FRENCH JEWS IN THE 1930'S
THEIR REACTIONS TO IMMIGRANTS AND TO HITLERISM
AS INDICATED BY L'UNIVERS ISRAÉLITE, 1932-1938

A Thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree Master of Arts

by
Stephanie Lorber Karger, A.B., B.S.
The Ohio State University
1966

Approved by
Advisor
Department of History
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank those whose assistance was so helpful in completing this work. Dr. Peter Larmour first sparked my interest in Modern France, guided my study of her history, people, and institutions, and supervised the writing of this thesis. My husband, Arieh, with encouragement and shifts at the typewriter saw me through the research and preliminary drafts. And Shelly Studley, my indefatigable sister, persisted through seemingly endless hours, typing this final copy.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. FRENCH JEWS</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. FRENCH JEWS AND EAST EUROPEAN JEWS</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. FRENCH JEWS AND HITLERISM</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Approximately 200,000 "individuals professing the Jewish religion" lived in France at the beginning of 1933.1 These represented a tiny minority of the 42,000,000 inhabitants of France. About 150,000 of the Jews, however, lived in Paris, where they made up 5% of the population. Their impact on the city and nation was further increased because of the relatively large number of Jews in the professions, business, and politics. In addition, 80,000 of the Jews had only entered Paris after 1900;2 largely congregated in


The exact number is impossible to determine, although most serious estimates are within 20,000 of Ruppin's. The government in the thirties did not include religious affiliation in its published census (L'Univers Israélite, December 9, 1932, p. 325); official records which did exist were largely destroyed during World War II to prevent des crimination (Charlotte Roland, Du Ghetto à L'Occident: Deux générations Yiddiches en France [Paris: Les éditions de minuit, 1962], p. 36). The Jewish organizations had membership lists, but many Jews did not belong to any of the Jewish institutions or clubs. Ruppin's figure was approximated by evaluating the many incomplete sources available: estimates by Jewish officials and private censuses, the population in Jewish districts, the number of children in Jewish schools, the number of Jewish funerals held.

2Ruppin, pp. 60, 62. The great majority of these, in fact had only arrived after World War I. About 60,000 came from Eastern Europe; the rest were mainly from Alsace-Lorraine, Greece, Turkey and North Africa. These were added to 20,000 Jews who immigrated from Eastern Europe between 1881 and 1900 (Ruppin, pp. 60, 62). There were also
several districts where they formed alien majorities, they were extremely noticeable to French observers.

But despite the small size of the Jewish population, and the tendency of Jews to live together, it would be inaccurate to speak of the Jew of France or of the Jewish community of France during the between-war period. Actually this is hardly surprising. It has long been recognized that during these decades, French unity disintegrated. Traditional patterns of ideals, goals and methods were insufficient for overcoming contemporary problems; they no longer represented the foundation of a consensus for rallying the masses. The historian cannot write about "The Frenchman of 1938" or even about "The French Leftist of 1938"; he must consider the differing political, social, economic, religious, and other convictions of the individuals concerned, and discuss the coalitions they formed and changed for each specific issue.

There was a similar lack of unity, homogeneity, and stable coalition patterns within the Jewish minority, as particular Jews reacted to events of the thirties. "Individuals professing the Jewish religion" could—and did—identify themselves primarily as Hassidic, Ashkenazic,

277,000 Jews living in the French colonies of North Africa, a fact which must be kept in mind when analyzing the concerns and reactions of continental French Jews during the 1930's (Pierre Paraf, Israël 1931 [Paris: Librairie Valois, 1931], p. 27).
Sephardic, Salonikon, Roumanian, Zionist, Bundist, French, Internationalist, Socialist, Communist, Radical, Republican, Orthodox, secularist, Traditionalist or even Christian, or some combination of the preceding few examples. Proponents of these tendencies and groups distrusted, hated, disputed and fought one another over many issues with as much passion as French Communists the Socialists, and French businessmen the labor syndicates. And just like members of the latter groups, some Jews belonging to opposing trends would grudgingly unite their efforts for tactical purposes if they became convinced that all faced a common enemy.

For a complete understanding of Jewish history during this period, one would have to study each of the trends, as well as the pressures on the Jews as individuals and as a class. A good beginning can be made, however, by recognizing one fundamental cleavage; every Jew was either French or Foreign Born. The established "native Jews" were assimilated to French culture and society, and proud of generations of loyal service to France. The "immigrant Jews," primarily from Eastern Europe, stubbornly clung to ideologies, customs and friends from the "old country," although they were no less devoted to France, their land of refuge and freedom. Culturally, economically, socially and linguistically they differed; the only link between native and immigrant was a common religious designation—Jewish. And even this bond was
minimized by the natives who considered themselves "français israélites" or "Frenchmen of the mosaic persuasion," while the others were "juifs imigrés." 3

The magnitude and effect of this division in the Jewish "community" correspond to or exceed those of Left-Right or Paris-Province in the French nation. French Jews, non-Jewish observers, and foreign reporters all commented upon this obvious split, though without agreeing upon its significance. Its basic cause can be

3Jews during this period displayed an almost unbelievable touchiness regarding what they should be called, reflecting perhaps uncertainty they felt as to what they were, or as to the security of their position in France. Paraf included a paragraph on the subject in his book: "First of all, is it permitted to speak of a race juive? Juif? Non, Israélite! one is apt to write today from the point of view of the assimilated to show that only the religion is important; while others, more uncompromising, prefer to the feminine sound of 'Israél' the offensive, almost provocative, title of 'Juif'" (p. 40).

Pascal Themanlys, a perceptive essayist, carried the analysis a step further. "One has heard it said often enough: 'we call Israélites the very cultivated and superior Juifs! ... [But], if Israélite means superior Jew, then it is the Hasidim from Poland ... that we must call Israélites; but these prefer to carry proudly the name Juif." Another says: "The Israélites are those who put their country before their religion." This however varies with circumstances, even within the individual. "The Rabbis showed during the war that they put their country before all; but ... the country was in danger." Clergy-men of all faiths responded in the same fashion, and "marched to war like the Socialist International." And there were even some non-French Jewish Zionists who fought in the French Army under a Jewish flag—perhaps the term Israélite should be reserved for them? (L'Univers 1935, February 15, p. 356.)

Writers in L'Univers generally chose Israélite or Juif with care, the former referring to native, the latter to immigrant Jews. For this paper, "Jew" will generally be used throughout, in accord with contemporary American practice.
seen in the totally different historical experiences of these two Jewish groups. And although it is generally impossible to discover any single cause or motive which will explain particular beliefs or actions during the thirties, an individual's development in either the native or immigrant milieu tended to influence his reaction to certain problems in fairly predictable fashion.

In this paper, therefore, I will first discuss the history of the native and immigrant Jews, and the types of beliefs and institutions each developed. I will then examine their relationship to one another and to some of the problems considered significant for Jews: assimilation, the decline and revival of Judaism, anti-Semitism, Hitler, refugees, and the rebuilding of Palestine.

A major portion of the information on these topics was obtained from analysis of the weekly newspaper, L'Univers Israélite, for 1932-1938. Its writers and editors were primarily the members of the established native community who were particularly concerned with Jews, "Jewish problems" and the survival of Judaism in France.

---

4 In this thesis, "French Jew" and "native" are used synonymously, the phrase "Jews in France" is used to include both natives and immigrants. "Eastern Jew" means an immigrant or refugee born in Eastern Europe; unless otherwise noted, "immigrant" also refers to someone from Eastern Europe because numbers coming from other areas were insignificant in the thirties; "refugees" on the other hand could be of Central or Eastern European origin.
It thus provides a useful guide to what these Jews were thinking about "Jewish topics" in the thirties. And except for a number of omissions which are discussed later, L'Univers also fulfilled the promise of its title by carefully including reports of immigrant activities. Their meetings, lectures, fund drives, and conferences with French officials were listed, without comment, under the appropriate headings, alongside similar notices of native events. Those of particular importance, or of a somewhat controversial nature might receive fuller coverage with an expression of the writer's approval or unhappiness--or they might be totally ignored.

The stories about the immigrants, however, were written for the natives; the immigrants read their own papers. Once we have obtained a general idea of the size and activeness of both communities from other sources, therefore, L'Univers essays, editorials, and news articles become materials for understanding how the natives regarded the immigrants and themselves as Jews and Frenchmen, and even, in a few unusually frank reports, how the immigrants regarded the natives, and why.
CHAPTER I

FRENCH JEWS

There are records of Jews living on French soil legally or surreptitiously since the fourth century. Years of creativity in Jewish scholarship and thought, of wealth and honors, of economic hardship and forced conversion followed one another as kings alternately favored or restricted the Jews. The modern period of Jewish history in France and Europe, however, might be said to have begun with the French Revolution.

Previously, whether rich, poor, respected or persecuted, the Jews were always regarded as distinct from all other groups of the population, to be governed by regulations applicable to them alone and designed to benefit the nobles or church officials in control. Now, in accordance with the revolutionary ideal of abolishing all corporations and groups within the nation, the special status of the Jews was also to be abrogated. In January, 1790, the Constituent Assembly had permitted the rich, assimilated Sephardic Jews\(^1\) living mainly in Southern France "to

\(^1\)Jews who had moved west from Judea, eventually settled throughout Europe and North Africa. Those who
continue enjoying" the full rights "which had been accorded to them by letters patent." Almost 50% of the French Jews, however, were Ashkenazim, living in Alsace-Lorraine; they were less wealthy than the Sephardim, and were recognizably foreign because in addition to retaining elements of German speech and ways they observed numerous Jewish customs which differed even from those of the Sephardim.²

Not until September 27, 1791, three days before adjourning, did the Assembly normalize the status of all Jews in France: since the requirements for citizenship are stated in the Constitution, and everyone fulfilling those conditions is entitled to full rights, "the National Assembly . . . revokes all . . . exceptions inserted in earlier decrees affecting Jewish individuals who will take the civic oath, which will be regarded as a renunciation of all privileges and exceptions previously granted in their favor."³ This declaration followed the pattern suggested lived in Spain, North Africa and the Near East spent at least part of the Middle Ages under Moslem control, absorbing or reacting against its influence. These Jews developed rites, customs, and philosophies somewhat different than those of European Jews who spent the whole period under Christian rulers. Jews whose families originated in the Moslem areas generally retained some of their separate traditions and identity even if they later lived in Christian Europe; they are referred to as Sephardim, or Sephardic Jews, from Sepharad, the Hebrew name for Spain, where a peak of their cultural development occurred. Similarly the other Jews, Ashkenazim, obtained their title from the Hebrew name for Germany--Ashkenaz.

³Raphael Mahler, Jewish Emancipation: A Selection
two years earlier by Clermont-Tonnerre: To the Jews as individuals everything must be granted; to the Jews as a nation, nothing. 4 Not "the Jewish people" as a group was liberated to follow its own mode of existence, but individuals who have the right to be Frenchmen, even though they observe the Jewish religion.

The Revolution, at least in its earlier phases, was almost universally supported by the Jews; they became citizens, and were proud that their country—France—had been the first in Europe to declare an end to religious persecution, and full civic equality for men of the Jewish confession. This feeling still exists. In September, 1939, on the eve of catastrophe, L'Univers Israélite, on behalf of the native community, devoted an entire issue to the Revolution, whose 150th anniversary was being celebrated.

Napoleon, continuing the Revolution's work of centralization and unification became convinced that if the Jewish community of Alsace-Lorraine continued its traditional practices, it might form the nucleus of a new nation within the nation. As he had done with Catholicism and Protestantism, therefore, he decided that Judaism must be confined within the purely religious sphere if the Jews

---

were to remain in France. To accomplish this he called a Jewish Estates-General in 1806, followed by a "Great Sanhedrin" in 1807, and submitted to them several questions concerning Jewish dogma, ritual and attitudes. It was assumed that all French Jews would consider their replies official and binding.\(^5\) Napoleon also made it clear that the answers had better satisfy him that the Jews were politically loyal and were favorably disposed to cultural and social assimilation into the French people.\(^6\)

The significance of 1789-91 and 1806-08 for the development of Judaism in France becomes apparent only in the context of earlier Jewish history. When the Assembly and Napoleon used the term "religion" it was in its narrow dictionary sense: "the service and adoration of . . . a god as expressed in forms of worship."\(^7\) Before the eighteenth century, leaders in the mainstream of Jewish thought would have been amazed and appalled by the implication that Judaism was merely a "religion." This normative tradition maintained that "worship" is more a means than an end;

---

\(^5\)Under Greek and Roman rule, Jewish leaders sitting as a Council of State, or Sanhedrin, made decisions binding upon all those in the accepted Jewish community, concerning application of Torah to life situations. Napoleon's convoking of a Sanhedrin was not really "legal," and it had no Jewish authority to bind French Jews by its decisions, though most French Jews could be expected to abide by the opinions of their leaders.


\(^7\)Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 1951.
adoration, thanksgiving, and supplication help the individual realize his position as God's servant and partner, and his purpose which is to live in accordance with God's will as revealed in the Torah and its past and present interpretations. Pre-Revolutionary Judaism can better be defined in terms of these teachings and the action of Jews in response to them, than as a "religion" or "way of worshipping" in the accepted sense. Every aspect of human life was covered by specific laws or general principles. Jews responding to their environment in accordance with these laws and principles and expressing their reactions in daily life and art, completed the formation of an integrated Jewish sub-culture--Judaism for that time and place. This process helps explain the development of Jewish sub-cultures, such as the Sephardic and the Hassidic, during the centuries of diaspora.

