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"Report on the Jews in French Morocco." 13 November 1953.

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## REPORT ON THE JEWS IN FRENCH MOROCCO

Sermon Delivered on 13 November 1953

Tucked away in the northwest corner of Africa is the neediest Jewish community in the world today. In a strange and far-off place called French Morocco, remote from the travelled highways of the world, there exists a community of  $\frac{1}{2}$  million Jews living among 8 million Moslems, Arabs and Berbers. They are spread across a territory from the Atlantic Ocean to the Sahara Desert. They live in crowded filthy quarters in the large cities as well as in distant villages in the Atlas Mountains. They are mainly the descendants of those Sephardic Jews who were expelled from Spain in 1492 and who found their troubled way across Gibraltar into North Africa. In the city of Marrakech, far to the south, an exotic place of strange flowers and huge walls, where Winston Churchill often goes to paint, we calculated the Hebrew dates on the stones in the graveyard and found the oldest to be of 1559, although local legend has it that there are others still older.

Travelling, talking, looking, learning -- making our way through this fascinating and troubled part of the Jewish world -- was like exploring a different planet. It hardly seemed real -- hardly seemed related to the areas of Jewish life with which we of the West are familiar.

The basis of the problem in Morocco stems from a triangular situation -- French, Arab and Jewish. Casablanca is today a bustling, modern port city of almost a million people, well-known because of the meeting held there early



in 1943 between Churchill, Roosevelt, De Gaulle and others at the Anfa Hotel. But 40 years ago, Casablanca was a primitive walled town of 50,000 ragged inhabitants. The transformation occurred in the four decades since France assumed the protectorate. The French arrived in 1912 and started to develop and exploit. Let us not here go into the general problem of colonialism. The western liberal stereotype that all forms of colonialism are evil per se does not always hold up in the face of realities. The French brought much to Morocco, and while it is true that the area has served as a source of great wealth for France, still the local population has benefitted greatly through the introduction of schools, hospitals, roads and factories.

At any rate, colonial empires are being broken up all over the world today, and Morocco is no exception. The Arabs want their independence from the French and are pressing hard for it in the United Nations. It is inevitable, with the precedents of India, Indonesia, Egypt and other areas in the past few years, that they will achieve it, at least in some measure. But the struggle is bitter and difficult.

The Arab nationalist party is called Istiqlal, and its members fight the French with terror as well as by political pressure. There are shootings and incidents daily. While we were there, on a Monday, the French arrested 20 members of the Istiqlal on charges of being terrorists in possession of arms and munitions. On Tuesday, the Istiqlal struck back by murdering, on a busy downtown street, an Arab



who had spoken favorably of the new pro-French sultan. This type of thing occurs every day. There is a constant sense of tension in the Arab struggle against the French.

The Jews are caught, as the third party of the triangle, right in the middle. There is a little question that the fate of the Jews is tied to the fate of the French. While the French are in power, the Jews feel more or less secure. If the power and prestige of the French declines, the security of the Jews will grow more doubtful. Hatred between Jew and Arab is a matter of ancient tradition, long antedating the establishment of Israel. It is a mistake to assume that the sting of defeat in the Arab-Israel war of 1948 touched off new animosities. The antagonisms are old and deep. Let me give you an example.

In the old bazaar of Marrakech, there is a quarter of Jewish artisans who make copper trays by hand, hammering out really beautiful patterns. They bend over the anvils in little cubby-holes for 15 hours daily, sitting on mud floors, the youngest children already learning the craft. We witnessed a scene in which an Arab was bargaining with a Jew over the purchase of a platter. The conversation went something like this --

Arab: I love this beautiful tea tray, made by your unworthy Jewish hands. How much must I pay to free this lovely thing from your dirty grasp?

Jew: It saddens me to let this object of my labor



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Arab: Don't be so moral. You would sell your mother for money.

Jew: Give me your filthy money - and may the beautiful tray be soiled by your filthy use.

This was not merely Oriental bargaining -- although it was undoubtedly partly that -- but a symbolic representation of underlying tension and bad blood.

In all quarters and circles, we were made to feel that the Jewish future in Morocco under an independent Arab rule, without the restraining hand of the French, would be disastrous. We heard this from responsible leaders of the Jewish community; from ordinary people on the streets; from officials of the JDC; from Jewish business people whose roots go back several generations. One merchant, who was economically stable, whose children had received European educations, whose status was relatively very high, started to perspire visibly when, at tea in his home, we put this question about the Jewish future. He admitted without hesitation that Jews would simply find it untenable if the French withdrew, and that actual physical safety would lie only in emigration. Emigration from Morocco, incidentally, means only to Israel, since the masses would be inadmissible to America.

How do these masses of Jews live? Of 80,000 in Casablanca, 50,000 reside in what is called the Mellah. This is a ghetto worse than anything I have ever seen in my life. The DP camps of Germany and Austria after the war are very

familiar to me. The tent encampments in Israel of 3 and 4 years ago are equally familiar. I have seen slums of the meanest quality in American and European cities. Absolutely nothing can be compared to a mellah - hence it is indescribable by our concepts. There are crooked little alleys, often no more than a yard or two wide, containing low doors through which one crouches to emerge into a court around which are dozens of little openings that are literally holes in the wall. In each hole or room, which has no lights, water, or air, there are living unbelievably large numbers of people. Families are huge - birth control is unknown. Usually there is one bed, on, under and around which, sleep 6 to 10 people. There are often no table or chairs. Cooking is done on the floor, as is eating. There is no question of sanitation. Water in the mellah is sold by water-carriers. The average earnings of the head of a family, with 7 or 8 children, amount to \$350- 400 per year.

It is fantastic to realize that people pass through the mellah walls each day, see life outside, work outside, and then return to this festering, stinking place to sleep. We saw pretty young girls, dressed in presentable western clothing, going out to work in shops and offices, and coming back at the end of the day. We saw others, who, having made the break, swore they would never return, and took rooms outside, although that meant separation from family. There is a social ferment going on at the moment, which will eventually lead to the dissolution of the mellah, unless there is a forced emigration first.



