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THE JEWS OF BATNA, ALGERIA:
A STUDY OF IDENTITY AND COLONIALISM

by

ELIZABETH D. FRIEDMAN

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate
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Abstract

THE JEWS OF BATNA, ALGERIA:
A STUDY OF IDENTITY AND COLONIALISM

by

Elizabeth D. Friedman

Adviser: Professor Robert Glasse

This dissertation studies social identity through the Jews of a small town, Batna, in the department of Constantine, Algeria, during the French colonial period. It traces the history of the Jewish community from the founding of the town in the 1840s through the process and aftermath of immigration to France following Algerian independence in 1962. A group of extended families now living in a small city in the south of France is analyzed.

Archival and oral accounts were used to reconstruct the history of the Batna community. Ethnographic data were obtained through a sixteen month study of a group of Batna Jews in France.

The task of the thesis is to examine how social identity changes for the Jews of Batna and, by extension, the Jews of Algeria. The relationship between colonial domination in Algeria and Jewish identity is a central focal point. The effects of World War II and the Algerian Revolution on identity are studied. Changes in family patterns and

religious practice are analyzed. Jewish identity in France is understood in terms of the past in colonial Algeria as well as the very different social context of France.

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation studies social identity through the Jews of a small town, Batna, in the department of Constantine, Algeria, during the French colonial period. It traces the history of the Jewish community from the founding of the town in the 1840s through the process and aftermath of immigration to France following Algerian independence in 1962. A group of extended families from the Jewish community of Batna now living in a small city, Baumugnes, in the south of France is analyzed.

The task of the thesis is to examine changing social identity of the Batna Jews and, by extension, of the Jews of Algeria. I attempt to explain how a group of people in a colonial society constructed their identity. To do so involves an analysis of the crosscutting tensions of macro-social events--colonialism, world wars, revolution--as well as community and intergroup relations, family structure, and individual choice. I try to unravel the complex of mediations between the consciousness (and how it changes) of individuals and groups and the social and economic world in which this consciousness is constituted. In this complex of mediations, the relationship between colonial domination in Algeria and Jewish identity becomes a central focal point.

The Introduction consists of four sections. Together, these sections summarize the main issues and procedures of the study. The first section gives a historical overview of Algerian Jewry and its changed setting in France. The second section describes the methodology of the thesis. It shows how I draw on Sartre's Search for a Method

as well as the disciplines of anthropology and history. The last two sections of the introduction sketch the theoretical problematic: first, colonialism and racism and, second, antisemitism and Jewish identity.

Section I

Historical Setting:

Colonial Algeria to Contemporary France

Algeria, conquered by the French in 1830, was the first of the North African states to be a colony. Colonialism in Algeria was characterized by the implantation of a large European population. The Jews of Algeria, who can be considered an indigenous people, were given French citizenship by the Decree Cremieux of 1870. This differentiated them from the Muslim population for whom citizenship remained virtually inaccessible. Citizenship had important social, political, economic, and cultural consequences. It gave the Jews access to civil service positions, education, political leverage, etc. Over the course of time, the Jews began to put a social-symbolic claim to being part of the 'European' or 'French' population. Although emulating the French, the Jews had a sense of disapproval, bordering on disdain, for certain aspects of French culture. Socially, Jews differentiated themselves strongly from Muslims yet retained many of their cultural similarities with the Muslims.

The Christian colonists of Algeria did not accept the Jews as their social equals. Strong antisemitic sentiment throughout the colonial period manifested itself in repeated attempts to repeal the Decree Cremieux, antisemitic violence, and in a decided social separation between Christians and Jews. Yet the Christian population itself was not a cohesive group. It was composed of different nationalities--

Spanish, Maltese, Italian, etc.--all of whom sought to be considered French. These colonists resented the Jew as the native who was trying to become French, as they had done.

All this put the Jews in a contradictory position in colonial Algeria. Their legal status as French citizens placed them with the Christian Europeans into a privileged category. However, neither Muslims nor Christians accorded Jews the social status concomitant with their legal position.