The acceptance by most Jewish leaders of this pattern of development and evolution helped Judaism survive through centuries of change and revolution in the external world. The men having the best understanding of the Jewish framework and the greatest concern for its perpetuation worked to expand Judaism so that it would include and regulate the new inventions, philosophies, and activities; they also carefully excluded and forbade aspects of the new which seemed antithetical to Judaism. But they did not limit Jewish concern to the "religious" sphere and permit
increasing portions of human activity to become areas about which Judaism was essentially neutral and indifferent.

The Jews were tolerated in Christian, Moslem, or secular lands because although they were more than a "religion" and formed a cultural unit, they did not have to form a "nation" which would interfere with the prerogatives and institutions of the national government of the area. Jews became good citizens, obeying the host nation's laws, fulfilling their civic responsibilities, and even gradually mixing and assimilating to an extent great enough for them to contribute to the host nation's culture and history.

An exception to this pattern of tolerance would have to occur only in a state whose populace or rulers demanded the complete cultural uniformity of the inhabitants. French history, however, indicates the possibility of such a conflict: the French have displayed missionary zeal in spreading their civilization, convinced that this would be beneficial for the world as well as for France. 8


This missionary attitude was absorbed along with other aspects of French culture by the native Jews who, if they supported Zionism at all during the thirties generally did so (1) to provide asylum for refugees, or (2) to spread French culture. L'Univers writers were appalled because French was rarely used for Zionist Congress proceedings or declarations (L'Univers . . ., November 4, 1932, p. 174). "It is indispensable that our country not be absent from this movement; it is indispensable that on the soil of
Within France, conformity to the French cultural pattern, taught in home and school, was frequently the prerequisite for political, social, and economic success. While conflict between the legal responsibilities of French citizenship and the requirements of Judaism were unlikely, there undoubtedly were differences and even points of conflict between French and Jewish cultures.  

The final Sanhedrin declaration, partly through the use of vague language, avoided actually breaking any of the dictates of Jewish law while conforming to Napoleon's wishes. Not having had much previous experience with emancipation, the Rabbis and other Jewish leaders anticipated only benefits. They did not realize how sharply they had broken with normative Judaism, how much

Israel, where fascism already extends itself, people speak a little more French" (Paraf, p. 278). Unlike the German language, "it is the vehicle of a certain way of thinking, achieving order and clarity, ... the condition of a reflecting, measured will." In Palestine, Hebrew schools are insufficient; "it is the Alliance which has the mission of leading these Germanized Jews to the culture and civilization of France" (L'Univers ..., December 23, 1937, p. 264). For additional information on the Alliance and its schools, see below, chap. ii, p. 60, n. 43. "The future Jewish State can be a center of French influence in the East; Jews will never forget" France, their first liberator (Ibid., November 23, 1937, p. 193).


Possible areas of cultural conflict include the significant as well as the picayune: What is the goal of living? Which foods are traditionally, and which never, eaten? Which day should be observed as the Sabbath, and how? What is desirable behavior for adolescents?
of traditional Judaism they had abandoned by word or implication, or what drastic effects this would have on the viability of the remainder.

Napoleon completed his work in 1803, by decreeing absolute freedom of worship for the Jews, but applying restrictions that would force the Jews to "normalize" their economic activities and areas of residence. A Central Consistory was also established, to supervise consistories set up in the departments to maintain synagogues, and to keep the Jews "patriotic." 11

Napoleon's decrees produced temporary economic hardship in Alsace-Lorraine, but had, at first, little affect on Judaism in the region. A survey in 1845 indicated 51,000 of the 86,000 French Jews were affiliated with the consistories of Strasbourg (24,000), Colmar (17,000), and Nancy (10,000). 12 The East remained somewhat isolated from the rest of France, physically and culturally, during the nineteenth century. Partly for this reason, non-Jews in the area retained their old cultural patterns, and this, together with the relatively dense Jewish settlements in the region, was conducive to the perpetuation of

---


12L'Univers..., V (November, 1849), 40.
the traditional Jewish way of life. Thus, while changes occurred, in the direction of increased Frenchification for both Jew and Gentile, the process was comparatively slow, and evolutionary, rather than revolutionary.

A different influence worked to preserve the Sephardic communities. For generations before the Revolution, their degree of cultural assimilation and monetary resources combined to obtain toleration and respect for them in France. Afterwards, they felt no sharp pressures against conserving their fairly extensive Jewish life among their families and largely Sephardic social contacts. The French Rothschilds, though of Ashkenazic background, show a similar intermeshing of Jewish with family tradition, and sufficient independence to be able to resist any pressures to change either.

Alsacians, Sephardim, and Rothschilds, however, became numerically less significant as the years passed. The most enterprising and talented French Jews were continually drawn to Paris by the opportunities it offered for intellectual, artistic, economic, and political activity. Provincial Jewish communities, drained of potential leaders, slowly decreased in size and disintegrated. The history of French Jewry after emancipation could increasingly be written as a history of the Jews in Paris, which became the home of the largest Jewish population and the headquarters for the native Jewish organizations.
The 500 Sephardim "tolerated" in the capitol before the Revolution became 4,000 Jews by 1805 and 17,000, or 20% of French Jews, by 1845, largely due to continuous immigration from Alsace.\textsuperscript{13} The last great influx from Alsace-Lorraine occurred following the German victory of 1871; the émigrés and other French Jews frequently referred to this as proof of Jewish love and loyalty for France.

Most native Jews living in Paris in the thirties, therefore, traced their Parisian ancestry back at least two generations--and their French ancestry even further. Their patrie was France, their "old country" was French Alsace, and "traditional Judaism" meant Alsacian customs. Advertisements in \textit{L'Univers} offered Alsacian cooking in the restaurants. And to defend Alsacian Judaism, Paul Lang, \textit{L'Univers} correspondent in Lunéville, launched a vituperative personal and ideological attack on Leon Algazi, who directed the weekly Jewish radio program.

Algazi, said Lang, broadcast as "traditional Jewish tunes" music "which is traditional only in Russia and Poland" and is "meaningless" to true Frenchmen; this gives unsuspecting listeners, Jew and Gentile alike, an "unjust idea of Hebraic music."\textsuperscript{14} In an equally vitriolic and even more sarcastic reply, Algazi unmasked Lang's implied

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Ibid.}; Paraf, p. 180.
\textsuperscript{14} \textit{L'Univers} . . . , November 18, 1932, p. 240.
premise by arguing that "the French rite is not always or exclusively to be identified with the Alsacian," though as a matter of fact Alsacian music dominates the program for the simple reason that most French cantors originated in Alsace, and so there are more recordings available from this source. Synagogue music from Eastern Europe, he added, does have "as much right to the title of Hebraic music as its French sister."\textsuperscript{15} This was too much for Lang, who responded by listing his "Jewish credentials" as L'Univers correspondent, President of the Chema group in Lunéville, etc. He spoke proudly of Lunéville and its role in French and Jewish history, and indicated his violent resentment of Algazi's tone;\textsuperscript{16} Lang apparently was unaware of, or unconcerned with, the presence of many non-Alsacian Jews in France who might be offended by his own attitude.

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., November 25, 1932, p. 263.

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., December 2, 1932, pp. 298-99.

Lang concluded by noting: while "I am proud of being Jewish" and "honored to be the friend" of Jews of Polish origin and welcome them to France where they can find liberty and tranquility, "I remain before everything a French citizen." This last comment, of course, is totally irrelevant to Lang's argument upholding the exclusive right of Alsacian Judaism to recognition in France. Its significance was explained by Algazi, however, in his reply (Ibid., December 9, 1932, p. 337). Algazi had achieved prominence among the Jews in France; he was chief cantor at the Sephardic Consistorial Synagogue in Paris, and instructor of cantorial and Jewish music at the Rabbinic Seminary, a regular contributor to L'Univers and a frequent lecturer on Jewish music; but Lang, proud Alsacian, was mocking Algazi because he had immigrated from Roumania. This aspect of the feud, concerning the relations between native and immigrant Jews is discussed in chapter 11, below.
But although many Parisian Jews spoke of Alsatian-Jewish traditions with pride, and even with emotion, Jewish leaders in the thirties noted unhappily that these customs were neither mentioned nor observed with any great frequency. Actually, the disappearance of pre-Revolutionary Judaism had become obvious long before. In 1844, worried Jews began publishing L'Univers Israélite to promote Orthodox principles. Describing the situation at that time, one writer lamented: "Our temple is deserted; the Jewish religion, speaking Hebrew and clothed in ancient symbols is . . . abandoned by the most illustrious Israelite citizens. . . ."17 And L'Univers editors pointed out some of the reasons for this: Many French Jews think

that it is necessary to pay for the gift of our emancipation by the abandonment of certain beliefs which could offend the political religion of the state, and of certain practices which displease our fellow citizens. [They feel that] in order to be a worthy citizen it is necessary to detach oneself as much as possible from a separatist religion and by a complete amalgamation with its manners and customs approach union with the rest of the nation.18

This statement makes it apparent that many Jews considered their post-Revolutionary status and opportunity to be the results of favors, and not simply the recognition of what was due them as human beings. And so they continued along the path laid out by the "Sanhedrin": "under the influence

17 Cited by Rabi, p. 66.
18 L'Univers..., V (September, 1849), p. 5.
of their religious and lay leaders" they earned full citizenship by considering Judaism to be just a religion, and by becoming completely French.\textsuperscript{19} Politically active, economically mixed in the artisan, commercial, and professional classes, educated in French schools, increasing numbers of the Jews also became socially and culturally indistinguishable from the people around them. The only difference remaining was that of "religion" in its narrowest ritual and worship sense.

But the trend in France during the nineteenth century was toward increased secularism. Especially on the Left, which Jews generally supported out of loyalty to the Revolution, clericalism and ritualism were unfashionable anyhow. The Jews therefore did not have to make a positive decision--to convert, for example--in order to be accepted; they just had to act French.\textsuperscript{20} And in Paris, where both secularism and pressure to conform were strongest,\textsuperscript{21} Jews who were determined to be French increasingly

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., September 17, 1937, p. 33.

\textsuperscript{20}There is an interesting discussion of this ease with which Jews melted into the surrounding, secularized society in Mandel's article, Commentary, XVIII, pp. 533-42 and in L'Univers..., October 8, 1937, p. 81.

\textsuperscript{21}Louis Chevalier discusses this in his preface to Roland's book. Speaking of "the people" in Paris, he attributes their general avoidance of conflicts based on ethnic grounds to "more than ignorance or indifference. It is a question of a great confidence ... in the impossibility that someone living in Paris would not become by the unique virtue of the city ... a good Parisian and a good Frenchman" (p. 12).
deemphasized and disregarded even the "religious" laws, which no longer had any relation to daily life, and seemed therefore to have no purpose but that of separating them from other Frenchmen; they believed that "in order to become a useful member of the society which has admitted us to its bosom, it is necessary to sacrifice the religious precepts which hinder us in our movements and in our freedom."  

As a later *L'Univers* reader explained: After gaining acceptance of the belief that some Frenchmen are Jewish, just as others are Catholic, Moslem, Protestant, or freethinkers, the Jews abandoned their religion.  

Those who retained some positive identification with Judaism after rejecting its rituals frequently did so by emphasizing various "Jewish" ideals such as social justice or the equality of man. These were accepted, however, because they were Good, Beautiful, or True—not because they were Traditional or Commanded. And these ideals were certainly not exclusively Jewish inventions; numerous Jews of this type, in fact, classified as important Jewish ideas only those which were identical with the program of some French group they supported. Without minimizing the significant contributions such individuals have made, it must be noted that, as the majority within French Jewry, they would threaten the survival of Judaism in France; unless other

---


23 Ibid., September 7-14, 1934, p. 9.
political or cultural forces intervened to isolate the "secular Jews" from the surrounding Christian society, they, and more importantly, their children, would increasingly rely on the French rather than the Jewish sources of their beliefs, and sever all ties with Judaism.

Early *L'Univers* writers, however, did not suspect that the decline in religious observance they noted might be due, even in part, to the form of Judaism officially available to Jews in France. In a passionate editorial, obviously occasioned by the political events of 1848, and by the new Reform Jewish movement in Germany, *L'Univers* could only suggest return to the ways of the past--a solution having as much likelihood of permanent success as the call of French conservatives for a return to pre-Revolutionary France.

The ideas of order and stability have disappeared in this great political deluge; reform in matters of religion has received strong support from the social reform... . We defend the ideas of order, of resistance, and of conservation in matters of religion. We think that religion, emerging perfect from the hand of G-d cannot be an object of change and of experimentation; that man must accept what time and history have transmitted to him... . We contest... the right of touching the sacred edifice, of creating a religion of circumstance, of locality, which... must be modified in each century, in each country... .

And so, through the nineteenth century, Judaism was not officially modified. Following the First World War, Israel Cohen visited the Synagogue on the Rue Victoire, at

---

which the wealthiest French Jews worshipped. He commented on the sermon:

It might have been a sermon in the seventeenth century. . . . For this Rabbi, apparently nothing had happened since the downfall of Judea except perhaps the erection of this magnificent sanctuary in which he was concerned with the attachment only of his particular flock.25

Finally in 1935, the concept of "unchanging Judaism" was challenged, and the suggestion was made that modification by those who knew Judaism best be substituted for the un-official modification by chance, neglect, and external forces, which had been occurring in France since the Revolution.26 In a perceptive essay in L'Univers, called "Liberalism or Orthodoxy," Pascal Themanlys asks: "Where does Orthodoxy begin?" and replies with the obvious historical fact that "it is different according to the country and according to the times." Ashkenazim and Sephardim observe two different orthodoxies, both have made significant changes from Temple Judaism, and this process of evolution cannot be stopped.