The social ferment is partly due to the expanding horizons of the younger generation, and partly due to the extensive program of health, welfare and education which is being supported by outside agencies such as our own AJDC. When you bring health, welfare and modern education to people, you make them unhappy and dissatisfied with the cubby-hole. Let us not go into the question whether we do them any favor or not. There are those who would say, "Leave them in the cubby-hole, they know no better". Yet, I think few would subscribe to that. Progress means irritation, agitation, excitement, advancement in the face of all kinds of difficulties. And, I for one feel it is right and proper to teach them to be dissatisfied with what they have, so that they may strive for better.

Let me give you a few examples of the kind of programs and projects that are going on to increase the rate of dissolution of the old pattern. We saw a large polyclinic of four stories. The place was a beehive of mothers and children. One of the nasty diseases of Morocco is PARCH, or Favus (teigne, tinia). It invades the scalp of children and causes running pussy sores. At the clinic a mass attack is being made on this scrofulous thing. A battery of X-ray machines has been brought in. The child's head is placed under X-ray and after several exposures, the hair falls out. In the next room there are about 25 nurses, locally trained (which was no small task), plucking individual subcutaneous hairs with tweezers, to get every single follicle. The skulls are swabbed in many successive treatments with various medicaments. Bandaged

heads or egg-bald heads of children are both a most common sight in the Jewish parts of the city. Gradually the hair grows back, free of the disease, and the clean curly locks are matched only by the smile on the face of the emancipated boy or girl.

In this same clinic, there are departments for many other things - such as care of new-born babies, how to wrap, feed, take temperature - all matters of routine which seem so commonplace to us, but which constitute a very real revolution to people bereft of these benefits until 4 years ago.

Down in the basement of the clinic there is a modern sanitary milk plant, under the control of a young Dutch boy. Machinery has been brought in to sterilize the bottles, fill them automatically, seal them hermetically, and then, of all miracles, pasteurize them. Every mother, bringing a baby or child to the clinic for any kind of treatment, gets 4 pint bottles at each visit. Medical care and milk are both free. As an aside, let me say that it was quite a thrill to see, in the mixing room large containers of powdered milk, with the stencilled emblem - Donation of the State Dept. from the depot at Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

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the Mellah, for the cure of trachoma. In one area which we would call 2 square blocks, 2200 people were tested. Of these 1600 had some form of trachoma. The results of treatment were startling. More than 400 were completely cured; another 400 were improved, and the last third showed no change.

The clinic was located in a sort of cellar. Children were brought there 4 times daily. The dose each time was aureomycin, 1% in solution. We looked at the cards of two children who happened to be there at the moment. The doctor was a woman - 50ish - a refugee herself from Siberia, of all places. She explained that one child had been in 167 times and the other 205 times. This indicated a period of treatment from 40 to 50 days. Both children, screaming vigorously, held in tow by a barefooted grandmother, were practically finished with their cure. /Four precious baby eyes were saved from the scourge. The doctor told us that shortly they were moving the clinic two blocks farther into the Mellah, to tackle another 2000 people. The fight for life and health goes on steadily and encouragingly.

There are many schools all subsidized in one way or another by the JDC. There are the schools of the Alliance Israelite, where thousands of children receive secular and religious education in both French and Hebrew. An organization called Ozar-ha-Torah operates a school for 800 boys. There is even a normal school, under the direction of a French Rabbi, an army chaplain, where teachers are prepared

to staff the expanding school system all over Morocco. There are many kindergartens where the children are taught to drink milk ( which they disliked intensely at first, never having had any) and to play constructively. One such kindergarten was being operated by a girl who had been sent to Switzerland to get her own education and training.

At all the schools, a free lunch is given the children, the only hot meal many receive in the day. At Marrakech, we stumbled across quite a scene. A young woman, who turned out to be 22, was literally fighting at the entrance to the school with the principal. She was the mother of 5 children. She was trying to register her boy, 4 years old. The principal was explaining that the boy was too young for the school. The mother was shrieking that she wanted him enrolled, so that he could eat. It was pitiful - and at the same time indicative of the very real help being given by the school and lunch program.

In addition to health and education, the third aspect of the JDC program is economic rehabilitation. If people can be trained or encouraged or aided to improve themselves economically, they can hope to make a break from the Mellah. For there is no law except the law of poverty which keeps them inside. Once he has a specific trade at his command, the young man or woman has a fixed place in the labor market and can always find work. This is the key to freedom.



ORT has a large and wonderful vocational training school in Casablanca. 400 boys are accommodated on a boarding school basis. A large workshop provides for metal working, welding, woodworking, motor mechanics, and other special skills which the boys are learning. There are dormitories for sleeping, class-rooms for study, kitchen and dining hall for meals. The noon meal we saw consisted of vegetables, fish, beans and zucchini, and dates for dessert.

Just a few months ago, the first cooperative loan society was opened. Here small loans are available, up to \$150.00, to enable a craftsman or an artisan to purchase tools which will enable him to earn more. These loans are given without interest, are repayable in 12 months, and must be approved by a board which determines the merit of the application. The original capital fund was \$10,000, and out of thousands of applicants 147 have been approved so far. Most of the original money is therefore out in circulation, and the rate of repayment is so successful that the JDC plans to put an additional sum at the disposal of the society.

We read through one typical history. A printer's apprentice requested the maximum loan of \$150.00 to buy some type to set himself up as a printer. He made so much more than he expected the very first month, that he volunteered to repay his loan in  $\frac{1}{2}$  year instead of taking the full time. In the long run, this kind of assistance is better than all the charity in the world.



What is the ultimate solution of these quarter million Jews in French Morocco (and incidentally, their --Brethren in French Tunisia, whose situation is identical)? What can and should be done? What conclusions did we reach?