Despite contradictions between social status and legal position, there was nevertheless a definite social category of "Jew" in colonial Algeria. Identity was formed and upheld by social conditions in Algeria. There were three distinct communities: Jewish, Islamic, and Christian. Virtually no intermarriage took place between the communities; social relations were strictly demarcated, and the power hierarchy (although often subverted) was acknowledged. Jews were an important part of colonial Algeria numerically (about 25 percent of French citizens), politically, and economically. The social environment continuously defined and reaffirmed who they were.

In France, where most of the Jews immigrated following Algerian independence in 1962, the Jews find themselves in quite a different situation. Numerically, they are less than one percent of the population of France and the role they play is considerably reduced.² Although there is prejudice against Jews in France (see below), it takes a different form from that in Algeria. The amount and type of interactions Jews can have with Christians in France is much less structured by social convention. One of the aims of this thesis is to explore the consequences of these changed conditions for the social identity of the Jews from Batna.

Section II

Methodology

In my research on the Jews of Batna, I drew on techniques from both anthropology and history, utilizing traditional anthropological methods of participant observation as well as formal and informal interviews. Archival research resulted in the incorporation of extensive material from secondary historical sources. In the first chapter, a discussion of Algerian colonial history, documents from the period such as pamphlets, newspapers, legal statutes, and novels are employed.³ The demographic data on the Jews and Christians of the town of Batna were taken from military recruitment registers and vital statistic records (Etat-Civil).⁴ For the Algerian War period, data from the newspaper, La Dépêche de Constantine et de l'est algérienne, served to cross-check informants' perceptions of events. The functioning of the Batna synagogue was reconstructed from its records now located in the Archives Nationales in Paris.

An ethnohistorical account was established by interviewing informants about details of their lives in Batna. Most of my informants now live in Baumugnes, France; however, several former Batna synagogue officials who reside elsewhere were interviewed. Based on extensive discussions with ten informants (six men and four women), genealogies, occupational histories, details of ceremonial life, and accounts of day-to-day life were ascertained. One of the women provided her journal which recorded her childhood in Batna. There were twenty other persons who shared various aspects of life in Batna with me, although I worked with them less intensively.

A major part of my work consisted of participant observation based on: (1) close contact with four and social ties with several other households from Batna extended families, (2) maintenance of social relations with non-Batna Jewish families in the town, (3) presence at holiday preparations and ceremonies, meals, social visits, household work, commercial dealings, family fights, and participation in social activities of young people, such as outings, dances, etc., (4) attendance at Jewish youth and WIZO (Women's International Zionist Organization) meetings at the Jewish community center as well as conferences and lectures given there, (5) attendance at synagogue services on Friday nights, Saturday mornings, and on holidays.

Towards the end of my fieldwork, I interviewed, using an open-ended questionnaire, fourteen young people in their late teens to early thirties. The questionnaire served to obtain specific data on various aspects of Jewish identity for these people who spent the greater part of their lives in France.

Fieldwork included a one-week trip to Algeria, where I stayed with and interviewed two of the three Jews who remain in Batna.

In the thesis I make use in an abbreviated form of the progressive-regressive method developed by Sartre in Search for a Method. Sartre's massive (three volume, projected four volume) study of Flaubert puts his method ideally into practice. Certain aspects of my focus are different: I am writing not about an individual historically but about a group's social history. Hence the richness of individual particularity is not the major task here and is revealed only in brief passages on individuals within the group.⁵ I follow Sartre's method to a point--

thus there is no claim that the result of my study is a "totalization." To do so would minimally entail a study of France comparable to my work on Algeria. Therefore, Search for a Method provides a guiding model.

Let us briefly discuss Sartre's progressive-regressive method. Sartre writes that "The movement of comprehension is simultaneously progressive (toward the objective result) and regressive (. . . back toward the original condition)" (Sartre 1963:154). This is the way in which one understands events in daily interaction as well as the method for analyzing the social world. Comprehending, for instance, an act by another person is progressive--one looks toward what that person has done--and regressive--one looks back at prior events which situate the act. This is a simultaneous movement. The going backwards (regressive movement) is coupled with the going forward toward the resulting act.