26One attempt at conscious modification of Judaism had already been made in France by a Reform ("Libérale") group established in 1907. The changes proposed however were more revolutionary than evolutionary; they were unable to convince enough observant or non-observant Jews of the value of their approach to present Orthodox leaders with a serious challenge. L'Univers hostility to the reform group during the thirties manifested itself more by generally ignoring Reform activities than by debating or condemning the movement.
A certain number of customs, born in the course of ages or arising in some assimilation long ago, will fall in the new generations and will not be missed. A tradition admits of spontaneous transformation emanating from the conscience of all the people. But good reforms ... can be born from the interior, not the exterior. Only those are considered as possible which emanate from the spirit of the Torah and which spring up from the knowledgeable and clear mind of Israel. We must add that an old tradition charges Israel with continuously ... selecting and integrating within itself the best thoughts and customs of humanity.27

Themanlys' essays were part of a revival of Jewish thinking which appeared in France after the First World War. It is hard to ascertain why this occurred; one paradoxical reason was offered when Paraf credited the War with completing the Frenchification of the Jews, in their own opinion and in that of others. "Businessmen, workers, writers, the Israelites served in blue uniform along with the other soldiers from the French Provinces." Jews faced war "with the same curiosity before the great adventure ... [as] their brothers of other confessions"; the obvious patriotism they displayed in the fighting conquered the remnants of anti-Semitism which lingered since Dreyfus had been charged with treason. And, for the Jews, "contact with all elements" of the French population, "fortified their French soul."28

After the War, the established, native Jews often

27L'Univers..., March 8, 1935, p. 407

28Paraf, pp. 22, 216-17, and 225. This of course indicates a native opinion in 1931, before the anti-Semitic clouds blown into France by Hitler and the depression had appeared. By the time they did, a number of significant works had been produced.
received evidence of their being a recognized, valued part of France. High national officials attended Jewish services honoring national anniversaries or heroes, and became honorary chairmen for Jewish fund-raising affairs. Catholic and Protestant clergymen wrote friendly, congratulatory, and sympathetic letters to Rabbis, which L'Univers frequently summarized with pride. Jewish soldiers were given passes that they might return home for celebration of the High Holydays. And now that few were really concerned, L'Univers informed its readers that permission had been obtained for Jewish students to be excused from writing in class on Saturdays, and that the date of examination for elementary certificates had been changed, so that it would not fall on Yom Kippur.

---

29 Two examples of this can be found in L'Univers, November 25, 1932, pp. 227 and 280; there are numerous others.

30 Ibid., September 7-14, 1934, pp. 2-3, for example, quotes numerous letters and articles by Catholic officials praising Rabbi Abraham Bloch who offered a crucifix to a dying Catholic soldier in 1914.

31 Ibid., September 30, 1932, p. 12. The article containing this information began by referring to the American President's tradition of wishing Jews a Happy New Year. "In France, where the Jewish electors are not so numerous, lay statesmen do not gratify us with their messages... But they give us tangible proof of their spirit of tolerance, or, to say it better, their respect for our religious convictions."

The article concluded: "When public officials show such good will, is it foolhardy to hope that the most unsociable of our laymen will not neglect to celebrate our High Holydays."
There was also a sudden demand from both Gentiles and Jews for books about Jews and Judaism; written by Gentiles as well as Jews, these often demonstrated understanding, rather than presenting just caricatures and apologies. Great stimulus was also received from increased contact with the Eastern European immigrants, and from Zionist ideology and achievements. Probably also significant is the awareness by a number of Jews of the new opportunities for Jewish expression. Paraf exulted over them in his book. L'Univers articles frequently spoke of a Jewish "revival" or "renaissance." Study groups met to discuss contemporary Judaism and Jewish literature, as well as the historical topics previously included. L'Univers reviewed works written by or about Jews or Jewish topics, as well as Jewish activity in art, music, and discussion, and occasionally published original short stories and poems. L'Univers even adopted a new format in 1934 and announced plans for contests and a women's page in addition to more articles by "eminent personalities" so as "to make L'Univers a great modern [italics mine] Jewish organ."32 It is conceivable that feeling secure in their Frenchness, rather than on the defensive, and being engaged in or excited by the increased Jewish cultural activity, a number of French

32Cohen, pp. 299-300; Paraf, p. 222; Rabi, pp. 86, 98-108; L'Univers . . . , September 7-14, 1934, p. 1; Ibid., October 22, 1937, p. 121.
Jews also began to re-examine the content of Judaism and the role of the Jew in France.

One aspect of this problem was explored by Fernand Lévy-Noguès in 1932. He noted that French Jews had concentrated on improving their position in business, professions, or politics, and increasingly ignored Jewish responsibilities and activities, except, perhaps, for a yearly visit to the synagogue, or a contribution to some Jewish charity. Jewish affairs were left to the dwindling number who cared deeply about them. The hierarchical and centralized structure of native Jewish organization made this relegation possible—but also showed the unhealthy condition of French Jewry.33

Glancing at L'Univers reports of activities

---

33 Ibid., November 25, 1932, pp. 261-62. After the 1905 separation of Church and State, local consistories were reorganized as associations cultuelles. By paying annual membership dues, Jews could join their local association, and elect its administrative council, still called a consistory, which actually conducted local religious affairs: charity, Jewish education, synagogue maintenance, worship. The seventy associations were federated in the Union des associations cultuelles israélites, the administrative council of which retained the name of Consistoire Central, and was considered by the Government and Gentile France to represent the Jews (Rabi, p. 156). Membership figures would indicate that Jews did not have similar faith in these institutions. Only 6,000 men, primarily natives, paid the 20 franc dues of the Paris association for 1932 (L'Univers . . ., December 23, 1932, p. 398). The consistories were therefore dependent upon voluntary contributions to finance most of their activities, and so the wealthiest families, again led by the Rothschilds, provided the bulk of consistorial resources. The depression complicated these financial difficulties; The Central Consistory spent 670,713 francs in 1936, but took in only 614,579. And this was an improvement over the 200,000 franc deficit of 1934 (Ibid., September 10, 1937, p. 25).
sponsored by organizations of the native community, it becomes obvious that a few dozen men are rotating the leadership positions amongst themselves, and directing all the work. The President of the Central Consistory was invariably a Rothschild. During the thirties, at least, Madame Rothschild headed the women's auxiliary of the Comité de Bienfaisance Israélite de Paris. The Comité itself was the native community's primary welfare organization, and on the page used in L'Univers each week to list donations received for the Comité the same names continually reappeared as the major contributors. Typical of the activists was one individual who served as a member of the Consistoire Central and the Paris Consistory, an administrator of the Comité de Bienfaisance and the Asiles Israélites, President of the Société du Culte Traditionnel, a member of the administrative committee of the Rabbinic Seminary, and President of the ORT Central Committee.\textsuperscript{34} The majority of Jews, however, did almost nothing. To improve this situation, Lévy-Wogue suggested decentralizing, forming the Jews of each arrondissement for example into semi-autonomous groups which would help determine how consistorial funds would be spent in their area, or would help run the institutions in their district.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., December 31, 1937, p. 274.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., November 25, 1932, p. 262.
Another approach to the revival of Judaism, even more thoroughly discussed in L'Univers than consistoral reorganization, was through Jewish youth and their education. It was almost as if much of the concerned establishment had given up on the rest of its generation and was concentrating its efforts and hopes on producing, for the future, adults who would be more intensely Jewish. The basic principles of this thinking were clearly stated: "The faith of Israel and its religious observances are in constant decline" despite the efforts of those doing religious or charity work. Religion is ostensibly shed "to realize a more perfect assimilation," but the real foundation of the problem is "ignorance, which makes faith and observance impossible"; improvement in education is therefore imperative.36 Rabbis and administrators of the supplemental Jewish schools, which met for one to four hours a week, blamed the parents: "We wish that families would not wait until the children are almost twelve or thirteen before initiating them to the language of the Bible and the prayers, to the history of Judaism and to the principles of our

36 Ibid., November 23, 1934, p. 161. Ben Eliaquim, whose weekly comments in L'Univers tended to be particularly incisive, made a similar point when he criticized Léon Blum for saying that Christianity first taught the world about the equality of man. "Now, in affirming that, Mr. Blum, of whom the erudition is proverbial, showed his ignorance. Our distinguished coreligionist, like many, like too many Jewish intellectuals of his generation, knows little about Judaism" (Ibid., January 27, 1933, p. 552).
faith."37 In addition, even when children attend classes, they make little effort to learn because parents themselves are indifferent to Judaism and to how much their children learn about it.38 Parents retorted that the system and teachers were at fault for not interesting the children in Jewish studies, that instructors are incompetent, and that classes are too large and not homogeneous with respect to amount of Jewish or Hebrew education obtained previously.39 I would guess that both Rabbis and parents had correctly identified some of the defects; unfortunately each was depending upon the other to initiate corrections.

In 1938 there was even a debate on the relative merits of religious and secular day schools.40 The

37Ibid., October 12, 1934, p. 70, quoting portions of a letter sent to parents by Julien Weill, Grand Rabbi of Paris. It was especially damaging to have students wait until age thirteen to begin because by age fourteen they had invariably quit.


40I say "even" because a Jewish day school is an extreme measure rarely supported by post-emancipation Jews. The fact that a "high level" debate was held in public and thoroughly reported in L'Univers would indicate that (1) a good number of Jews felt sufficiently secure that they did not worry about charges of "separatism" or that (2) some Jews were so concerned with the disappearance of Judaism that they were willing to risk irritating segments of the Gentile population.
statement by Mr. Salzedo, a Central Consistory member, probably typified native opinion: Jewish children should attend the secular schools; religion is a "purely personal" affair, outside of and paralleling daily civil life; "moral unity" can only be obtained in France by refraining from discussion, in school, of things which divide students, Mr. Cohn, director of the École Maïmonide⁴¹ insisted the Jewish day schools were necessary because only they provided a completely Jewish cultural atmosphere for the children. It is nonsense, he added, to argue that separate schools would prevent good relations with the French of other religions; more than a million Catholics who attend parochial schools are considered good Frenchmen, nevertheless. "We have no control over this blind and absurd force which is anti-Semitism; the best we can do under these conditions, therefore, is to do our duty and obey our conscience."⁴²

⁴¹ The École Maïmonide was the only Jewish secondary school recognized by the French authorities. It followed the general lycée curriculum and granted the baccalauréate. The student body, drawn largely from middle class immigrant families included 40 children when the school was founded in 1932, and 180 in 1939 (Research Staff of the Commission on European Jewish Reconstruction, Hannah Arendt, director, "Tentative List of Jewish Educational Institutions in Axis-occupied Countries," Supplement to Jewish Social Studies, VIII, No. 3 [1946], 29).

⁴² L'Univers . . ., January 21, 1933, p. 327.
Hitlerism does not appear to have significantly influenced this concern with Jewish education, but Jewish leaders sometimes used this threat just as American politicians tend to justify expenditures as "necessary for defense." Appealing for funds to support the Rabbinic Seminary, one wrote: "The science of Judaism must not be
The positions of Grand Rabbi Liber was symbolic of rabbinic thought and activity since the Revolution: he moderated the debate. And instead of leading the campaign for an intensification of Jewish life, he continued the Sanhedrin compromise: the "secular school . . . is obligatory for French Jews because the Republic did not want confessional schools" after the Revolution. "Nevertheless, we don't have to make a virtue of a necessity; only the Jewish school permits the formation of a true Jewish élite through its instruction and culture." The majority who attend day schools must receive a supplementary Jewish education.\(^4^3\) In effect, however, this again meant no solution, given the deplorable condition of the supplementary educational system; and there was almost no support in the established community for Cohn's idealistic, independent, and, in its eyes, aggressive position.

A number of Jewish leaders therefore saw a need for intensive youth programs which would require less financial or parental backing than schools, and at the same time produce greater results. Before World War I, the only important youth group maintained by the native community was L'Union Scolaire established in the 1880's. Its primary

function, however, was to assimilate children of the immigrants. The post-War native groups evidenced the growth of an attitude which, from the perspective of traditional Judaism, is much healthier. The Éclaireurs Israélites de France were organized in 1924 "to develop, by the methods of scouting, the physical and moral qualities and the religious feelings of the young Jews of France."\(^{44}\) This group, although federated with other scout branches in France, was obviously "separatist"; members would, for example, spend summer vacation or Jewish holidays studying and living Judaism in a totally Jewish camp atmosphere. For a second innovation, this group was "pluralist": admitting diversity in a fashion common to the immigrants but unheard of among natives,\(^{45}\) and it even favored the increase in Jewish consciousness implied by Zionism.

E.I.F. tends toward a conception of Judaism comprehending at one time the religious ideal and the Zionist ideal [understood broadly]. The breadth of spirit which this program shows permits all tendencies of French Judaism to be reunited in a common effort.\(^{46}\)

A second youth organization, Chema Israël, founded in 1919 appears, at first, more typical of native groups.

\(^{44}\)Rabi, p. 167.

\(^{45}\)The difference between Jewish uniformity under native control, as exemplified by L'Union Scolaire, and the pluralistic immigrant conception of Jewish unity is discussed in chapter II, below.

\(^{46}\)L'Univers . . ., December 16, 1932, p. 376. This program was announced at a meeting of the National Council of the E.I.F.
It offered "post-religious school" classes in Hebrew and Judaism for the 13-18 year olds, held lectures, set up a library. Totally new, however, was its emphasis on current Jewish problems. It was at Chema that the discussion on religious vs. secular day schools was held; they also debated Zionism, the best techniques for defending Jews and Judaism from anti-Semitism and Hitler, and similar living issues.