It seems to me that the picture is clear. It might be very clear, I admit, because our visit was so short. Perhaps, if we had stayed longer, the answers would have grown more complex. But, we talked to a lot of people and got very clear answers. And, therefore, the answers seem to fall into neat categories. There are three major conclusions which emerged. First, the future of Jews in Morocco will be difficult, if not impossible, as the Arabs continue to win more and more independence from the French. Second, their immediate emigration is also difficult, if not impossible, for Israel cannot take them now, unless there should actually be pogroms. I shall explain this more in detail when I report on Israel in two weeks. Third, it is therefore obvious that we must use this interim period, however long it should be - 5 or 10 years - to continue to improve health, education and economic condition, with an eye toward ultimate emigration. Life itself thus will become more bearable, for the meanwhile, and Israel will ultimately receive a population whose general standards will be considerably higher.

One last matter. At the JDC international conference in Paris, which it was our good fortune to attend, someone asked the question why we should be concerned about these Moroccan Jews. Haven't they always lived in squalor and poverty? How far can we go to rescue every remote remnant



of Jewish population? The questioner went on in this vein - expressing the mood, apparently, of many American Jews who wonder why their UJA money should be used in this fashion.

My answer to this comes from the heart. I am convinced that these people are good human material. They have been ground down under brutal poverty and ruthless Arab oppression for centuries. We have found them now in this condition. Miracles have been wrought in the 4 short years that organized help has been brought to them. They constitute a small replacement for the 6 million of Europe. If we have found this reservoir, let us be not dismayed at the temporary burden it represents, but let us rejoice rather that there are those who can again be gathered in to enlarge the fold. Why be concerned about them? Simply because they are ours.

In one of the villages near the Atlas and the Sahara, far from Warsaw and Berlin and New York and Jerusalem, a car with American visitors stopped. The visitors talked to two young boys, and with love and kindness, asked "What do you need, what can we send you?" Out of the poverty and the want and the fear came the strong and simple answer "please send us few Hebrew books."

Across many centuries and wide, wide spaces, Jew was speaking to Jew.

~~Morocco~~  
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 SITUATION OF THE JEWS IN FRENCH MOROCCO  
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between Churchill, Roosevelt, De Gaulle and others at the Anfa Hotel. But 40 years ago, Casablanca was a primitive walled town of 50,000 ragged inhabitants. The transformation occurred in the four decades since France assumed the protectorate. The French arrived in 1912 and started to develop and exploit. Let us not here go into the general problem of colonialism. The western liberal stereotype that all forms of colonialism are evil per se does not always hold up in the face of realities. The French brought much to Morocco, and while it is true that the area has served as a source of great wealth for France, still the local population has benefitted greatly through the introduction of schools, hospitals, roads and factories.

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*Insert from pg. 7-8 other MSS.* → ~~To describe the entirety of this program would be impossible.~~  
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Across many centuries and wide, wide spaces, Jew was speaking to Jew.



amount to \$350.00 or \$400.00 a year. This is the situation of 50,000 people in the big capitol city of a million.

It is fantastic to realize that people pass through the mellah walls each day, see life outside, work outside, and then return to this festering, stinking place to sleep. It was amazing and very hard to understand to see pretty young girls, dressed in very presentable western clothing, to work in shops or factories, and coming back at the end of the day. We saw others, who, having made the break, and gotten out, swore they would never return, and they took rooms outside, which meant that they were separated from their families. But there is a social ferment going on at the moment, which, in my judgement, will eventually lead to the dissolution of this mellah, unless there should be a forced emigration of all the Jews first.

The social ferment is important for us to understand. It is due to the expanding horizons of the younger generation, and is also due to the extensive program of health, welfare and education which is being supported by outside agencies such as our own JDC. When you bring health, welfare and modern education ~~methods~~ to people, you make them unhappy and dissatisfied with the cubby-hole. Let us not go into the question whether we do them any favor or not. There are those who would say, "Leave them in the cubbyhole, they know no better". Yet, I think few would subscribe to that. Progress means irritation, agitation, excitement, advancement in the face of all kinds of difficulties. And I for one feel it is right and proper to teach them to be dissatisfied with what

*Insert*



they have, so that they may strive for better.

Let me give you a few examples of the kind of programs and projects that are going on to increase the rate of dissolution of the old pattern. There is a large polyclinic, which has just been taken over, of four stories. The place is a beehive of mothers and children. Hundreds and hundreds and hundreds lining up and down the staircases, sitting on the tile floors, barelegged, cross their feet, waiting, with an Oriental fatalistic attitude, for the doctor and the nurse to come to see them. One of the nastiest diseases is what was called in the Bible or in old Jewish Lore PAROH which doctors now call Favus or teigne. A very nasty scalp disease. It invades particularly the scalp of children causing pussy runny sores. At the clinic a mass attack is being made on this scrofulous thing. A battery of X-ray machines has been brought in. The child's head is placed under x-ray and after several exposures, the hair falls out. In the next room there are about 25 nurses, local girls from the Mellah ( and this is a miracle) they have been trained to do this, taking these little kids and putting their heads between their knees and with tweezers plucking out the individual subcutaneous hairs that the X-ray did not reach. When the scalp is completely denuded, then medications are placed on and swabbings occure. And all over the Jews quarters of Casablanca, you see thousands of children running around either egg-bald or with their heads swappd in bandages. Gradually the hair grows back, free of disease now, and the clean curly locks are matched only by the smile on the face of the emancipated boy or girl.



And so he has got a key, when he can speak the language — when he can occupy his hand with a trade. He can walk out a freed man, he doesn't have to go back. What then is the ultimate solution? What can and should be done? What conclusions did we draw?