Part of the regressive movement is the procedure of "cross-reference." In the simplest terms, cross-reference is building a multiplicity of ways in terms of which historical phenomena can be seen. Sartre uses Flaubert, and his novel, Madame Bovary, as an illustration.⁶ He examines the history of this novelist and his novel by analyzing the social conditions (in the broadest sense) of the epoch in which Flaubert is living, the family conditions (of families of that class and occupation), and the particular experiences of Flaubert as a child growing up in his particular family. The goal is not to reduce Flaubert to any of these things: thus the explanation that Flaubert wrote his novel because he came from the petite bourgeoisie is insufficient. Rather the task is to set up a framework in which Flaubert is situated in his milieu and his milieu is grasped through Flaubert's particularity. "The most

concrete significations are radically irreducible to the most abstract significations" (Sartre 1963:145).

Once the task of the regressive movement, of cross-referencing, is accomplished then the progressive method is begun.

The problem is to recover the totalizing movement of enrichment which engenders each moment in terms of the proper moment, the impulse which starts from lived obscurities in order to arrive at the final objectification--in short, [given the Flaubert example] the project by which Flaubert, in order to escape from the petite bourgeoisie, will launch himself across the various fields of possibles toward the alienated objectification of himself and will constitute himself inevitably and indissolubly as the author of Madame Bovary and as that petit bourgeois which he refused to be [Sartre 1963:147].

In my study I attempt to adhere to the principal outlines of this method.⁷

Sartre writes that one is to "proceed as far as possible . . . in the historical particularity of the object" (Sartre 1963:140). Thus my study begins by situating the Jews of Algeria in the context of French colonialism. I study the identity of this group of Jews in Batna and in France in reference to a very concrete phenomenon: the domination of Algeria by the French colonists.

Knowledge of the impact of colonialism on the Jews of Algeria in general and of the ideology of domination of the colonists over the indigenous Muslims is essential to the understanding of the Jews of Batna. This double task is the subject of the first chapter.

We see how a forced modernization takes place. Having previously been a self-regulating, quasi-theocratic community under control of the Muslims, the Jews were integrated in the 1830s into the French nation-state. French Jews seized control of the Algerian Jewish communities and broke the traditional structures. Thus Algerian Jews were in effect colonized by the French Jews with the latter professing humanitarian goals--

progress for their 'downtrodden' Algerian co-religionists--but, as we will see in the first chapter, there were economic and other interests at stake. The French Jews were embarrassed by the presence of these 'backward' and 'Arabized' Jews of Algeria and thus tried to make them adopt French customs. With the insistence of the French Jews, the Jews of Algeria were given French citizenship. The Algerian Jews became active in the Algerian political arena and, to a certain extent, part of the European economic sector. Christian colonists reacted strongly to the increased Jewish participation in public life. As forcefully articulated in the Algiers antisemitic riots of 1989, Christian colonists tried to assert and legitimate their domination in this colonial society through racial prerogatives.

Having set broad outlines of the overarching structures of colonial domination, the analysis shifts to a study of the town of Batna. The second chapter is a demographic and economic study of the Jews and Christians of Batna. In the 19th century, we find the Jews occupationally segregated but subsequently more fully integrated into the European sector, especially in the post-World War II period. Literacy, changes in naming practices (traditional to French names) in the Jewish community indicate this shift.

Narrowing the particularity further, the third chapter describes the Jewish family in Batna. From an ethnographic description of the customs and values of the family, the focus shifts to the family as the constitutive unit of identity. Denying many of the differences between Jews and Christians in family life, Jews chose to define their difference from Christians in terms of a supposed moral superiority of the

Jewish family. Analyzing marriage ceremonies, we see how Jews began to present themselves to themselves and to the Christians as European--stripping away many North African aspects of their culture. Removal of North African elements in Jewish life-crisis ceremonies with little re-symbolization was taken by them to be sufficient proof of their European status. Jewishness was involuted on symbols of the family and Jewish identity generated by living in a social world in which Jews were clearly demarcated to other groups without having to signal who they were.

Chapter Four, on inter-group (Jewish, Muslim, Christian) relations in Batna, continues the particularity of the regressive movement. We see individual Jews in Batna caught in a net of contradictions arising from their position as Jews in colonial Algeria; cultural constraints shaped their rebellion.

