It continued to train some 2,500 children in the mellahs, had some 1,000 in its workshop programs, and established new community centers for young people in six Moroccan cities during 1955–56.

The principal Jewish publication, the French-language monthly La Voix des Communautés, which had been published by the Central Council, ceased publication early in 1956.