*Insert*  
~~It seems to me, at least, the picture is very clear~~  
~~and~~ **I** might be very clear, I admit, because our visit ~~and our~~  
~~penetration and our analysis~~ was so short. Perhaps, if we had  
 stayed longer, the answers would have ~~appeared~~ <sup>grown</sup> more ~~complexed~~ <sup>Complex</sup>.  
*But* We talked to a lot of people and got very clear answers. And,  
 therefore, ~~the answers seem to fall into neat categories.~~  
~~the thing is in a frame, as far as we are concerned.~~

~~There are three major conclusions that I came out~~  
~~with.~~ First, the future of Jews in Morocco will be difficult  
 if not actually impossible as the Arabs continue to win more  
 and more independence from the French. Of that there is no  
 doubt in anyone's mind. Second, ~~their~~ immediate emigration  
 to Israel is also difficult, if not impossible, because  
 Israel cannot take them now. Unless, of course, there should  
 be a pogrom, a mass immigration, then Israel would take them.  
 I ~~would say~~ <sup>will explain</sup> more about this when I talk of Israel in two weeks.  
 Is there then a situation where there is absolutely no future  
 for them in long-term prospects. The best estimates, incidently,  
 were, that Arab independence would come within a period of five  
 to seven years. Isn't five to seven years rather priceless on  
 your hands because Jewish life is untenable there and you would  
 therefore say, "Get them out now". But if Israel can't take  
 them now, that's the second conclusion you have reached, because



(1)

CASA

almost 1 million -  
all built in last 40 years

Mellah was original town  
some 50,000 - including several thousand Jews

Today - 80,000 Jews in Casa, of ~~which~~ whom 50  
are in Mellah

200,000 Jews in all Morocco - 8 million Arabs

no assimilation here - even in middle class  
impossible to assimilate to Arabs because of hatred  
Jews here even have own language - judeo-Arabic  
In Egypt, for example, Jews have assimilated - speak  
Arabic

$$\begin{array}{r} 16 \\ 350 \overline{) 5500} \\ \underline{350} \\ 2000 \\ \underline{2100} \end{array}$$

Arab buys from Jew in copper bazaar of Marrakech -  
"I love this beautiful tea tray - how much must I  
pay to free this lovely thing from your dirty hands?"

$$\begin{array}{r} 11 \\ 350 \overline{) 4000} \\ \underline{350} \\ 500 \\ \underline{350} \\ 150 \end{array}$$



## CASA - OSE Polyclinic

(2)

Dr. Mosberg - Deputy Director - Israeli, came 2 months ago

- 1) good building - many floors - accurate records
- 2) Thousands howling mothers & infants
- 3) main work on Parach - TEIGNE - FAVUS  
x-ray hair so it falls off  
swab skulls  
pick subcutaneous hairs with tweezers - local girls trained to do this  
hair grows back
- 4) trachoma treatment in basement
- 5) milk plant under care of Dutch boy - powdered milk from  
Eau Claire, Wis. - donated by State Dept. - every one gets 4 bottles  
for sick children.
- 6) all other branches of emergency medicine - tonsils, baby care, etc.

CASA - Jewish Habitat - 8 big apartment houses  
near sea, about 100 families - built with government  
funds, at instance of JDC pressure.

Egon Fink - Buzen-Belzer - feels people must be  
prepared to move. Political situation too precarious.  
Fate of Jews is tied up with fate of French.  
As French are forced to give ground to rising  
Arab nationalism, Jews will have more trouble.

Althausen - born Frankfurt - lived in Cambodia, Viet Nam,  
Japan, etc. - in China last 4 years, very  
sensitive to political situation. Tells story that  
old sultan (recently deposed) told new sultan 3  
years ago that he should go with his friends the Jews  
and buy Yefillin. Sultan now in power - but forces  
beyond him may require him to cease being friendly.



Casablanca

Trachoma Clinic - floating, experimental,  
within mellah

(3)

To aureomycin  
4 times each day

1 child - 167 times } great improvement - grandmother holds boy  
1 child - 205 times } almost cured

~~1600~~ 2200 { experiment in one section of mellah  
2 streets

1600 had some form of trachoma

most of these were treated at home or in factories

1/3 - healed

1/3 - improved

1/3 - no change

400 no change - will try terramycin  
and various ointments

to see if these can be improved

women - 50ish - intellectual - working in cellar - behind curtain - look  
Dr. Rony - Siberia - DP - looking into eyes.

medical social worker

25 girls to help in clinic, trained in Casablanca

## Unbawtchen Yeshiva

(4)

1 1/2 yrs. old

Matusoff - 36 - born studied in Russia illegally all  
Through war, came out in '1946' to  
Peking (illegal papers as Polish citizen  
entitled to repatriation) - Wexford - Paris -  
USA only 2 1/2 years.

no spiritual leadership in CASA, from his viewpoint. People  
losing their religion. If he can train 100 boys he will  
be satisfied - trying to ~~preserve~~ "Yiddishkeit" - interesting  
transplanting of askanazic culture into Sephardic.

## Talmud Torah - 1100 boys

built by government  
supported by Joint

run by Alliance & Ozar Hatorah

French & Hebrew education - secular & religious

## Ozar Hatorah - Rabbi Levy in bathrobe

800 boys - 5 yrs. and up - learn Hebrew,  
feed boys - social worker to investigate home conditions -  
starting with toothbrushes & paste.

Very clean compound of several rooms around a  
courtyard. Blind boy. (tried to persuade me to  
take boy to states for operation.)



(5)

## Children Soup Kitchen

350 per day - mostly girls because boys are fed in schools -

Also medical examination at lunch -  
Wash hands - show nails to teacher

Cost approximately \$1 per month to feed each child.  
Well-run.

Phonograph played at lunch, so children will develop sense  
+ taste of finer things.  
Very crowded room.

Fink - we could get gas out now for \$10-20  
few years from now we will have to pay  
hundreds - and will be glad to do so.

In few years, when French lose power there  
will be no room for anyone other than Moslem  
or Western technicians. Isataglah grows stronger.

(6)

Marrakech

OSE clinic - Lospersine 150 patients daily  
give milk to kids

Dr. Azoulay - from Fez - studied in Paris for 12 years  
first 12 years in chaper in Fez  
fine looking young fellow  
without money - very brilliant - returned to M.  
idealist - to work with poor  
in one year - cut infant mortality in half.