In the fifth and sixth chapters, we attempt the progressive movement. Sartre writes that "the meaning of a conduct and its value can be grasped only in perspective by the movement which realizes the possibles as it reveals the given" (Sartre 1963:152). In these chapters we see the consequences, the choices of individuals and groups, which are conditioned (but not determined) by the historical situation of Jews in colonial Algeria. In the fifth chapter, we discuss the Second World War and the Algerian War. During the Second World War Jews were stripped of their French citizenship, many lost their jobs, and their property was confiscated. Still, most of the Jewish population retained a strong sense that they were 'really' French and continued to support the French government. Despite Muslim assistance during the World War II period, Jews (from Batna and throughout Algeria) sided with the French government

during the Algerian Revolution. We move back and forth between the large-scale events of these two wars, the social conditions created by them, and the particularity of Batna. We see the effect of the wars on the lives of the Batna Jews and how they understood what was taking place.

The analysis in the sixth chapter of the Jewish family in France is a continuation of the progressive movement. We focus on a group of Jewish extended families from Batna living in the small city of Baumugnes, France. We wish to understand the project of identity creation given their history and the changed social context. How they grapple with being Jewish and the contradictions and dilemmas they face are seen as an outcome of their past and an attempt on their part to go beyond it.

Section III

Colonialism and Racism

Keeping this overview of the thesis in mind, let us now turn to examine some of the theoretical issues and presuppositions underlying the analysis of French colonialism in Algeria and the place of the Jews in it.

Albert Memmi's work on the relation between colonizer and colonized serves as an important theoretical foundation for this work.⁸ Memmi characterizes colonialism as "first of all a politico-economic exploitation. But . . . it is a relation of a people to a people and not of a class to a class" (Memmi 1973:15, footnote 1). It is this former aspect which gives colonial oppression its specificity and upon which Memmi concentrates his analysis.

In the colonial relationship, the colonizer is the "illegitimate" possessor of power (Memmi 1973:39). As Memmi demonstrates, the reason the colonist comes and stays in the colony is to be in a privileged economic and political position. This privilege has its basis in the historical accident which made the colonizer's nation the conqueror. Therefore, Memmi characterizes the colonizer as a "usurper": the illegitimacy of his position is apparent both to himself and to the colonized. "He [the colonizer] appears thus doubly unjust: he is a privileged person and a nonlegitimate privileged one, that is to say a usurper" (Memmi 1973:39).

The colonizer attempts to prove his legitimacy in his own eyes and still assert his dominance. Thus the colonizer is constantly engaged in aggrandizing his own merits and belittling those of the colonized. The basis of this claim to legitimacy is a racist ideology. Memmi analyzes the racist attitude of the colonist and sees in it three important elements: (1) differences between the colonist and the colonized are enunciated, (2) these differences are "valorized" for the profit of the colonizer and to the detriment of the colonized, (3) these differences are then brought into the realm of the "absolute" and thought of as definitive. Actions are taken so as to insure the definitiveness of the classification (see Memmi 1973:100).¹⁰ The colonist removes the perceived differences between himself and the colonized from being the result of historical or geographic circumstances.

The sociological fact is baptised biological or better yet metaphysical. It is declared to belong to the essence of the colonized. . . . the colonial relation between the colonized and the colonizer, founded on the essential way of being of two protagonists becomes a definitive category [Memmi 1973:101].

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Thus Memmi sees racism

. . . not as a detail more or less accidental but as an element consubstantial to colonialism. . . . It is the best expression of the colonial fact. . . . Not only does it establish the fundamental distinction between colonizer and colonized . . . but it grounds this distinction in immutability. Only racism allows to pose for eternity, by substantiating it, a historical relationship having had a dated beginning [Memmi 1973:103; emphasis added].

In other words, under a colonial system, racist ideology takes the differences between groups and poses them as if they were the defining essence of the groups. We are reminded here of Marx's incisive observation that what appears founded in the nature of the individual in one historic period is seen as accidental in another (Marx and Engels 1972: 86).