The Rabbis, whose programs were also increasingly youth centered, then used the members of Chema or Scouts to lead youth services and tutor other children in Jewish skills, and coach sports and similar activities in Jewish clubs meeting after school.\textsuperscript{47} Ben Eliaquim explained the fundamental need for and success of the youth groups by writing:

There is no doubt that the generation which preceded ours has no great things to teach us concerning Judaism. I know, on the contrary, more than one family where the young man or woman, won over by the programs of different groups such as Chema or Scouts, has become for the parents a living example of resolute, intelligent, attachment to our traditions and the spirit of our doctrines. \textsuperscript{[And some parents are] not very happy about what they call the "conversion" of their children. \textsuperscript{[For many of the 40-60 year olds], Judaism is not the inexhaustible source of all their spiritual life, but only a kind of relic, infinitely venerable and venerated \textsuperscript{.} but nevertheless having only the virtues of a relic.\textsuperscript{48}]

It is obvious from the foregoing that French Judaism had deteriorated during the assimilationist nineteenth


\textsuperscript{48}\textit{Ibid.}, January 20, 1933, p. 519
century, but it was not yet beyond repair. L'Univers and the concerned Jews who supported it had begun the rethinking of Jewish beliefs and goals necessary for a true revival of French Judaism. Looking back at the twenties and thirties, Rabi judged that "it was often just a surface fermentation."\(^49\) On one level he is obviously correct: the number of children enrolled in supplementary Jewish education continued dropping through the thirties: only a few hundred became scouts; the ideas discussed in L'Univers or by study groups were rarely acted upon.

I suspect, however, that failure to influence the majority of French Jews was due less to the insufficiencies of the native activities than to the successes of Hitler; increasingly as 1939 approached, the old "defensiveness" of French Jews reappeared.\(^50\) L'Univers in the thirties indicated the lingering doubts of most French Jews that

\(^{49}\)Rabi, pp. 100-101.

\(^{50}\)On the borderline between the twenties and thirties, Paraf who was part of the revival noted: "At this sudden fashionableness of Jewish activity, many prudent spirits become indignant, or more or less disquieted. I have never partaken of their disquiet or their apprehension" (p. 222). "These lines are by an Israelite of France, loyal to his race and striving to rekindle its ideal, but for whom Racine and Victor Hugo, more than the Talmud have molded the spirit. . . . In the year 1931, when frontiers and spiritual ghettos are more and more abolished . . . one can remain himself while permitting all the currents of the centuries to refresh his soul. By cultivating the qualities unique to each spiritual family of a country, one strengthens the unity of the nation at the same time as that of the world" (pp. 11-12).
their position in France was totally secure, or permanently unassailable. Most native Jews wanted to become even more unnoticeable as Jews, assuming this a good way of assuring their safety. Faithfully honoring their wishes, instead of providing leadership, Rabbis and the Consistory refrained from taking a stand even on those "non-religious" issues for which there was a clear Jewish position; they preferred limiting themselves to Kashrut regulation and the hours of Synagogue service; even the work of "Jewish

---

51 One editorial for example chastized a French Minister who was Jewish because he attended a ceremony "inaugurating a train station" one Rosh Hashanah instead of "inaugurating the New Year by attending Synagogue. "The French Minister thinks without doubt that a Jew, above all a Jewish Minister, must not make himself stand out as a Jew" (L'Univers, , October 14, 1932, p. 71).

There was also the continuous apologetic denial of even the least possibility of any conflict between French and Jewish principles or responsibilities--too vigorously, too frequently. Many examples can be cited, in issues published throughout the thirties, just as they can be for the issues published in 1849.

52 When reporters asked Israel Levi, Grand Rabbi of France, for his opinions about disarmament, to be included in a newspaper alongside those of Christian clergymen, the Rabbi prefaced his remarks with a long disclaimer, part of which noted: "Not being the director of the conscience of my coreligionists, I am not qualified to speak in the name of the French Jews on questions which are not strictly religious. And the question of disarmament is today a political, and if you wish, economic question" (L'Univers, , December 23, 1932, p. 396).

I do not believe the foregoing to be a complete explanation. Judaism has addressed the issue of disarmament and even discussed its political and economic considerations. And while a Rabbi cannot speak for other Jews, even concerning religious problems, he should be, by training, the best qualified to explain the traditional Jewish approaches to all issues.
self-defense" against anti-Semitic activity was generally turned over to sub-committees, or independent organizations, whose work would appear less like unified effort by all French Jews.

And so, throughout much of the thirties, only one problem appeared to confront a majority of native Jews, individually and as a group; the French Jews frequently acted as if the greatest danger to them arose from the immigrant Jews who formed a majority in Paris. The difficulty was exacerbated rather than caused by the interaction of Hitlerist racism and belligerency, economic depression, and the growth of national insecurity and xenophobia in France. Only to ameliorate this situation did the Consistory, other native organizations, and most French Jews unite; all devoted themselves, at least verbally, to educating, assimilating, and integrating a mass of Jews who, of all things, had no desire to become inconspicuous, and who were suspected as foreigners, revolutionaries, unemployed indigents, and law-breakers. It was feared that unreformed immigrants would spoil the "Jewish image" in France, revive anti-Semitism, and so destroy the satisfactory pattern of living which had evolved for native French Jews.
CHAPTER II

FRENCH JEWS AND EAST EUROPEAN JEWS

These "dangerous" immigrant Jews attained their characteristics from their experiences—in Eastern Europe—as naturally as had the French Jews from theirs. Nationalism in Eastern Europe was of a different type and later development than the French. In the general pattern, a fairly weak or disorganized central government, ruling several minority groups of diverse ethnic or religious backgrounds, had encouraged or compelled the Jews to live under the administrative control of semi-autonomous Jewish councils, in partial isolation from non-Jewish communities. Jews thus developed their own schools, rituals, charities, languages, courts, taxes—and a consciousness of being a distinct people, or even a nation.

Through the nineteenth century, although less rapidly than in France, the hold of the Jewish authorities was breaking down. But in the East, this Jewish "spiritual self-emancipation," whether it took religious or secular forms, occurred long before any comparable political or
social emancipation. The majority society remained closed to them, ignoring Jews of intellectual or economic achievement, and periodically unleashing pogroms against the masses. Most of the energy expended in searching for new forms of life and expression thus resulted in a flourishing of Jewish culture, ideologies, parties, and institutions, instead, as in the French experience, of contributing primarily to the economic and social development of the host country.

Observance of religious laws diminished, but the Jews involved could not just passively melt into the society around them. Instead they rebelled actively against religion, along with other Jews of the same convictions—and frequently engaged in obviously Jewish forms of rebellion, such as choosing Saturday to smoke near a synagogue. For political expression, they had to form "secular Jewish" socialist or "secular Jewish" nationalist groups. To combat their influence among other Jews, or to meet the needs of those who still maintained the old faith, or adhered to it in modified forms, "religious Jewish" socialist, or religious Zionist, and anti-Zionist


2 In one such demonstration, the Polish police had to break up a Bund protest against "clericalism" staged on Rosh Hashanah (L'Univers ..., October 14, 1932, p. 52).
organizations were established.

Culturally, even the breakaways retained much that had been characteristic of Judaism in the region, including the language and secular thought and customs. Jewish youths whose only contact with outsiders had been with ignorant peasants or anti-Semites did not feel the same attraction to the majority culture as had Jews in France. Most of the educated Eastern Jews, regardless of their beliefs, were familiar with ancient Hebrew writings or with the contemporary literature in Hebrew or Yiddish which had also attained a very high level; these literatures compared favorably with the majority culture's. French Jews, on the other hand, if they had learned about Judaism at all had done so for a few hours a week during early adolescence; they had only a child's understanding of Judaism against which to measure the remarkable French civilization studied in the universities. The whole literature and ferment occurring among Jews of the East was largely unknown to French Jews who read neither Hebrew nor Yiddish; and they had themselves developed no literature, in any language,

3 In fact, if Eastern Jews were attracted to any non-Jewish civilization, it was frequently the French. A segment of the Christian élite had itself adopted aspects of French language and culture. Jews wishing to reject or broaden their own heritage were also frequently influenced toward the French.

which could be compared with the French.

Two great waves of East European Jews arrived in France in 1881-1882 and 1903-1905 when pogroms followed political change or upheaval in Russia; there was also a steady, though smaller, stream from Roumania, in response to that government's "unfriendly" attitude. The largest influx began after conclusion of World War I. The Eastern Front had twisted through the areas of densest Jewish settlement on the Polish-Russian-Roumanian border, bringing economic catastrophe and disease. Post-War disorders and revolution led to new pogroms. Increasingly restrictive legislation made it difficult or impossible for Jews to enter a university or to find jobs, and even deprived Jews of citizenship or refused to grant it in the first instance. The desire for emigration thus increased greatly among Jews.

But the economic and social conditions prevailing around the world changed the currents of immigration. The U.S. and all America are closed to emigrants. Our country is no longer a place of transit, where only a few stop in their migration; it has become a land of refuge.

At first France encouraged this immigration which helped to counterbalance war deaths and the low birthrate, and to provide laborers needed to rebuild the country. But

---

5 In 1921, for example, 119,000 East European Jews entered the Unites States. But only 10,000 per year were admitted in the decade after 1925, due to the enactment and zealous enforcement of restrictive legislation (Ruppin p.49).

6 Jules Leon, article in L'Univers . . . , November 30, 1932, p. 384.
the economic depression, social and political tensions, and international difficulties led many Frenchmen to wonder if their nation could even survive the effects of foreign masses, not to speak of obtaining benefits from them.\textsuperscript{7} Raymond-Raoul Lambert, editor in chief of \textit{L'Univers} discussed this problem in several lead articles. In December, 1934, he admitted worry that, although unemployment was really a result of this crisis, many Frenchmen believed it to be the cause. Political parties and labor unions demanded protection for French factories and workers, and there was pressure from those who see autarky as a solution to French economic problems.

One must also take into consideration the xenophobic campaigns launched by newspapers short of copy. People fear future immigration and rightly complain of the boisterous activity of certain groups of immigrants.\textsuperscript{8}

Reflecting these attitudes, alien legislation regarding procurement of identity cards and work permits, was made more complex and stringent during the thirties, and it was more strictly enforced.\textsuperscript{9} Toward the close of

\textsuperscript{7}By the eve of World War II, there were over 3 million aliens in France, this being about twice as many as in 1919. Statistics are by Arieh Tartakover and Kurt R. Grossman in \textit{The Jewish Refugee} (New York: Institute of Jewish Affairs of the American Jewish Congress and the World Jewish Congress, 1944), p. 133, and by Michael Shapiro in "German Refugees in France, 1934-1940," \textit{Contemporary Jewish Record}, III (March-April, 1940), p. 134.

\textsuperscript{8}\textit{L'Univers} . . ., December 14, 1934, p. 209.

\textsuperscript{9}A 1926 "Decree for the protection of the labor market," for example, required aliens to have a work permit before they could be employed; this was however "obtainable
1934, when an interministerial commission discussed several "extremely vigorous solutions" to the immigrant problem, Lambert, like many in the native community, understood their implications. His articles exploring these implications and the consequent responsibilities of the natives also reveal much of the confusion natives experienced, because of the conflicting ideals and feelings which motivated their actions.

This situation must concern our organization and our official representatives because the considerable number of Jewish immigrants in France has made this matter of foreigners a properly Jewish question. It is Jewish refugees from Germany, Poland and Roumania who will feel effects of the new measures first—since they must become established in a new country.

Even more serious, the new measures will affect immigrant Jews already established in France for several years . . . [Including some 5000 Paris inhabitants]. Until now people have tolerated craftsmen earning a living in their homes without work cards; but if, as one might believe, this impossible to obtain authorization will be demanded of the home-craftsmen in the future, several thousand people will fall under the responsibility of our charitable institutions.

from the authorities without difficulty." In 1928, a second law set three years residence for Russians, five years for Poles and Roumanians, and ten years for others as prerequisites to issuance of the work permits; "this law, however, was not strictly enforced." By 1932, the Ministry of Labor was authorized to set quotas on the number of foreigners employed in industry, ranging from 5% in millinery to 40% in mining. A registry of trades was established in the spring of 1935 and the self-employed artisans and craftsmen were added to the list of those requiring work permits. Ministry officials had complete discretion as to whether or not permits were issued, even if residence and other requirements were filled; the enforcement of penalties for immigrant misbehavior was also largely at their discretion, and their policy in these areas tended to reflect the strength of the anti-foreign agitation in France, which peaked during 1934-1935, and again in 1937 and after. This situation is discussed thoroughly by Tartakower, pp. 130-135, and by Shapiro, Contemporary Jewish Record, III, 135-136.
The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Central Consistory, official organs of French Judaism, should intervene energetically with the public powers . . . [to obtain desirable alien legislation and so prevent anti-Semitism] and to prove to the immigrant Jews that French Jewry does not refuse to understand its imperative duty. It is beautiful, it is human to wish to resolve the anguishing problem of Judaism . . . in Poland or . . . in Spain. But it is more reasonable, more courageous perhaps, and in all events more useful, first to put our own house in order.10

The native's responsibility for defending the immigrants against the French Government, regardless of the reasons on which it was based, was however in no sense felt to be absolute--nor was native sympathy. French Jews were aware that the alien legislation had not resulted from any particular malice against Jews; and native Jews were certainly less endangered by this legislation than they would be if the presence of too many Jewish immigrants in France led to anti-Semitism. Political leaders continually reaffirmed the "traditions of French hospitality" toward "persecuted beliefs and ideals seeking asylum."11 France was thus one of the few nations of the world whose borders remained open to any sizable number of refugees. And although refugees were sometimes jailed, fined and threatened with expulsion, few were actually ejected from France.