OSE Kindergarten - GABY BRAMY

Habitat Juive - 6 new blocks  
built by French

Mellah -

- open stalls for shoemakers, sewing machines (purchased through loan program), lamps out of tin cans, etc.
- closed stalls for shoe makers, copper workers.
- crowded but more air <sup>light</sup> than Casa mellah
- children clean and modern - go to Alliance school  
Alliance pro Israel.
- various synagogues - Tahmid Toubes - all have JNF boxes

David Elkaim - most charitable + best man in Marrakech

- map of Israel
- map of Temple
- certificate for 400 trees

} all framed on wall of office

(over)



## Alliance School

3000 pupils

5 hours French - 2 hours Hebrew

fed lunch - from Joint 1/2 million francs each month  
for Marseilles school

children go till 14

well-run school - very impressive  
This education gives them good opportunities for future

what happens to them when they go back to Marseilles?  
They should be taken out.

## Immigration

Everyone agrees that Jews should leave.

But how and under what education?

Some have returned from Israel with stories of  
discrimination vs. Moroccan Jews

Rabbi stirred  
people up vs.  
Mazai shlichim

## Birth Control - only solution

20 year old girl at door of Alliance school, trying to  
register a child - another on arm - she mother of 5. Boy  
too young - only 4.

Rather against birth-control

5714 -

5320 -

394

1953

394

1559

oldest known  
grave in cemetery in  
Marseilles

others perhaps  
older but not  
antiquated

CASA

(7)

## OPT school

400 - girls - only few minutes

400 - boys - boarding school - dormitories good - little clutter  
clean bunk

two brothers - Solomon Azoulay - 14  
Scaife " - 13

seven children in family

4000 per month to feed this school  
noon meal - 

- vegetables
- fish
- beans + zucchini
- dates

Pollock - director - sensitive, good psychologist  
give kids all they want - take away fear of hunger  
no bread being hidden -

in Hebrew class kids from every city in Morocco

- technical studies
- class rooms
- sleeping rooms
- kitchen, etc.

 } full establishment

## Beir - on religion

People are religious because of tradition, not conviction.

Explanation is that something is sin.

Rational analysis is itself considered sin.

Thus high degree of Kashrus, but without any reasoning -  
only that it is commanded and thus must be observed



660-48-Fink

29717

Rabat Sale

M. Borboj

(14)

INSPECTEUR Office Persienne  
pour Affaire Juif

advisor on Jewish affairs to both Sultan + French  
office established in 1909. Located on palace grounds of Sultan,  
near mosque where attempted assassination took place.

M. Dahan

secretary of the Council of all Jewish Communities of Morocco.  
outlined reforms which Jews are seeking

- 1) nationality - very complicated
- 2) legal rights
- 3) strengthening of community organization
- 4) public office
- 5) increase representation of Jews on municipal councils

also believed that in immediate future no trouble for Jews.  
But as French influence declines (or if French have to leave)  
Jews will be in trouble.

## École Normale Hébraïque

teacher's normal school - Alliance

Rabbi Itzhak Rouche

born in Algeria - studied rationalized school in Paris

chief chaplain French Army in Morocco - major

modern, fully Jewish (kosher, Shabbas, etc) - but willing to recognize change. Very great possibility with

this man to alter the benighted & ignorant attitude of religious superstition.

His place is clean - his approach is modern.

(took picture on wif with BenK)

100 pupils - { 20 hours secular studies  
20 hours Hebrew

come at age 13-14 stay 5 years, go out and provide staff for Alliance schools all over Morocco. This is reservoir for teachers.



## Rein + Klementbaum

9

JDC program is long & short term

Keep alive & healthy - and prepare for emigration

JDC started with children - whole program is still with children - except for trachoma which is for all.

Emigration is not the long term solution  
(acute from a panic situation - political or economic)

People have to leave - but Israel cannot take them.

There is no emigration program <sup>at the moment</sup> (because there cannot be), so there must be a different program - education, health, economic independence for life in Morocco (which will also benefit emigration when that becomes possible.)

In effect, Israel prevents emigration for health & education & economic reasons.

So JDC are caught in a dilemma - They can't start an emigration program, with all that implies, if Israel is unwilling to take. On other hand, JDC knows emigration must take place eventually. So everything they do with the people has emigration in mind.

JDC program will now have to turn to adults, in addition to children, for long term program -

- 1) control of TB (especially in Mellah)
- 2) mass trachoma treatment
- 3) economic - loan program for artisans



How ~~full~~ tell this story to get money?

Berni answers

- 1.) There is good human material
- 2) Never had a chance to develop under Arab persecution
- 3) Replace loss of 6 million.
- 4) Proven after 4 years of work that we can achieve miracles with small means (2 million in 1953).
- 5) utter poverty - out of 80,000 Jews in Casablanca, 13,600 are registered for  $\text{p.n.}$  - 200 to 2000 francs per month.

my additional answers

- 1) Fate of Jews tied with fate of French
- 2) There will be trouble in future - no question
- 3) Jews will have to leave
- 4) Meanwhile we must prepare them so that they will not be social problems in Israel. This is the main program. They are so filthy, uncleanly, uneducated, etc., that we have to prepare them from the ground up.

few boys in poverty-stricken village  
can stopped - visitors talked -

Q - "what do you want?"

A - "could you send us a few Hebrew books?"

- 6) Moroccan youth in Israel form outposts of Neger troops, etc.  
Thus Moroccan youth is reservoir to aid strength of Israel.  
Morocco is the frontier of Israel - The only Arab country unconquered by the Arab League.



## Kinlegarten

6 in city - 1600 kids

one we saw had 120 TB kids  
milk twice daily - had to be forced on kids at first  
fed rest 2 hours each afternoon  
brought by bus from Mellah  
nurses all trained by JDC - themselves from Mellah

## Mme Benatar

in five years Arabs will have almost independent power <sup>together with French</sup>  
situation of Jews will be impossible at that time,  
unless they are given official minority status, protected  
by the UN. If they cannot have this, they must emigrate.  
salvation of Moroccan Jews is only by UN or Israel.