This notion of essence is thus culturally created: the process of substantiation described here is one case of the more general phenomenon of reification. Reification, in simplest terms, is taking an idea or concept and treating it as if it were a thing: thus it is the process by which "thingness" is ascribed. In the case of substantiation, in the sense in which I am using the term, an attribute (or attributes) of groups of people is conceived of as a thing, a physical, unchangeable essence.¹¹ For the social actors engaged in such a process the substantialized characteristics are perceived as one of the taken for granted aspects of the social world.

One further notion needs to be added to Memmi's insights into the colonial process in North Africa. The very idea of race itself is a cultural category and one which forms part of the ideology of domination in North African colonial society. When speaking of racism in North Africa, one has to keep in mind that the idea of a racial

distinction between the indigenous North Africans and the European settlers was brought to North Africa by the settlers themselves. Phenotypically, there was little difference between the Europeans of North Africa (especially those from the Mediterranean basin) and the Muslim population. That these differences were conceptualized as race is a phenomenon which needs to be explained.

Louis Dumont (1966) sees racism as coming directly out of the Enlightenment doctrine of the equality of man. As opposed to hierarchical societies such as the caste system in India or the feudalism of the European Middle Ages, the Enlightenment philosophers pose all men as having a common essence. However, there is a "serious and unexpected consequence of [this] egalitarianism" (Dumont 1966:31). A common-sense confusion between equality and identity comes into being. Sameness is supposed and, when sameness is not found, difference is conceptualized in somatic terms.

In the universe where all men are no longer conceived of as hierarchized in diverse social or cultural species, but as equal and identical in their essence, the difference of nature and of status between communities is sometimes reaffirmed in a disastrous fashion: it is . . . conceived of as proceeding from somatic characteristics, this is racism [Dumont 1966:31].

We should note that some of the early French settlers in Algeria were political exiles sent to Algeria for their leftist beliefs and actions.¹² Pierre Nora poses the question how these progressive, democratic, and socialist exiles could have been transformed in Algeria into reactionaries and oppressors of the Muslim population.¹³ Economic and political factors can account for these French colonists' taking advantage of their privileged situation in colonial Algeria. Dumont's theory enables us to understand how they reconciled the seeming contradictions

between their politics and their new-found status. Coming to Algeria, believing in the equality of all, they found themselves in the position where they were the ruling group in a situation in which those under them were obviously different. The colonists transformed this difference into racial difference; they created a somatic basis to comprehend and justify the inequality.

As many students of colonial Algeria have noted (e.g., Nora, Memmi, Cohen, O'Brien, Fanon), there was a tendency among the colonists to dehumanize, to deny the common humanity of the Muslim population. Speech acts provide an excellent example of this. Nora (1961:184) and Cohen (1955) note that the colonists restricted the use of personal pronouns to designate Europeans. (See Chapter Four for a detailed discussion.) Memmi gives the example that an act by a Muslim which displeased a European was never spoken of as an act by an individual but as an expression of group characteristics. It was not that a particular Muslim stole or lied but that "they" do so. Memmi calls this the "mark of the plural": "The colonized is never characterized in a differentiated manner; he only has the right to drown in the anonymous collectivity" (Memmi 1973:115). Given this racial ideology, this study analyzes how the Jews created their sense of identity and came to think of themselves as "European."

Section IV

Antisemitism and Jewish Identity

As Memmi's work serves as a model for understanding the relationship between colonizer and colonized in North Africa, Jean-Paul Sartre's Anti-Semite and Jew provides an insight into the position of Jews in

French society. I am using Sartre in a sense as an informant, because as a non-Jewish Frenchman his philosophical portrayal of the relations between Jew and non-Jew in France are based in his lived experience as a member of that society. Even the shortcomings of his analysis (which Memmi points to and I discuss in the conclusions) reveal how Jews present themselves to non-Jews in France. In contrast to Algeria, where the Jews were a large, concrete group with a definite presence in all aspects of daily life, in France Jews have always been a tiny minority which has played a disproportionately important role in French politics and history.

The Jews about whom Sartre writes are very "Frenchified." They are not strictly religious and are ostensibly the 'same' as other Frenchmen. French is their native language; their culture, education, tastes, etc., are French. It would seem that the ". . . Jew is perfectly assimilable by modern nations, but he is to be denied as one whom these nations do not wish to assimilate" (Sartre 1974:67). For Sartre, what keeps them Jews, what serves to give unity to the Jewish community, is their "situation" as Jews.