11Taken from declarations by Minister of Interior Chautemps in 1933, and by Premier Daladier in 1938, cited by Tartakower, pp. 131-32.
Viewing the situation from this perspective, L'Univers writers tended to express their legitimate pride in France and the hospitality it had offered to the oppressed, rather than to emphasize what still needed to be done.\textsuperscript{12} Economically and socially secure themselves, they frequently ignored or quickly passed over the significant difficulties alien legislation might cause the immigrants.\textsuperscript{13} Increasing numbers of the post-War Jewish refugees, had been deprived of, or were unable to obtain, citizenship in their country of birth or previous residence, and had neither the

\textsuperscript{12}"The frontiers have generally been open, and all refugees, with or without passport, with or without visa, were able to enter France, while the borders of the other countries were closed." One can not therefore "criticize the French government for reserving the right" to decide which refugees are qualified to remain permanently; this is a necessary right of government—and, besides, other nations are much stricter (L'Univers ..., October 12, 1934, p. 65).

\textsuperscript{13}Roland describes the unnerving results of "the procedure of systematic vexation" by which French officials tried to discourage permanent residence. Immigrants were told they had eight days or some weeks before they had to leave France; after "humiliating discussions in dirty offices with hostile officials" this might be renewed for another few weeks, when the process would be repeated. Potential expulsion was thus a permanent nightmare; and as many had no papers, being forced to leave France would just be the beginning of a volleyball-like existence; the Swiss, German or Belgian police promptly expelled the refugee back to France, where he would be jailed and then re-exiled; "80% of the people interviewed recited analogous tales of their first years in France." Obtaining work permits was similarly degrading. The only conceivable result of such procedures would be refugee hostility and suspicion for the French government and law and a tendency to segregate from French society (pp. 231-234). The natives, of course, did not feel the pressure on the immigrants; they were only aware of the results: refugees were permitted to stay in France and thanked her by isolating themselves and breaking laws.
passports nor the visas necessary for legal immigration. Several L'Univers articles indicated awareness of this problem, but the editors once declared casually:

This decree fixing several points of detail ... does not present any particular severity, and appears designed only to make control of foreigners easier, and to make legalization impossible after immigration by irregular or clandestine means.14

Similarly, although native representatives or joint delegations of both Jewish communities, did meet with government officials to discuss suitable alien legislation, the organized native groups were not as concerned with solving this problem as were the immigrants, and they did not want to jeopardize their own good relationship with the government; immigrant representatives, therefore, were frequently left to obtain whatever concessions the government would offer because of their own limited influence.15

The characteristics and activities of Eastern Jews in France stem from the history, laws and needs just described.16 On arrival, only "the most audacious, the most successful, the intellectuals ... who felt capable of individually integrating themselves," scattered throughout France.17 The rest naturally settled in Jewish immigrant

16Roland presents several case histories of these immigrants, their experiences and attitudes, and then distills the typical pattern, pp. 199-205.
17Ibid., p. 35.
districts of Marais, Temple, Bastille, République, Gobelins, Montmartre, and Belleville, (These were portions of arrondissements III, IV, XI, XIII, XVIII, XIX, and XX.)

Here, the newcomer found others who dressed, acted, and spoke like himself, perhaps even friends or relatives who would shelter him until legal requirements could be satisfied and a means of livelihood found. These earlier immigrants also had arrived in France penniless, if not actually in debt to others who lent money for the trip; they could be expected to show more understanding than the good bourgeois French Jews if laws were broken, whether through ignorance, fear, or necessity. For a trade the Eastern immigrant generally chose a handicraft which required little training or at which he had some previous experience; he might work for someone else in the area, or independently if the capital outlay for materials and equipment was small enough. In 1910, 16,100 of the East European Jews in Paris earned their living at handicrafts; 71% of these were in the garment trades. These occupations had the additional advantage of being just a step removed from the more desirable commerce (which could not be entered without knowledge of the vernacular), and of enabling the immigrant to work at home, day and night, with the minimum of official

18 L'Univers . . . , October 14, 1932, pp. 86-87; Ibid., September 28, 1934, p. 44; Ibid., October 1, 1937, p. 75.
cognizance and supervision. 19

Before the mid-thirties, an immigrant was usually able to establish a legal and economic foundation after a relatively short time. Within 5 or 6 years he, or his wife, would be able to handle transactions in French; they would often own a business, workshop, or a factory, and might even employ several refugees who had arrived more recently. Their children would attend French schools, and could elect to grow up indistinguishable from other French natives. 20

During these same five years, however, one could expect only relatively minor changes to occur in the individual's cultural pattern of the type conducive to his acceptance by French society. Reasons for this included natural inertia, rejection by the French community, and continuous reinforcement of old customs by more recent immigrants. An additional explanation however, is the immigrant's response

---

The following table gives an estimate of percentages of native and immigrant Jews in various occupations during the thirties, and so shows another difference between the two communities (Henri Sinder and Kalman Stein, "France," Hitler's Ten Year War on the Jews, ed. Boris Shub [New York: Institute of Jewish Affairs of the American Jewish Congress, 1934], p. 254).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>% of French Born</th>
<th>% of East European Origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry and Handicrafts</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Professions</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20Paraf, pp. 219-20; Rabi, p. 98.
to economic, religious, and social needs: they reconstituted many of the institutions which had filled these needs in the old country—and which had also served to isolate and preserve the Jewish group.

Self-help or mutual aid societies were formed to help newcomers settle and to offer interest free loans, health and funeral services, companionship, legal advice, education, socials, and prayer services. They had no connections with the consistories or native charity organizations, which had their own conceptions of what type of aid the immigrants should receive.\(^{21}\) Membership in the societies was based on country or town of origin, and like the old communal organizations, they followed a policy of remaining aloof from political, religious or ideological divisions. Numerous groups representing the latter were also established in France on the East European pattern, and remained local or joined their respective international. They met for social programs, lectures, discussions, or action; many published bulletins or propaganda sheets. Frequently an immigrant belonged to one or more of these groups, in addition to his aid society.\(^{22}\)

\(^{21}\) Roland explained: "... The French Jews did not show themselves more receptive than the authorities." Of 300 immigrants interviewed, 34 "to be exact, applied to native charity organizations for monetary assistance to establish themselves in France. But they obtained only counsel to emigrate to another country... and the offer of funds... for the trip" (p. 232).

\(^{22}\) Ibid., p. 251.
If one reads L'Univers announcements and reports of activities held by Jews in France, it becomes obvious that most immigrants participated more actively and independently, in a more democratic community, than did the natives; each expected more from and contributed more to his "Jewish" organizations than did the average French Jew. Not until 1923 did leaders of several of the societies decide to create a "Fédération des Sociétés juives de France"; this reflected, perhaps, the increased financial and social security of immigrants who had already lived in France for many years, and responded to the greater needs of more recent immigrants, which individual groups could not handle. It took another ten years of informal contacts before a conference of representatives of all eighty-four associated organizations was convened. The leaders' announced intention was "to study the problems concerning the Jews newly immigrated to France," and determine how more efficient coordinated efforts might best aid them with legal protection, finding employment, health and sanitation, "mutualité," and cultural activity.\(^{23}\)

During the thirties, native as well as immigrant leaders recognized additional benefits all could obtain from collaboration between the two communities; this would be especially true in the administration of welfare projects.

to avoid duplication. The depression had led to a reduction of contributions in both native and immigrant institutions, but the surge of new refugees had sharply increased the need for funds. Near the close of 1934, the Comité de Bienfaisance Israélite de Paris, had a debt of 1,300,000 francs which was increasing at a rate of 40,000 francs a month. Early in 1935, the Fédération associated Asiles Israélites reported itself "absolutely broke" and perilously close to suspending operations, because refugees and unemployment had "aggravated" the normal problem and forced distribution of 30,000 free meals per month, and 300 lodgings a night. Numerous appeals were issued and meetings called to promote coordinated charity work. The speeches and activities of the leaders, however, and even the tone in which L'Univers reported them revealed the attitudes and misunderstandings on both sides which made this cooperation impossible.

A typical example is found in L'Univers coverage of a Fédération meeting in October, 1934; Gustave Laroque who had succeeded Baron Edmond de Rothschild as President of the

24 Ibid., November 2, 1934, p. 122.

25 Ibid., January 4, 1935, p. 267. Some of the other charity groups which appealed for emergency contributions to cope with increased needs included L'Asile Israélite de Montmartre (Ibid., September 28, 1934, p. 38), Asile de Nuit and Crèche Israélite de Paris (Ibid., September 10, 1937, p. 25), and Pour Nos Enfants (Ibid., October 26, 1934, p. 103), as well as the organizations specifically created to assist refugees.
Comité "did not hesitate to participate." Jeffroykin, President of the Fédération, thanked Laroque ... for this first visit and this first contact" and hoped it would lead to cooperation between the Fédération and the Comité "of which many well-off immigrant Jews have only a vague idea." Rather than work with the Comité, the "immigrant Jews have founded their own charity organizations, whose total budget had risen to almost 3 million francs, demonstrating their generosity."27

The extensive coverage of Laroque's visit and speech indicates that the native establishment considered it unusual and particularly significant. In the past, native leaders generally ignored immigrant conferences; it would not occur to them to participate in one. For the immigrants, I think Jeffroykin's opening remarks showed the oversensitiveness of many who anticipated contempt from the natives, and so insisted on recognition, from the start, of their own equality or superiority. In effect Jeffroykin was saying: just remember—all immigrants are not poor, and we are rightfully proud of our own charity record; why has it taken so long

26 Despite his status in the immigrant community, his name was spelled in numerous different ways, graduating from Jeffroykyne to Jefroikine, depending on the instincts or mood of the writer. This apparently symbolizes something, though I could not determine if it was the native's impatience with weird immigrant names, or the immigrant's unwillingness to bother establishing its standard form in French.

27 L'Univers ..., November 2, 1934, p. 122.
for you to contact us. Nevertheless, Jeffroykin continued by noting that two organizations with the same goal are wasteful; obviously merger or at least central coordination "would be necessary . . . sooner or later."

In his reply, Laroque "with visible emotion" thanked Jeffroykin, and explained the functioning of the Comité since 1809. His statement was remarkably frank; one might expect varied reactions from his immigrant listeners. He admitted "some people" complain the Comité "is nationalistic and that for this reason it does not like immigrants" so that "they are badly received." But he insisted that "impatience is sometimes legitimate when faced with people who exaggerate" and that "in any case instructions were recently reissued that the deserving poor be treated with full respect." In addition, he challenged the immigrants to improve the situation by becoming donors themselves; it was not by choice of the Comité that only 1200 people, almost exclusively native Jews, gave contributions, although 90% of those helped were immigrants. The issue reporting

28^L'Univers presents other examples of immigrant sensitivity. In one case after a tragic fire in Belleville, the writer made a purely humanitarian appeal for funds which could be used to cover funeral expenses (October 26, 1932, p. 135). In response from Belleville, L'Univers received a testy letter informing the natives that an aid society had already taken care of the burial costs; any donations received were being used exclusively for the welfare of surviving children (November 4, 1932, p. 173).

29^Ibid., November 2, 1934, p. 122.
Laroque's speech at the Fédération meeting also noted a "harmony gesture"; Jeffroykin contributed 1,000 francs to the Comité, and the Consistory donated 3,000 francs.\textsuperscript{30} In later issues, however, the monopoly of the contribution lists by the same non-Eastern names that had been so evident earlier, was resumed. Lasting effects of this meeting, like those of so many others, were negligible.

If it was so difficult to obtain cooperation in an activity when everyone agreed it was necessary and possible, it is not surprising that failure also occurred in other spheres where Jews could not agree on the wisdom of coordinating actions or on the programs to be realized. One of the most serious hindrances to union with the natives was the independence and heterogeneity of the immigrant elements. Jeffroykin addressed the Fédération's first full conference, held January 7, 1933. He indicated that cultural activity planned by the Fédération "requires much prudence and tact, given the differences of intellectual level and political tendencies which prevail in this mass, where we find all the nuances of the political rainbow, from the 'Bundists' to the extreme nationalists.\textsuperscript{31} This is why we must conduct

\textsuperscript{30}Ibid., p. 126.

\textsuperscript{31}The Bund, organized in East Europe at the turn of the century, had adopted many of Marx's social and economic principles. Unlike the internationalist "Jewish" communists however, they wanted secular national and cultural autonomy for Jews in whatever country they inhabited. Bundists in France fiercely opposed both the chauvanistically French assimilated Jews and those of Zionist tendencies. These in
our cultural work in such fashion that it will not destroy the unity of the Fédération."\textsuperscript{32} Jeffroykin's speech clearly revealed the attitude developed by Jews in the pluralistic societies of Eastern Europe; unity, fraternity, and loyalty to some central coordinating group could be achieved without uniformity of thought and action in all aspects of life, although diversity frequently caused problems, required careful handling, and restricted the activities that could be undertaken.

Similarly, proof of loyalty to France had been given in 1914, when the immigrants rushed to volunteer for army service. Many were finally establishing themselves in business or study, others had just arrived, but they wanted to show their gratitude for the original grant of equality, as well as for the more recent offer of asylum and opportunity.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{32} L'Univers . . . , January 6, 1933, p. 465. In accordance with this policy, for example, the announcement of a series of lectures on "The Renaissance of the Jewish people" given under Fédération sponsorship included this disclaimer: "The orator not being part of any political grouping, the subject will be treated by him from a historic, philosophic and scientific point of view" (January 11, 1935, p. 255).