## C.I.R.E. - Ninon director

loan fund - revolving -  
capitalized with  $3\frac{1}{2}$  million francs  
started 1 Aug 53.

picture of secretary at desk - she is  
product of Mellah.

has 147 clients - maximum loan 60,000 francs  
saw dossier of a printer who borrowed the maximum  
to buy type faces. Pays back in six installments.  
makes much more money because he is better equipped.



Haklai - Agency man in Morocco -  
visited his machine

### selective immigration

- Family
1. family must have a capability of self-support
  2. children whose parents call for them
  3. elders whose children call for them.

All must go through health examinations  
12 centers established throughout Morocco

### Youth aliyah

This is most desirable elements - but parents don't want to be separated. Youth aliyah kids take years before they become independent and can bring their parents. Parents lost confidence in promises of Agency that they would be reunited with families.

Small mountain villages - See Moshav Tsfon Atlit - north of Haifa also Tselim

About 30,000 people live in these villages. They are better element than malleh people - because they are headstrong. These people would be better for Israel. Boy to try experiment - take whole village and transplant whole village to a moshav as a unit. Skip the machine. Israel is prepared ~~with~~ to undertake such an experiment - but wonders about capacity of such villagers (who are primarily artisans) to do agriculture.

### Catastrophe

Much larger emigration can be handled, if medical treatments are ignored. Now about 800 people per month can be handled. Up to 2000 could be handled with medical treatment. In crisis any number could be handled. In crisis Israel would take them all. There is no possibility of refusing, regardless of Israel's bad circumstances.

### Quality

People are good, intelligent, can be made into workers, taught modern techniques



Only way to get the youth is to agree to take the families.

### Discrimination

There has always been this fault in Israel - between Polish & Yekkes; between sabbas and immigrants. In government there is no discrimination, for all people are equal and immigration budget is for all immigrants, most especially for oriental Jews. But there is a popular discrimination, when the settled population sees the condition of the new immigrants.

About 2000 Moroccans have returned from Israel, because of discrimination, etc - but of these 500 have organized an association to try to get back to Israel again.

Resentment against aliyah is not only because of discrimination but also because of failure to keep promises about joining families.

### Party Differences

The situation among the Ashkenazim (15) is not as bad as in Germany regarding party loyalties and propaganda.

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# H.A.F. — on Morocco

## Main observations

1. Future in Morocco will be difficult if not impossible.
2. Emigration at moment difficult if not impossible.
3. Interim time must be used to ~~prepare people~~ <sup>prepare people</sup> :  
e.g. - a) improve their <sup>conditions</sup> ~~standards~~ for their <sup>individual</sup> ~~own~~ benefit  
b) improve the standards as a whole for Israel's benefit.

## Specific

1. trachoma clinic in mellah
  2. Kindergarten ~~Hermitage~~
  3. Ecole Normale - Rabbi Roncha
- } Keep this up.

## But

Keep in mind that long-term capital investment is not indicated.  
IF IDC can stimulate government construction of housing, OK  
(like Habitat Juive).

## Alleged Discrimination vs. North Africans - Joseph's explanation

1. They were the last to come, so least economically absorbed.
2. Most still in ma'abarot.
3. Their leadership is very weak. Israel is trying to stimulate leadership artificially - e.g. army made rule that 60% of NCOs should be non-askkenazim.

Tunis rabbi admits that there is no official discrimination, but rather a feeling in the streets.

A returnee to any country must justify his return. So he refers to discrimination.

Don't worry about returnees. B.G. came with 80 people in 1905. 78 returned to Plotsk.

There must be less harsh talk <sup>by Israelis</sup> to North Africans, no doubt - but these last immigrants must also remember that the latest newcomers have the most difficult time.

This discrimination exists - but it is psychological and will be overcome in time.



1953

# Morocco

Tucked away in the northwest corner of Africa is the neediest Jewish community in the world today. In a strange and far-off place, <sup>called French Morocco</sup> remote from the travelled highways of the world there exists a community of 14 million Jews living among 8 million ~~Arabs~~ Muslims, Arabs & Berbers, ~~French Morocco~~. They are spread across a territory as large as (compare to some equivalent area in U.S.), from the Atlantic Ocean to the Sahara Desert. They live in crowded filthy quarters in the large cities ~~and~~ as well as in distant villages in the Atlas Mountains. They are <sup>mainly</sup> the descendants of those Sephardic Jews who were expelled from Spain in 1492 and who found their troubled way across Gibraltar into North Africa. In the city of Marrakech, far to the south, an exotic place of strange flowers and huge walls, where Winston Churchill often goes to paint,

we calculated the <sup>Hebrew</sup> dates on the stones in the graveyard and found the oldest to be of 1559, although ~~the~~ local legend has it that there are others still older.

Travelling, talking, looking, learning - ~~being~~ making our way through this fascinating and troubled part of the Jewish world - was like exploring a different planet. It hardly seemed real - hardly seemed related to the areas of Jewish life with which we of the West are familiar.

The base of the problem in Morocco is ~~there is~~ a triangular situation - ~~which is~~ French, Arab & Jewish. Casablanca is today a <sup>bustling modern port</sup> city of almost a million people, well-known because of the meeting held there early in 1943 between Churchill, Roosevelt, De Gaulle and others at the Anfa Hotel. But 40 years ago, Casablanca was a <sup>primitive</sup> ~~typical~~ walled town of 50,000 ragged inhabitants. The transformation occurred in the four decades since



France assumed the protectorate. The French arrived in 1912 and started to develop and exploit. Let us not here go into the general problem of colonialism. The western liberal stereotype that all forms of colonialism are evil for as does not always hold up in the face of realities. The French brought much to Morocco, and while it is true that the area has served as a source of ~~much~~ great wealth for France, still the ~~the~~ local population has benefited greatly through the introduction of schools, hospitals, roads and factories.