It is neither their past, their religion, nor their soil that unites the sons of Israel. If they have a common bond, if all of them deserve the name of Jew, it is because they have in common the situation of a Jew, that is, they live in a community which takes them for Jews [Sartre 1974:67].

Sartre's term "situation" bears scrutiny. For Sartre, man is defined "as a being 'in a situation'" (Sartre 1974:59). That is, man has to be understood as a "synthetic whole" with his biological, economic, political, cultural, etc., setting. One cannot extract 'man' as such from his situation: the situation forms who he is and gives him

his range of possibilities. Within his given state, man makes meaning by his choices.

The French Jew is to be understood as being created (and consequently choosing his course of action) through a social world which defines him as an outsider who has no legitimate place in French society. The Jew is regarded not as an individual but as a Jew. Sartre gives us the example that as a government official the Jew is a Jewish official. Even in personal matters, the same things occurs: "Let him [the Jew] multiply acts of disinterestedness and honesty and perhaps he will be called a good Jew. But Jew he is and must remain" (Sartre 1974:74). The Christian Frenchman sees himself as having a link with French culture, land, language which comes to be considered "natural" (see Sartre 1974:133). The Frenchman has a certainty of belonging, of having a claim on French heritage which the Jew never has. The Jew is not considered part of French 'history'; he did not create the past, hence he has no legitimate part in the present. Sartre analyzes the response of the Jew to being placed in this position and the consequences of the Jews' actions given his situation.

What concerns us here directly is looking at Sartre's analysis in terms of the contrast it offers us with Algeria. What it means to be Jewish in France is quite different from what it means in colonial Algeria. In France the 'native' Frenchman is seen as having a certain groundedness, a legitimacy of possession of his country. This both manifests itself in his feeling that he is a part of the nation and legitimates his right to possess land and material goods. The French Jew, however, is denied this. Because he is Jewish, he is by definition not a

'real' Frenchman and his Frenchness is considered assumed and illegitimate. In France, therefore, the situation is in many ways the opposite of colonial Algeria. The Christian Europeans of Algeria were trying to forge this sense of legitimacy in their position. We have seen above in the discussion of Memmi's analysis the impossibility of such an attempt. Just as 'history' created the Christian's legitimacy in France, so 'history' denied it to them in Algeria. For the Jews in Algeria, the sense of belonging to Algeria was not a problem: they were considered indigenous people by the Christians, Muslims, and themselves. In France (even under the antisemitic Vichy regime) no one denied the Jews' right of citizenship. Their legal status was never in question, but within this legal position their right (in an almost moral sense) to be 'real' Frenchmen was disputed. The Christians in France did not question that the French Jews had a right to be citizens, but as citizens they were Jews and not 'really' French. In Algeria the Christians did not deny the Jews their 'Algerianness' but did protest the Jews' right to be French citizens.

In France the Jews are a loosely defined Other. They are defined in terms of an essence which is characterized by negativity--a lack of being French, whereas in Algeria, the Jews were defined as being a group with its own particular characteristics. The French of Algeria denied that the Jews were French, but they treated them as a distinct group. In colonial Algeria racial/religious groups were the cultural model; in France, with the exception of the Jews, there is a traditional assumption of uniformity.

NOTES

¹Baumugnes is an imaginary name. It is taken from the novel by Jean Giono, Un de Baumugnes.

²French census material does not include data on religion. This figure is therefore an estimate.

³The documents were found in the Harvard Library. I would like to thank Sid Schuyler of the Anthropology Department of Harvard for her hospitality during my stay.

⁴I would like to thank Pierre Bourdieu for helping me to obtain permission to use the Etat-Civil.

⁵Sartre's focus on the individual and his incorporation of the psychic makeup of the individual in a study which situates that person-ality historically without reducing it to the historical era (as for example Erikson does) is one of his major contributions. By so doing, he adds to our knowledge of both history and the individual.