\textsuperscript{33} Paraf, pp. 18-19; Rabi, p. 98. Following the war the immigrants felt compelled to create their own "Association des volontaires juifs anciens combattants," to raise their own funds, honor their own heroes, assist their own widows and orphans and support other immigrant causes. No
They did not believe however that loyalty and gratitude also demanded they replace their Jewish culture with the French.

Most French Jews it will be recalled, however, had accepted both complete cultural assimilation and a hierarchical religious organization which maintained at least the trapping of uniformity in "Jewish" (religious) affairs. Perhaps for these reasons, the Jewish establishment generally appeared to be ignorant of differences among the immigrants and tended to describe them as a homogeneous community of predominantly "bad" political, economic, and social characteristics. L'Univers, written as it was from the native viewpoint, rarely explored ideological divisions, their programs and relative importance, within the Eastern community. Jewish Communists could not be discussed on the excuse of this being a "political" rather than "Jewish" subject, and so not a suitable topic for a Jewish newspaper; they were occasionally alluded to, however, disparagingly, in a general report on the immigrants. Similarly, Bundists were best ignored; if their program were ever recognized as even a vaguely possible development of Jewish thought, French Jews feared the repercussions might be dangerous. And when publication of an article on Jewish Revisionism in Mercure de France forced comment from

more than in other activities did they join the native group (L'Univers . . . , December 9, 1932, p. 324). There was also a separate organization of "anciens combattants volontaires orientaux" for the Sephardic immigrants (Ibid., October 26, 1934, p. 109),
L'Univers, the editors demurred: "Far from us is any thought of reproducing in detail so vulgar a thesis and discussing assertions which can only disgust every religious conscience and every unbiased spirit."\textsuperscript{34}

The same attitude and apparent blindness was displayed towards language divisions among the immigrants. Eastern Jews disagreed as to whether Hebrew, Yiddish, French, Russian or some other language was the proper vehicle of expression for Jews engaged in various activities. Obviously, for business purposes, French was advantageous, and the mutual aid groups set up classes, or members tutored one another in French. In his speech, Jeffroykin had noted that "the linguistic problem" was as "thorny" as that of non-divisive cultural activity; "it has forced us to abandon our project of creating Jewish schools."\textsuperscript{35} But the natives, at least in print, equated "Eastern Immigrant" with Yiddish.\textsuperscript{36}

The point emerging most clearly from L'Univers reports

\textsuperscript{34}Ibid., September 21, 1934, p. 18. True to their work, the rest of the article never rose above polemical attacks. It concluded: "like Hitler, M. Kadmi-Cohen based his political doctrine on race and on 'national solidarity' as well as on discipline. Luckily for humanity and for Judaism, his chief and master Mr. Jabotinsky has never had the authority of the Führer over the ignorant masses."

\textsuperscript{35}L'Univers ..., January 6, 1933, p. 465.

\textsuperscript{36}Examples are provided in the discussion below, pp. 57-59.
is that the natives considered the immigrant Jews first and 
primarily as foreigners. Occasionally, articles like those 
on Jefforykin's speech make it obvious that the natives had 
足够的 information available about the immigrants to have 
been able to have understood them, their problems and their 
thoughts. Worried or annoyed above all by foreignness in 
Jews, however, the natives would not distinguish among 
various tendencies, possibly adopting what was good and 
rejecting the rest; their insistence was that everything 
un-French be abandoned.

French Jews apparently agreed with many Gentile 
French of the thirties that "foreign" was synonymous with 
"uncivilized" or "inferior". Even sympathetic native Jews, 
therefore, frequently adopted the mocking, patronizing tone 
of missionaries discussing jungle tribes.

The patrons of the picturesque complain about 
the disappearance of the old Parisian handicrafts. 
Lovers of the exotic console themselves with the ap-
pearance of new trades imported with the immigrants. 
Along with Yiddish, they have installed in the capital 
some professions as ingenious as they are strange: the 
"affairiste" who will procure you an identity card or 
mariage papers; the "mohel" . . . who circumcises the 
newborn without a medical degree; the matchmaker who 
unites couples in the back room of a café, using an 
inverted umbrella for the marriage canopy; the "hazen" 
who recites the liturgy in suburban cemeteries, and who 
organizes solemn services in a vaudeville hall for the 
festivals of Tishri.37

The missionary however did not generally fear being 
mistaken for a primitive by his fellow citizens. Because

37 L'Univers . . . , October 21, 1932, p. 102.
many French Jews were afraid of this, their attitude towards the immigrants descended from mocking to bitter. The President of L'Union Scolaire, Adolphe Caen, told members that the immigrants live as craftsmen and small retailers,

expressing themselves exclusively in Yiddish, street signs in Yiddish, daily and weekly papers in Yiddish, theatre in Yiddish. They live largely in the street, speaking loudly, gesticulating much. If the youth have been in French schools, if they speak French, too often they do not think French.\textsuperscript{38}

Disappointingly, the Eastern Jews even used Yiddish at important conferences, instead of the more civilized French. Reporting on a Fédération session, L'Univers carefully noted that all the delegates gave their speeches in Yiddish except for one who spoke French.\textsuperscript{39}

L'Univers also indicated that the basic problem was their "foreignness" or "differentness" by its praise for another group of immigrants: the large number of Sephardic immigrants from North Africa and the Balkans are distinguished above all by their ease of assimilation to French life. They very quickly learn French and

\textsuperscript{38}Ibid., November 9, 1934, p. 139.

\textsuperscript{39}L'Univers ..., January 20, 1933, p. 523. An observer less worried than the natives might have drawn two other conclusions from this fact: (1) the immigrants must be learning French, or not even one address would be delivered in that language (2) the immigrants are educated, cosmopolitan and broadminded enough to use two languages at their conferences.
abandon their Judeo-Spanish without regret. It is not at all surprising that the work of Frenchification progresses so rapidly in this active population, able to furnish useful elements to French Judaism. It is regrettable that this population . . . does not mix with the "Pollacks." . . .

But the blame for this must be placed on the Yiddish used by the East European immigrants, and not on the "Sephardic separatism" usually alleged, or even on religious differences; native Ashkenazic and Sephardic groups mix freely "where only French is used."40

It was also noted that Sephardic immigrant services are "more orderly" than the Polish; this was apparently an important consideration. Worshippers at the latter are invariably scolded for "conversing too much during services" while in the natives' temples holidays are always "celebrated with dignity by a pious, receptive assembly"; in L'Univers reports the ushers always receive praise for assisting in maintenance of decorum.41

Baron Guy de Rothschild, who also spoke at the Union Scolaire meeting, saw anti-Semitism as a form of xenophobia, to counteract which "foreign Jews must be

40 Ibid., October 21, 1932, p. 117.
41 Ibid., October 14, 1932, p. 86; Ibid., October 21, 1932, p. 117; Ibid., September 28, 1934, p. 44.
Some L'Univers editor finally complained about the stereotyped reports received from the synagogues: "There follows a long description which is only a matter of a rabbi who spoke well, a cantor who chanted well, a choir director who directed well and an usher who kept order well. . . ." (Ibid., October 8, 1937, p. 83.)
integrated into the great French family." As a grievance of the French against the Jews, he cited the fact that too many of the immigrants are "too active in extremist politics." Apparently however, this passion for extremism was just another aspect of foreignness, because to cure it "we must make the new immigrants understand and love French culture." Agreeing, Caen insisted that

the problem must concern us as Jews and as Frenchmen. The French Jews understand [Jewish immigrants] better than our fellow citizens, but... they need physical, moral and intellectual training. The young French Jews have a great duty to fulfill vis-a-vis the immigrants and vis-a-vis themselves in order to preserve them from xenophobia which, if it grows, would deliver to public vindictiveness all Jews, without distinction, be they foreigners or French. 42

To "fulfill their duty" French Jews devised numerous programs for persuading or coercing assimilation of the foreign Jews. Jules Leon advocated establishing schools on the alliance principle, 43 "to take the children

42 Ibid., November 9, 1934, p. 139.
43 L'Alliance Israélite Universelle had been founded in 1860 to defend Jewish rights around the world. From 1863 to 1890, while Adolphe Crémieux was president, it joined with Jews from Europe and America to protect Jews in the Balkans and Eastern Europe. After Crémieux' death, it became less active in this, and concentrated on establishing schools for Jews in the Moslem countries and Eastern Europe. These schools were of relatively high quality. The language of instruction was French, and French, Jewish and other subjects were taught. It has been said that, as in so many other efforts by the French Jews, the directors emphasized the "French language, spirit, and culture" almost to the exclusion of the Jewish (Cohen, pp. 62-63; Sinder and Stein, p. 251). Countering this it must be noted that a number of individuals (such as Albert Memmi, by his own admission in Portrait d'un Juif, 1952), developed a substantial Jewish consciousness while attending
of immigrants at the youngest age possible and conduct them to adolescence" that they might "become men and women thinking in French."^{44}

But budgetary limitations and immigrant sensibilities limited the effectiveness of this technique. The native community in fact had long before set up a few schools pursuing this objective, but they tended to serve as orphanages and boarding schools for only the poorest immigrant elements, for whom procurement of food and education was a severe problem. Immigrants had established their own afternoon or Sunday schools for the Jewish education of their children, and it is not surprising that these were preferred to the natives'. The immigrant schools were often run by a political or religious group in accord with its ideology and language. In addition, these same groups frequently offered courses for adults in both French and Jewish subjects. Leon's proposal sounded drastic and thorough. But even if successful it would only gradually effect the second generation. French Jews of the thirties wanted more immediate, widespread results, to ameliorate their embarrassment over the immigrant generation itself.

the Alliance schools, and consider these schools to have contributed greatly to this. In addition, a number of graduates of Alliance schools came to Paris each year to study at the Alliance's Normal schools and return to leadership roles in their own Jewish communities.

^{44} L'Univers..., December 23, 1932, p. 398.
An opening seems to have been provided by the immigrants themselves, most of whom, as we have seen, did not adamantly refuse all modifications of old cultural patterns. Some changes occurred gradually in response to business and social pressures, others reflected conscious decisions; they generally agreed that French at least had to be learned. The Fédération meeting of 1933 had carefully discussed methods of raising the immigrants' moral and intellectual level. At the conference, Jeffroykin had explained:

... The immigrants have a duty to assimilate all that French culture offers which is great and beautiful. But this assimilation of French culture must not prevent us from preserving religiously the old Jewish culture for which we have no cause to blush.\textsuperscript{45}

Most of the native leaders also realized that the disagreement between immigrant and native concerned the content and extent of the changes to be made in the immigrants' old patterns rather than whether or not any change would occur. They therefore saw as the native's task the demonstration of how much in the French culture was "great and beautiful," in the expectation that the immigrant would then willingly adopt it. Instead of requiring a slow, expensive, and insulting program of formal education for immigrants and their children, this could be done in conferences, informal educational lectures, and mixed social gatherings, initiated by the natives, who would bring the Easterners into their organizations, and serve as mediators.

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., January 20, 1933, p. 523.
between the French and Eastern Jewish cultures.

Numerous attempts at this were made and chronicled in L'Univers, invariably under the title of "Rapprochement." The energies expended, mixed feelings displayed and results attained were comparable to those characteristic of attempts at Franco-German rapprochement between the wars. The failure was similarly caused by misunderstandings, distrust, and fundamentally contradictory philosophies and goals, although in truth no comparison can be made regarding the consequences of failure.

We have already described the divisions within the immigrant community. Its leaders acknowledged their inability to force immigrants to conform to any one cultural, religious, or political pattern. Relying on the East European pluralistic experience, the leaders and masses accepted the principle that "all Israel are brothers" with a moral obligation to help one another, but each trend, individual, and group would contribute voluntarily in the fashion it believed most likely to benefit itself and the whole. The Fédération served merely as a coordinating agency, permitting those with similar aims to act cooperatively, and providing forums in which different ideas could be discussed. While each leader may have wished to unite all Jews under his control and ideology, the manifest impossibility of this precluded even the attempt. Speaking at a Fédération meeting, Jeffroykin explained:
Our dream is to see in France a single great community which includes all the Jewish elements, French as well as immigrant. But . . . we realize perfectly well how very difficult it would be to make of our Fédération an organization including all Jews of France without exception. This result can be obtained only in the far off future. For the moment [within] our group we can aspire only to organize the whole immigrant population and to raise its moral and intellectual level.\(^{46}\)

Outside the Fédération

between French Jews and immigrant Jews . . . a new spirit of fraternity is necessary above all; it would unite them despite the differences of culture and of education.\(^{47}\)

The natives, however, were not interested in unity despite differences. In the first place, this clashed with their own French experience, and was felt to be self-contradictory and impossible. Even more important, although cooperation on such terms might permit greater efficiency in welfare work, or present a "common front" against enemies, it would not enable natives to end the boisterous immigrant demonstrations which they found so embarrassing, nor would it lead, with any rapidity, to modification of individual foreign behavior patterns; and it was these which natives saw as responsible for creating bad will in France against Jews. In addition, many natives did not even agree it was wise for all Jews to unite in public organizations devoted to the defense of Jews against others; it was feared this might lend credence to Nazi charges of a Jewish race and a

\(^{46}\) Ibid., January 6, 1933, p. 465.

\(^{47}\) Ibid., November 2, 1934, p. 122.
world Jewish conspiracy.