At any rate, colonial empires are being broken up all over the world today, and Morocco is no exception. The Arabs want their independence from the French and are pressing hard for it in the United Nations. It is inevitable, with the precedents of India,

Indonesia, <sup>Egypt</sup> and other areas in the past few years, that they will achieve it at least in some measure. But the struggle is bitter and difficult. ~~The~~

The Arab nationalist party is called Istiglal, and its members fight the French with terror as well as by political pressure. There are shootings and incidents daily. While we were there, on a Monday, the French arrested 20 members of the Istiglal on charges of being terrorists in possession of arms & munitions. On Tuesday, the Istiglal struck back by murdering on a busy <sup>downtown</sup> street, an Arab who had spoken favorably of the new pro-French sultan. This type of thing occurs every day. There is a constant sense of tension in the <sup>Arab</sup> struggle ~~for~~ against the French.

The Jews are caught, as the third party ~~in~~ the triangle, right in the middle. There is little question that the fate of the



Jews is tied to the fate of the French.  
Hatred between Jew & Arab is a  
matter of ancient tradition, long antedating  
the establishment of Israel. It is a  
mistake to assume that the sting of defeat  
in the Arab-Israeli war of 1948 touched  
off new animosities. The antagonisms are  
old and deep.

In the old bazaar of Mamaleh, Jewish  
artisans make copper trays by hand, hammering  
out really beautiful patterns. They bend over  
the anvils in little cubby-holes for 15 hours daily,  
sitting on mud floors. The youngest children already  
learn the craft. We witnessed <sup>a scene in which an</sup> Arab-  
man bargaining with a Jew over the purchase  
of a platter. The conversation went something  
like this -

Arab: I love this beautiful tea tray, made  
by your unworthy Jewish hands. How  
much must I pay to free this

lovely thing from your dirty grasp?

Jew - It saddens me to let this object  
of my labor pass into your lecherous fingers  
for any price.

Arab - Don't be so moral. You would sell  
your mother for money.

Jew - Give me your filthy money - and may  
the beautiful tray be soiled by your  
filthy use.

This was not merely Oriental bargaining -  
although it was undoubtedly partly that - but a  
symbolic representation of underlying tension and  
bad blood.

In all quarters and circles we were  
~~told~~ made to feel that the Jewish future in  
Morocco under an independent Arab rule, without  
the restraining hand of the French, would be  
disastrous. We heard this from responsible <sup>leaders</sup> officials  
of the Jewish community; from ordinary people on the  
streets; from officials of the JDC; from Jewish business



people whose roots go back several generations. One merchant, who was economically stable, whose children had received European educations, whose status was relatively very high, started to perspire visibly when, at tea in his home, we put this question about the Jewish future. He admitted without hesitation that Jews would simply find it untenable if the French withdrew, and that actual physical safety would lie only in emigration. Emigration from Morocco, incidentally, means only to Israel, since the masses would be inadmissible to America.

How do these Jews live? Of 80,000 in Casablanca, 50,000 reside in what is called the Mellah. This is a ghetto worse than anything I have ever seen in my life. The DP camps of Germany & Austria after the war are very familiar to me. The tent <sup>encampments</sup> ~~camps~~ of Israel of 3 and 4 years ago are equally familiar. I have seen slums of the meanest quality in American and

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European cities. Absolutely nothing can be compared to a mellah - hence it is indescribable by our concepts. There are crooked little alleys, often no more than a yard or two wide, containing low doors through which one crouches, to emerge into a court around which are dozens of little openings that are literally holes in the wall. In each hole or room, which has no light, water, or air, there are living unbelievably large numbers of people. <sup>Families are huge - birth control is unknown.</sup> Usually there is one bed, on, under and around which, sleep 6 to 10 people. There are often no table or chairs. Cooking is done on the floor, as is eating. There is no question of sanitation. Water in the mellah is sold by water-carriers. The average earnings of the head of a family, with 7 or 8 children, amount to \$350-400 per year.

~~The contrast with life outside must be fantastic for the mellah-dweller.~~

It is fantastic to realize that people

pass ~~out~~ Through the mullah walls each day, see life outside, work outside, and then return to this festering, stinky place to sleep. We saw pretty young girls, dressed in presentable western clothing, going out to work in shops & offices, and coming back at the end of the day. We saw others, who, having made the buck, swore they would never return, and took rooms outside, although that meant separation from family. There is a social ferment going on at the moment, which will eventually lead to the dissolution of the mullah, unless there is a forced emigration first.

The social ferment is partly due to the expanding horizons of the younger generation, and partly due to the extensive program of health, welfare and education which is being supported by outside agencies such as our own AIDC. To describe the entirety of this program would be impossible. Let me take a few examples.



We saw a large polyclinic of four stories. The place was a beehive of mothers and children. One of the nastiest diseases of <sup>Morocco</sup> ~~the area~~ is PARCH, or FARUS (teigne, tinea). It attacks the <sup>of children</sup> scalp, and causes running, puffy sores. At the clinic a man attack is being made on this scrofulous thing. A battery of X-ray machines has been brought in. ~~The child's head is placed under X-ray~~ <sup>The hair is exposed</sup> and after several exposures, the hair falls out. In the next room there are about 25 nurses, locally trained (which was no small task), plucking individual <sup>subcutaneous</sup> hairs with tweezers, to get every single follicle. The skulls are swabbed in many successive treatments, with various medicaments. Bandaged heads or egg-bald heads of children are both a most common sight in the Jewish parts of the city. Gradually the hair grows back, free of the disease, and the clean curly locks are matched only by the smile on the face of the emancipated boy or girl.

In this same clinic there are departments for many other things - such as care of new-born babies, how to wrap, feed, take temperature - all matters of routine which seem so commonplace to us, but which constitute a very real revolution to people here of these benefits until 4 years ago.

~~for the~~

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of the clinic

Down in the basement, there is a modern sanitary milk plant, under the control of a young Dutch boy. Machinery has been brought in to sterilize the bottles, fill them automatically, seal them hermetically, and then, of all miracles, pasteurize them. Every mother, bringing a baby or child to the clinic for any kind of treatment, gets 4 <sup>pint</sup> bottles at each visit. Medical care and milk are both free.

As an aside, let me say that it was quite a thrill to see, in the mixing room, large containers of powdered milk, with the stencilled emblem - Donation of the State Dept, from the depot at Eau Claire, Wisconsin.