⁶The exploration of this profundity [i.e., the profundity of the world through man] is a descent from the absolute concrete (Madame Bovary in the hands of a reader contemporary with Flaubert . . .) to its most abstract conditioning (material conditions, the conflict of productive forces and of the relations of production insofar as these conditions appear in their universality and are given abstract subjects). Across Madame Bovary we can and must catch sight of the movement of landowners and capitalists, the evolution of the rising classes, the slow maturation of the Proletariat: everything is there [Sartre 1963:145-146].

⁷As well as regressive-progressive, Sartre characterizes his method as analytic-synthetic. That is, a process of dissecting events from numerous vantage points and then recombining them in a totalization which is the unity of the "heterogeneous structure" (Sartre 1963:147-148). Sartre's method is

. . . at the same time an enriching cross-reference between the object (which contains the whole period as hierarchized significations) and the period (which contains the object in its totalization). In fact, when the object is rediscovered in its profundity and in its particularity, then instead of remaining external to the totalization (as it was up until the time when Marxists undertook to integrate it into history), it enters immediately into contradiction with it. In short, the simple inert juxtaposition of the epoch and the object gives way abruptly to a living conflict [Sartre 1963:148-149].

⁸Memmi, a Tunisian Jew, grew up in a traditional, non-French speaking environment and through sheer brilliance and perseverance obtained a university education. The position of the Jews of Tunisia--

they were never accorded French citizenship as were the Jews of Algeria-- was one of utter marginality. They were clearly not colonizer, yet in the movement of their elite toward French education and lifestyle, they were demarcated from the Muslims. Memmi describes the Jews as the next to the bottom rung on the pyramid of power and position. Precisely because he was not a French citizen, Memmi was in the position to see more clearly the contradictory place of the Jews in North Africa.

⁹Memmi calls this process the Nero complex: "Et ces deux efforts sont en fait inséparables. Son inquietude, sa soif de justification exigent de l'usurpateur, à la fois, qu'il se port lui-même aux nues, et qu'il enfonce l'usurpé plus bas que terre" (Memmi 1974:83).

¹⁰For the sake of clarity I have paraphrased the translation. Words in quotation marks are Memmi's.

¹¹The precise way in which this substantialization is effected is beyond the scope of ethnohistorical reconstruction. In Chapter Four there is further detail on it. For an excellent analysis of substantialization in the formation of identity see Magdoff (n.d.).

¹²Political deportees from the 1848 revolution and the Paris Commune of 1871.

¹³See Nora 1961:103-106. He describes the legislation which was passed under leftist governments for Algeria and which was used by the colonists to deprive the Muslims of their lands and their rights.

CHAPTER I

THE JEWS OF ALGERIA: 1830-1900

This chapter is divided into two sections. In the first part, I discuss the legal and social impact of the French conquest of Algeria on the Jews. In the second section, I analyze antisemitic movements of the Christian colonists.

The first section begins with a brief historical overview of the Jews in North Africa and their role in the French conquest of Algeria. The French drastically changed the structure of Algerian society. The Islamic state in which religious and secular law were identical (and in which Jewish law had its delegated role) was replaced by a colonial regime which governed by a secular legal system. Over a 40-year period, the Jews of Algeria were fully incorporated into the French system of secular law. I contend that this was a process of forced modernization: the Algerian Jews were in effect colonized by their French coreligionists as well as by the French colonial regime. This is a reinterpretation of the history of the Jews in colonial Algeria. Previous work has portrayed the French Jews as the saviors of their downtrodden fellow Jews rather than as systematically undermining a cultural tradition.¹ I postulate that this experience is in part responsible for the Algerian Jews' stripping away many aspects of their culture and involuting symbols of identity on the family. This process is described in Chapters Three and Four.

The second section of this chapter shows how the structural position of the Algerian Jews changed and examines the consequences of it. In the beginning of the colonial period, Jews had the same legal rights as Muslims, but lower social status. After mass naturalization in 1870, Jews had the same legal position as the European colonists. Legally, at least, they made the shift from colonized to colonizer. We shall examine why their relationship to the European population was thrown into tumult.