Native approaches to the immigrants quite naturally reflected their own goals rather than the immigrants' and the natives did want all Jews included under the hierarchy of their religious organization immediately. In 1931, four non-citizen Jews were elected to the twenty-four member Central Consistory for the first time. The most qualified representatives of the principal Jewish organizations and institutions in the capitol, including a number of immigrant leaders, were invited to a meeting of the Paris Consistory in November, 1932. In the name of "the famed Jewish solidarity," Baron Robert de Rothschild appealed "above all" for the support of the immigrants in view of the "numerous valuable achievements" of the old community in meeting the religious and moral needs of the growing Jewish population. It was of course not suggested that natives support the immigrant groups, in view of their greater numbers and activity, nor did the Baron inquire what value the new community placed on the achievements of the old.


49 Ben Eliaquim used this phrase cynically in his short comment on the enthusiasm and hopes expressed at the meeting. As he noted, "the distance which separated and which still separates the 'invited' from the 'invitors' is such that neither the one nor the other would know how to bridge it in just one attempt" (L'Univers . . . ., January 6, 1933, p. 455).

50 Ibid., December 2, 1932, p. 294.
Perhaps because of the almost universal commitment by Jewish leaders to some form of Jewish solidarity, a good deal of well publicized mixing occurred at higher levels. Native and immigrant officials frequently attended one another's functions, met to plan for cooperation, and even held office in organizations of the other group. It is impossible to predict the effects of such activity, had it continued for several decades; but it is obvious that little significant headway had been made among the masses before the defeat of France in 1940. Natives were barred by ignorance of Hebrew, Yiddish or Polish from meaningful participation in immigrant educational or social events; political considerations led them to avoid many others. Most immigrants had no intention of abandoning their own culture to please the French; and their own limited knowledge of French customs and manners, as well as their distrust, led them to avoid native activities. Cultural differences, mutual suspicions, and divergent goals hindered real communication and cooperation between the two Jewish communities; their integration in so short a time was impossible.

51 Thus, L'Union Scolaire had established numerous youth centers in immigrant quarters to facilitate assimilation through informal mixing. Caen had called the 1934 meeting, however, because "the foreign youth visits these centers, but the French youth too often ignores them, and so the goal is not attained" (Ibid., November 9, 1934, p. 139).
CHAPTER III

FRENCH JEWS AND HITLERISM

In the previous chapters of this paper, I have discussed the concern of French Jews with immigrants, xenophobia, and the decline of Judaism. Absorption of the East Europeans within the native community combined with improvements in Jewish education and cultural activities were their attempts at solution. Looking back, however, it becomes apparent that the events which most affected Jews in France after 1930 developed beyond the influence of their plans and actions. And without major alterations in these external events it is doubtful that any other approach to the difficulties they faced could have significantly improved their situation or the history of the world.

French Jews had noticed Hitler before he attained power. Their comments in L'Univers on his activity during the early thirties indicate a tendency to consider him just one more of the many viruses who have tried to infect society with anti-Semitism, to be exposed to sunlight, isolated, and rendered impotent. Underlying even many optimistic reports of cure, however, was a nagging suspicion which slowly became a fatalistic assumption, that this was a new
virulent strain producing a unique syndrome which might prove immune to the traditional medicines or to the new ones being developed. There was even a fear, among some, that any attempt at treatment might worsen or spread the disease.

In September, 1930, the National Socialists won 107 seats in the Reichstag. Paraf commented a few months later:

if one permits himself to be too deeply impressed by the results of the last election, one would almost hesitate to rank Germany today among the nations of liberty, because of the dangerous anti-Semitism which manifests itself there with increasing force. It is necessary to keep from dramatizing excessively events occurring across the Rhine; others can remind us, with good reason, that we had our Dreyfus affair.\(^1\)

By July, 1932, the Nazis had obtained 230 seats out of 608 to become the largest party in the Reichstag; Goering as presiding officer helped overthrow the government of Franz von Papen on September 12, and new elections were called.

In an article published on the thirtieth, called "Chronicle of Germany: to the East Nothing New," Lambert expressed pleasure that Chancellor von Papen had quieted the trouble-makers, and there were no recent martyrs to report. Nevertheless, he feared that anti-Semitism might sprout again from "deep rooted economic disorder and moral anarchy" especially since divided, apathetic German Jews still had not organized to counter it.\(^2\) Three weeks later, under the heading "Decline of Hitlerism," readers were informed that it

\(^1\)Paraf, p. 134.

"is certainly receding and the Jews of Germany no longer seem to fear it. In the next election it is said, the Nazis will lose at least fifty seats."³ When they did lose thirty-four seats, L'Univers rejoiced: "Hitlerism is declining and the Jews of Germany regain confidence";⁴ but two weeks later it was again reported that the situation could as easily worsen as improve.⁵

On December 2, General Kurt von Schleicher was asked to become Chancellor and form a new government. After his government failed, Hitler and von Papen were sworn in as Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor on January 30, 1933. Hitler acted immediately to have the Reichstag dissolved, with new elections set for March 5. During the interval the Nazis used propaganda joined with terrorist activities to weaken their opposition. Lambert had noted in the January 6 L'Univers that again "the future appears . . . somber [because] Jews cannot hope for anything good from political and social troubles. . . ."⁶ But he estimated in February that the situation had become "relatively calm" because "Hitler visibly avoids the Jewish question."⁷ In the election, the Nazis obtained 288 seats, and on March 23, Hitler maneuvered

³Ibid., October 21, 1932, p. 113.
⁴Ibid., November 11, 1932, p. 211.
⁵Ibid., November 25, 1932, p. 267.
⁷Ibid., February 17, 1933, p. 651.
passage of the Enabling Act which established the foundation of his dictatorship.

L'Univers inability to evaluate Nazi fortunes or their significance paralleled similar failures in the rest of the world press. Reasons for this confusion are many. German Jews tended to minimize their difficulties; typical of their public position was the declaration made to a Jewish news service that despite "uncertainties ... the Jews of Germany are not discouraged." On the basis of previous historical experience, many Jews--and Gentiles--assumed "that the anti-Jewish agitation of the Nazis is a means and not an end. Power is usually sobering," and as Chancellor, Hitler would have "to consider the possibility of popular reactions and international opinion."

Contributing to this belief was the conception of Hitler as just another politician. At first, it was thought that he needed the backing of the center to gain control, and that to obtain it he would modify his position. At other times, reliance was similarly placed on von Papen.

---

8 A number of quotations from the minutes and diaries kept by Nazi leaders indicates that they also alternated between excessive optimism and pessimism regarding their chances for success. These are cited in William L. Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany (New York: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1960), pp. 232-78.

9 L'Univers ..., December 2, 1932, p. 307.

10 Ibid., December 9, 1932, p. 343.

11 Ibid., February 10, 1933, p. 613.
von Schleicher, and President Hindenberg as likely to re-strain him. At one point, Lambert noted a chilling fact: "On the eve of attaining power, Hitler . . . undertook a new anti-Semitic offensive," not just in the streets, but in Parliament, and "anti-Semitism has taken first place among Nazi preoccupations." He did not go on to state the logical conclusion from this fact—that Hitler would probably not give up this aspect of his program in any compromises necessary to gain control of Germany. Instead, he concluded fatuously: "It is necessary to hope that the German people will understand the realities of modern times in spite of everything."13

Then, suddenly, Hitler obtained dictatorial power, and almost immediately he enacted the first anti-Jewish legislation: Jewish admission to German schools and Universities was limited, as was their employment in the civil service, medicine, and law. Naturally, this reinforced Jewish dislike for Hitler, but the first violence and excitement subsided quickly, and only a few realized that now anti-Semitism "had been fixed in the law, which was perhaps

12 Ibid., November 25, 1932, p. 267; Ibid., December 9, 1932, p. 343.

13 Ibid., February 10, 1933, p. 613.

even worse."\textsuperscript{15} Instead, Jews consoled themselves by doubting that Hitler could ever enact the rest of his program; total ejection of the 517,000 "racial Jews" from the German economy and soil would obviously damage Germany—no politician would so act. At the start of 1935 therefore, \textit{L'Univers} declared "Hitler will no longer persecute the Jews."\textsuperscript{16}

The spring of 1935 was marked by renewed anti-Jewish propaganda and violence, as part of a "'softening up operation'. . . to prepare" the country. In September, the Nuremberg laws made "German blood" a requirement for citizenship and political rights, and protected "the German blood and German honor" by forbidding marriage or sexual relations between Germans and Jews; a decree in November defined Jews as those individuals having three Jewish grandparents. Large numbers of Jews finally realized that Hitler would eventually enact his whole racist program—although they debated how long this would take. Many others however did not become convinced until after the \textit{Anschluss} in March, 1938, subsequent legislation which made it impossible for Jews to satisfy basic economic or social needs in Germany, and the "Kristallnacht" of November which demonstrated that even the property already in their possession, and their very persons were not safe.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{L'Univers} . . ., September 7-14, 1934, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{17}Weinrub, pp. 44-46. Figures on emigration of Jews
Hitler and his activity in Germany was only one aspect of the problem caused to French Jews and in their eyes it was one of the less important. L'Univers writers carefully reported his advance and chronicled the anti-Jewish incidents and legislation in Germany, but in identical fashion they included items on Oswald Mosley's campaign in England, enactment of "numerus clausus" legislation in Eastern Europe, and Moslem uprisings in North Africa.  

The tone of L'Univers, and its allocation of space to 

from Germany support this analysis of shifting opinion. From January to June, 1933, 15,000 left. This included panic flight for political or religious reasons, as well as "temporary vacation" for the wealthy, waiting abroad until conditions settled. In the relative quiet after September, a number of these emigrants returned. There was a second panic in response to the events of 1935, and by June, 1936, an additional 83,000 had fled. During the rest of 1936 and 1937 which again were relatively calm there was a well organized steady flow of 52,000 who, having considered carefully, decided their opportunity for a successful career or happy life in Germany was minimal. Another panic occurred in 1938, and 150,000 more fled Germany proper before the outbreak of war (L'Univers . . . October 1, 1937, p. 69; Werner Rosenstock, "Exodus 1933-1939: A Survey of Jewish Emigration from Germany," First Year Book of the Leo Baeck Institute of Jews from Germany [London: 1956], p. 373; Mark Wischnitzer, To Dwell in Safety: The Story of Jewish Migration since 1800 [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1948], pp. 171-76).

18 Frequently there was more about events in Africa and Eastern Europe than about Germany. Explanations for this are many: there were millions of Jews in Eastern Europe versus the thousands in Germany; French Jews were more concerned about French Jews in North Africa than about German Jews; native and immigrant organizations had a long history of charity and Jewish-defense work in Eastern Europe, the natives had long been active in Africa also; until very late, Hitler was seen as a direct threat only to German Jews --his conquest of France and Eastern Europe and extermination of Jews in those countries as well was not expected.
various topics would indicate that, throughout most of the thirties, French Jews were primarily concerned with the repercussions of Hitlerism in France: an increase in anti-Semitism and in the influx of Jewish refugees.¹⁹

Nazi leaders encouraged or subsidized publication of anti-Jewish propaganda in foreign newspapers. L'Univers, like the French Jews it represented, never decided on the best counterattack for this, and the different approaches tried somewhat contradicted one another. On the one hand, they did not want to dignify the charges with rebuttal, and hoped they could be ignored, because one would not expect to take root in France either the racist anti-Semitism which generally appeals to the lowest elements of the masses, or the religious anti-Semitism which can only be supported by narrow-mindedness. . . .

(But) political uncertainty, international instability, even the economic crisis . . . have made possible movements of xenophobia which, in noisy manifestation among groups of men, lead easily to anti-Semitism. (The

¹⁹Undoubtedly as people they were concerned with the persecutions in Germany and elsewhere, and about the threat of war: as Frenchmen they worried about Hitler attacking France, or fascism destroying the Republic. But as Jews, writing only on topics proper to a Jewish paper, their concerns were more limited.

This sharp, narrow delineation of the "Jewish sphere" was also revealed in an exchange between L'Univers editors and a reader. L'Univers reprinted an article about Jews being manhandled by "overexcited nationalist youths." A few months later, L'Univers received a letter describing how a man was beaten up by marchers in a Popular Front demonstration; the reader requested publication of his letter, to expose the tactics of the Leftists. Replied L'Univers: "... In this paper, we are not concerned with politics and we have no place to relate street incidents"; the original article had been included "only because of the anti-Semitic turn which had been taken. . . ." (October 15, 1937, p. 99.)
Jews, therefore, must be vigilant and not let pass any idea which might lead to anti-Semitism.\textsuperscript{20}

One manifestation of this vigilance was scrutinizing the French press for any slight hint or actual statement of anti-Semitism. Those who had carried remarks of the former type frequently apologized to \textit{L'Univers} or to the Jews after receiving protests. One paper insisted that "we in no way intended to give to our headline a meaning of confessional or racial polemic . . . and nothing was further from our thoughts than to offend the feelings of the Israelites of France."\textsuperscript{21}

Those papers for which anti-Semitism was a major policy component, however, naturally paid little attention to Jewish protests. And so this traditional form of Jewish self-defense was supplemented by another: rational attack on the theoretical racist foundation of anti-Semitism and attempts to prove its scientific inaccuracy. Paraf titled the second chapter of his book "The Destiny of Israel"; it began with a discussion headed "Is there a Jewish Race."\textsuperscript{22} Speeches by prominent world leaders, scholarly conferences, and meetings of groups formed primarily to combat racism were thoroughly reported. Innumerable times, French Ministers

\textsuperscript{20}Lambert, inaugurating a new column, "Nos Griefs" which ran, as needed, during succeeding years, \textit{Ibid.}, October 26, 1934, p. 93.

\textsuperscript{21}Ibid., March 9, 1934, p. 798. The apology was received from \textit{Matin}.