You have all heard of the dread eye disease called Trachoma. In Africa & Asia, millions are blinded by it. It is ~~not~~ <sup>most</sup> uncommon to see blind beggars sitting in the hot sun, their eye sockets crawling with flies, crying for a pittance. An experimental clinic has been set up by the JDC, right inside the mellah, for the cure of trachoma. In one area which we would call 2 square blocks, 2200 people were tested. Of these 1600 had some form of trachoma. The results of treatment were startling. More than 400 were completely cured; another 400 were improved; and the last third showed no change.

The clinic was located in a sort of cellar. Children were brought there 4 times daily. The dose each time was aureomycin, 1% in solution. We looked at the cards of two children who happened to be there at the moment. The doctor was a woman - 50ish - a refugee herself from Siberia, of all places. She explained that one child had been in

167 times and the other 205 times. This indicated a period of treatment from 40 to 50 days. Both children, screaming vigorously, held in tow by a <sup>transported</sup> grandmother, were practically finished with their cure. Four precious baby eyes were saved from the surgery. The doctor told us that shortly they were moving the clinic two blocks farther into the mellah, to tackle another 2000 people. The fight for life & health goes on steadily and encouragingly.

~~Health~~

There are many schools, all subsidized in one way or another by the JDC. There are the schools of the Alliance Israelite, where <sup>thousands of</sup> ~~the~~ children receive secular & religious education, in both French & Hebrew. An organization called Oran ha-Torah operates a school for 500 boys. There is even a normal school, under the direction of a French rabbi, an army chaplain, where teachers are prepared to staff the expanding school.



system all over Morocco. There are many kindergartens where the children are taught to drink milk (which they disliked intensely at first, never having had any) and to play constructively. One such ~~school~~ kindergarten was being operated by a girl who had been sent to Switzerland to get her own education & training.

At all the schools, a free lunch is given the children. The only hot meal they receive in the day. At Marrakech, we stumbled across quite a scene. A young girl, who turned out to be 22, was literally fighting at the entrance to the school with the principal. She was the mother of 5 children. She was trying to register her boy, 4 years old. The principal was explaining that the boy was too young for the school. The mother was insisting that she wanted him enrolled, so that he could eat.

It was pitiful - and at the same time indicative of the very real help being given by the school & lunch program.

### ~~The~~ ORT

In addition to health & education, the third aspect of the JDC program is economic rehabilitation. If people can be trained & encouraged or aided to <sup>improve themselves</sup> ~~be~~ economically, they can hope to make a break from the mellah. For there is no law except for the law of poverty which keeps them inside.

ORT has a large and wonderful <sup>vocational</sup> training school in Casablanca. 400 boys and 400 girls are accommodated on a boarding school basis. There are dormitories for sleeping, class-rooms for study, kitchen & dining hall for meals. The noon meal we saw consisted of vegetables, fish, beans & zucchini, and dates for dessert.

A large workshop accommodates metal working, welding, woodwork, motor mechanics, and other special skills which the boys are



learning. Once he has a <sup>specific</sup> trade at his command, the young man or woman has a fixed place in the labor market and can always find work. This is the key to freedom.

Just a few months ago, the first cooperative loan society was opened. Here small loans are available, up to \$150, to enable a craftsman or an artisan to purchase tools which will enable him to earn more. These loans are given without interest, are repayable in 12 months, and ~~are~~ must be approved by a board which determines the merit of the application. The original capital fund was \$10,000, and out of thousands of applicants 147 have been approved so far. Most of the original money is therefore out in circulation, and the rate of repayment is so successful that the JDC ~~is going~~ plans to put an additional sum at the disposal of the society.

We read through one typical history. A printer's apprentice requested the maximum loan of 150 to buy some type ~~for~~ to set himself up as a printer. He made so much <sup>than he expected</sup> more <sup>the</sup> very first month that he ~~was~~ <sup>volunteered to</sup> repay his loan in 1/2 year instead of taking the full time. In the long run, this <sup>kind</sup> ~~type~~ of assistance is better than all the charity in the world.

What is the ultimate solution of these quarter million Jews in <sup>French</sup> Morocco (and, incidentally, their — brethren in French Tunisia, whose situation is identical)? What can and should be done?

It seems to me that the picture is clear. <sup>First</sup>, Their future will be difficult, if not impossible, as the Arabs continue to win more & more independence from the French. Second, their emigration as of now is also difficult, if not impossible, for Israel cannot



take them now, unless there should actually be pogroms. I shall explain this more in detail when I report on Israel in two weeks. Third, it is therefore obvious that we must use this interim period, however long it should be - 5 or 10 years - to continue to improve health, education + economic condition, with an eye toward ultimate emigration.

Life itself thus becomes more bearable, for the meanwhile, and Israel ultimately receives a population whose general standards will be considerably higher.

One last ~~for~~ matter. At the JDC international <sup>conference</sup> ~~meeting~~ in Paris, which it was our good fortune to attend, someone asked the question why we should be concerned about these Moroccan Jews. Haven't they always lived in squalor + poverty? How far can we go to rescue every remote remnant of Jewish population? The questioner went on in this vein - expressing

The moral, apparently, of many American Jews who wonder why their USA money should be used in this fashion.

My answer to this comes from the heart. I am convinced that these people are good human material. They have been ground down under brutal poverty and ruthless Arab oppression for centuries. We have found them now in this condition. Miracles have been wrought in the 4 short years that organized help has been brought to them. They constitute a small replacement for the 6 million of Europe. If we have found this reservoir, let us be not dismayed at the <sup>temporary</sup> burden it represents, but let us rejoice rather that there are those who can again be gathered in to enlarge the fold.

In one of the villages near the Atlas and the Sahara, far from Warsaw and Berlin and New York & Jerusalem, a car with American visitors



stopped. The visitors talked to two young boys, and with love and kindness, asked "what do you need, what can we send you?" Out of the poverty and the want and the fear came the strong and simple answer "please send us a few Hebrew books."

Across many centuries and wide wide seas, Jew was speaking to Jew.