\textsuperscript{22}Paraf, p. 40.
"showed the inanity of racist doctrines," and organizations passed resolutions against them. During one public meeting of the Academy of Science, the President of this illustrious company condemned one more time the barbaric myth of Race. The words pronounced by this great scholar will not fail to have a considerable repercussion at a time when the Third Reich, founded on this false doctrine, multiplies its persecutions...23

Actually, the repercussion of all these speeches and conferences was negligible. For the third prong of its anti-anti-Semitic campaign, L'Univers assumed racism to be such nonsense that anyone taken in by it must be beyond the reach of protests or rational discussion; it deserved only to be ridiculed to death. So each essay of L'Univers contained a number of jokes on racists or racism. Many of these were reprinted from the non-Jewish press; this demonstrated that Gentiles also recognized the folly of the theory, and helped Jews convince themselves that Hitler's madness had not taken root in France. They mocked Germans for not even being smart enough to invent their own theories--most nations at some stage in their development believed in their absolute superiority and messianic duty.24 Authorities refused to allow publication of a book in Germany because its author had one great-grandmother who converted from Judaism in 1771. "During the War, Sven Hedin defended the cause of Germany against the

Allies. Today they thank him by prohibiting one of his works. Because of a few drops of blood. . . . C'est beau, le racisme." The Germans had to close ahead of schedule an exhibition organized to show the "despicable, demented nature" of modern art, including many French painters; it was extraordinarily successful "but in the sense opposite to that hoped for by its organizers." And after reporting Nazi prosecution of a mayor for selling a cow to a Jew, it was suggested that the mayor could have defended himself: if he said the cow had indicated Jewish origins and threatened to contaminate the rest of the herd by refusing to give milk on Saturday, or by avoiding the pigs, he could have demanded praise for turning this foreigner away from the good Aryan cows—in exchange for good Aryan marks.

But racism in Germany and its reduced but frightening reflection in France as xenophobia or anti-Semitism, were too deeply motivated to be routed by jokes or lectures. And this was especially true because the hatreds were reinforced by a second indirect affect of Hitler's activity—refugees.

The refugee problem had, of course, not been created by Hitler, any more than had anti-Semitism. At the start of 1933, there were already 200,000-250,000 refugees in France,

---


27Ibid., November 5, 1937, p. 147, reprinted from Ce Soir.
including Armenians, anti-Communist Russians, anti-Fascist Italians; there were also the thousands of East European emigrants discussed in the last chapter.\textsuperscript{28} Hitler's activity, however, undoubtedly aggravated the Jewish refugee problem. Nazi legislation and terrorism within Germany drove out about 150,000 Jews before 1933. Encouraged by German successes in violating minority rights and defying the League of Nations, East European Governments intensified their pressure on the Jews. And Germany as well as the Eastern nations began systematically revoking the citizenship of various classes of Jews, leaving them stateless as well as moneyless, jobless, and homeless. A further complication was caused by the Nazi's world-wide anti-Semitic campaign; hundreds of thousands of refugees were unable to find asylum because even the most humanitarian governments and individuals (including established Jews), who recognized the idiocy of racism, feared that a large influx of Jews might stimulate anti-Semitism in their own lands.

There were about 30,000 German Jews in France by May, 1939; thousands more had been aided through France to asylum abroad.\textsuperscript{29} The economics of this problem were staggering; at least during the thirties, the French had legitimate

\textsuperscript{28}Marc Vishniac, \textit{The Legal Status of Stateless Persons} ("Jews and the Post-War World," No. 6, Research Institute on Peace and Post-War Problems of the American Jewish Committee; New York: 1941), p. 29

\textsuperscript{29}Sinder and Stein, p. 122.
financial reasons for trying to move refugees through France, instead of helping them to settle. In 1934, Lambert explained that

the large Jewish organizations have succeeded in directing a part of the German emigration toward new countries . . . but by far the largest number of the refugees still remain in France, awaiting better times. This fact complicates the situation, and makes more difficult measures contemplated in case events . . . precipitate a new wave of emigration. If the . . . French aid societies have always upheld the thesis of a "sorting station," this was to maintain at all times in our country a free place for the persecuted of tomorrow. [Because of the League of Nation's failure to locate new receptor countries], the problem has become more tragic and complex. In the present state of things, no future mass immigration is possible;

the depression increased unemployment, and of the 320,000 registered unemployed, 60,000 are foreigners. Only a few artisans would be able to establish themselves, even on a small scale. And though aid would be offered, they "could not be assured with certainty of the necessities for living." Unfortunately too, the government cannot be called on for aid without risking an increase in anti-refugee feeling.

The large Jewish associations alone have been able to make the immediate sacrifices which have permitted amelioration of the worst misery in the past months. But it is also necessary to acknowledge that individual charity is tired out, and that it is no longer possible to count on it.30

Fortunately the funds did appear—as did, less happily, additional refugees. A Committee of Assistance for Refugees was established in July 1936, "to manage the constructive liquidation of the problem of German refugees

30 L'Univers . . ., October 12, 1934, p. 65.
in France." By October, 1937, the committee had received 15,957 appeals for help and had distributed 185,000 francs for temporary assistance and 1,372,000 francs to aid individuals establishing themselves permanently in France.\textsuperscript{31}

It also proved more difficult to absorb German Jews into France than East Europeans. Assimilation of Jews in Germany had appeared even more thorough than in France. Because of the racial basis of Nazi legislation, refugees included "baptized Jews," "\textsuperscript{1} Jews" and atheists with no religious training or beliefs. These often had no visible religious ties with Judaism, and so lacked even this link to French Jews—who were certainly not about to accept them on the basis of racist theories.

Worse perhaps from the French point of view, the refugees were obviously and proudly German. A Danish Christian was astonished and profoundly touched not to hear from the mouths of Jewish refugees a great burst of holy anger which would be, however, so natural. A shrug of the shoulders, that's all. And today, still, these exiles love their German patrie. . . .\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{31}Ibid., December 17, 1937, p. 250. Funds raised by this committee in France, with Consistorial support, were matched by the American Joint Distribution Committee. HICEM, internationally organized with an important branch in Paris, had been set up in 1927 specifically to oversee Jewish emigration; it was therefore very important for coordinating refugee movement, as well as for rendering daily aid. In Paris, much of the day to day assistance was offered by the Comité Central d'Assistance aux Emigrants Juifs (Ibid., November 23, 1934, p. 166). Numerous other groups worked exclusively with the refugees or their children, or helped them as part of their general charity work.

\textsuperscript{32}Karin Michaëlis, quoted in Ibid., March 9, 1934, p. 795.
Immigrants from Poland may have been Communists or unwilling to accept much of French culture; but they had demonstrated their loyalty to France in the War—neither they nor their parents had fought in the trenches against the very French now expected to aid them. There was also a suspicion that the German Jews were not doing their share. Baron Robert de Rothschild, in January, 1934, complained to a meeting of East European Jews that rich German Jews had contributed nothing while other Jews in France had raised 9,000,000 francs for the German refugees.\(^{33}\) Undoubtedly as the decade progressed, French bitterness against German Jews would soften, and refugees would lose some of their love for Germany—at least in its Nazi form. But three or four years could not be sufficient for shedding German culture which, in itself, French-Jewish writers increasingly pictured as inherently dangerous and evil.\(^{34}\)

Jewish Germans belonging largely to the middle and upper classes were also economically less suitable for mass immigration than had been the proletarian and petty bourgeois East Europeans. In L'Univers personal, the Germans

\(^{33}\)American Jewish Year Book, 1934-1935, XXXVI, 154. As was noted earlier, German Jews realized very slowly that Hitler intended to force all of them from German life. Many classes of Jews, including Veterans and their children, were exempted from early Nazi legislation. Partly to protect their own position they tried to play down the evils of the Nazi regime, and avoid any act construable as unpatriotic.

\(^{34}\)Examples are given above, chap. 1, pp. 12-13, n. 8.
tried to find positions as tutors or governesses; it was generally impossible for them to pursue the careers as doctors or lawyers for which they had studied in Germany; the depression did not provide favorable conditions for establishing a business, even if capital could be obtained. Because of Nazi regulations, later emigrants frequently arrived absolutely without resources; but they had no trade, working experience, or work permits and found it difficult to compete in the over saturated labor market, even if they could adjust to lower class living and working conditions.

Quite early however, the Germans formed an "association de solidarité" for the material and moral support of the "israélites allemandes" refugees. According to the report in L'Univers, Grand Rabbi Liber, director of the Rabbinic Seminary, "spoke at their first public meeting and thus demonstrated the sympathy of the native community."35 A more important aspect of the native attitude toward these refugees and their expression of "separatism" was as superior and disapproving as we noted earlier with regard to the Easterners:

To establish themselves permanently in a centralized country like ours, [the German refugees must] submit to imperious necessity and make a moral adaptation. The facts and political realities indicate . . . that we must avoid all plans for colonization or group settlement, and think only of individual solutions for individual cases; it is so that the Russian immigration and the Italian immigration were able, little by little, to

integrate themselves into the country. The French remain individualists and if the immigrants group themselves and act according to imported methods, this is enough for quite legitimate opposition to make itself felt.

French Judaism has done its duty in helping them freely, happy to obey at the same time an elementary human emotion and a national need; their first response must be to forget this gregarious mentality, this need for grouping themselves in associations. . . . Self-help [for them really consists in] trying to understand the laws of life among us. French Jewry will continue to guide them.35

Reading between the lines, it once again becomes apparent that the major goals of French Jews with respect to the newcomers did not originate primarily in the needs of the refugees or in the natives' personal feelings for them; each step was contemplated by insecure natives whose overriding concern was the affect of native and refugee actions on anti-Semitism in France.

This becomes even more obvious in the sphere of economic integration. As noted earlier, the first anti-Jewish legislation of the Nazis restricted Jewish participation in the professions. This, and its echoes in French papers, impressed the native Jews. So Baron Guy de Rothschild, at a meeting of L'Union Scolaire stated that "too many Jews in liberal careers" was a major French "grievance" against Jews. He suggested this be countered by convincing immigrants "that work is a value in itself and that nothing prevents the intelligent man from continuing to participate in the intellectual and moral life of

the country without his exercising a liberal profession."37

Reflecting a similar attitude, the director of a boarding school-orphanage insisted that

our essential goal . . . is to heal the Jewish proletariat of the wound represented by second-hand stores, and to accustom the young men to a regular life and to the dignity of work. We do not try to provide them with luxurious surroundings which would give them ideas of a grandeur they could never realize, but we assure them hygenic conditions and all the necessities of life.38

And one rabbi wanted to push immigrant children into agricultural work in France, "bringing back to life" a number of abandoned villages. He added that "several years ago, no difficulty was created by permitting Jewish families to organize their lives in accordance with their individual tastes," but that is no longer true.39

The grovelling nature of these suggestions only becomes apparent when compared with an announcement by E.I.R leaders: The scouts promote physical work, crafts, and agriculture "not to obey a racial disquiet, sacreligious to us Frenchmen . . . but to obtain a harmony, more complete, because more balanced, in our own lives."40 Few today would deny the value to Jewry of diversifying its economic

37 Ibid., November 9, 1934, p. 139.

38 Ibid., October 14, 1932, p. 75. "Jewish proletariat" is practically a euphemism for "immigrants" whose children made up the bulk of those in the school.

39 Ibid., October 5, 1934, p. 55.

40 Ibid., November 9, 1934, p. 138.
activities. But the Rabbi had not suggested that his own children become farmers, nor Rothschild that his take up brick-laying; only the immigrants were to eschew the professions or retailing for the sake of the Jewish image in France.\textsuperscript{41}

I do not mean to imply by the above that these attempts by French Jews were particularly despicable or even unexpected, given the turmoil that marked France in the thirties. Anti-Semitic propaganda and demonstrations were prevalent enough to justify the natives' belief that they were threatened. Under such conditions it would have taken an unusual amount of self-confidence, or pride in Jewishness, to resent, as did Ben Eliaquim, the advice of Jewish lay and religious leaders "to be saints because the black eye of the anti-Semites is watching you." This advice, he continued, is "as unworthy as it is naive," since anti-Semitism would seem less the "fault" of Jews than the problem of anti-Semites who reproach Jews "as much for our qualities as for our failings."\textsuperscript{42} When the traditional "protest and educate" techniques seemed to have no effect, most French Jews could not content themselves with ignoring it, and just "doing their duty and obeying their

\textsuperscript{41} It might also be recalled here that a greater proportion of natives than immigrants entered the professions. See table, above, chap. 11, p. 47, n. 19.

\textsuperscript{42} \textit{L'Univers} \ldots, September 7-14, 1934, p. 2.
conscience. But they found it equally impossible to broaden their conception of "Jew" and "Judaism" to include the activist, aggressive techniques being advocated and even put into operation by the Easterners. And so as they had in 1806-1808, the French Jews were looking for concessions which Jews (primarily the immigrant Jews) could make in exchange for being permitted to live in peace.

43See above, chap. 1, p. 30. I do not mean to suggest by this that ignoring severe anti-Semitism would have been a particularly good way to react. The point is that several alternative courses of action were available to the Jews, none of which had much chance of success: ignoring anti-Semitism, debating the anti-Semites, changing Jews and Judaism to something more acceptable to Gentiles, or fighting anti-Semites with all of the insufficient weapons Jews possessed (e.g., economic and political pressure, guns, street demonstrations). The natives tended to debate the anti-Semites and try to alter the immigrant Jews; the immigrants united and massed, as Jews, to try to force the anti-Semites to change.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Articles, Periodicals, and Pamphlets


Shapiro, Michael. "German Refugees in France," American Jewish Committee, Contemporary Jewish Record, III, No. 2 (March-April, 1940), 134-40.