Section I

The Algerian Jews Become French Citizens

There is documentation for the continuous presence of Jews in North Africa for some 2300 years, from 300 B.C. through the present. There is some possibility that Jewish settlement may date back to Phoenician times, thus pushing the settlement date back 500 years further. Due both to a paucity of source material, and to a lack of scholarly interest, there has been little historical work on North African Jews until rather recently.²

North African Jewry traces its origins to two sources: one uncontestedly documented migration was the flight of Spanish and Portuguese Jews to North Africa in the 14th and 15th centuries. However, there were large communities of Jews throughout North Africa when the Iberian refugees arrived. The origin of this earlier Jewish population is in question. One commonly advanced theory is that these Jews were descended from converts among the autochthonous Berber population. There is the legend of the Kahina, a Jewish Berber queen. She is said to have rallied the last concentrated Berber resistance to the Arab invaders in

the second half of the seventh century A.D.³ The "Berber theory" is contested by Hirschberg (1974), one of the leading authorities on North African Jews, who claims that there is no evidence that the woman who led the Berbers was Jewish. Instead, he argues that there was a diffusion of Jews of Palestinian origin to North Africa via Libya and Cyrenaica during the Greek and Roman periods (Hirschberg 1974:13-14).⁴ The reader is referred to Hirschberg for further details of the history of North African Jewry.

Let us now narrow our focus to Algeria and turn to the year 1525. In that year Algiers became the center of Ottoman power in the Maghreb. According to the historian Jamil Abun-Nasr (1971), the modern situation of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia was importantly shaped by the varying impact of the Ottoman Empire. The Turks never conquered Morocco, ruled Algeria directly, and in Tunisia were incorporated into the ruling dynasties. The situation of the Algerian Jews was adversely affected by Turkish rule. The Turks imposed very strict conditions as to dress, taxation, etc. Jews were not allowed to wear colorful clothes, to carry weapons, or to ride horses. They had to take off their shoes when passing in front of a mosque and had to give way in the road to a Muslim. Although in all Muslim countries Jews, as well as Christians, had restrictions placed upon them, it is generally agreed that Turkish rule in Algeria was particularly harsh for the Jews.

There were, however, a group of Jews in Algeria who enjoyed a privileged position. These were the Jews from Livorno, Italy, who settled in the coastal cities of Algeria from the end of the 17th century and throughout the 18th century. They acquired a crucial role in the

economic and political life of the Regency of Algeria. Westernized, often citizens of European countries, and hence under the protection of European consuls, they did not have the same restrictions as the indigenous Jews.

Two such families, Bacri and Busnach, were the most important of the Algiers Jewish mercantile families at the end of the 18th century. These two families were the catalysts in a series of events which led to the French invasion of Algeria. Through a very complicated set of political-commercial quasi-swindles which involved playing the French off against the Dey of Algiers, the Bacri and Busnach families were responsible for the situation in which the French consul (who was in league with their swindles) was swatted with the fly-whisk of the Dey. This so-called insult to the honor of France, the Dey tried to explain in numerous letters to the French government, was merely a sign of his exasperation with the dishonest and ineffectual French consul.⁵ Yet the "insult" was used as a pretext for the invasion of Algiers in 1830 and the eventual seizure of the entire country.

The Muslim population strenuously resisted the French occupation.⁶ The Jews aided the invading French army: they served as interpreters and many were killed in combat action.⁷

Once French rule became established in Algeria, there began a concerted effort on the part of the Jews in France, especially in the liberal intellectual circle of the publication Archives Israélites, to 'civilize' their coreligionists in Algeria. These French Jews had considerable political influence and were imbued with the 19th century ideal of social progress.⁸ They were convinced that France had the highest civilization and

they wanted to change the Jews of Algeria into modern Frenchmen. These French Jews were a particular lot: they were the first group of European Jewry to be Westernized and to have full citizenship.⁹ They had internalized in a very conscious way the ideals of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution and were determined to remake all Jews under French dominance. In their eyes "something had to be done in their [Algerian Jews'] behalf in order not to harm the prestige of French Jewry" (Szajkowski 1956:28).

French-Jewish travelers and army and administrative personnel often made extremely negative judgments of the Algerian Jews; they were more critical than the Christian French. One French-Jewish army doctor wrote that the Algerian Jews were "an execrable, deceitful, greedy race. They combine all the baseness of slavery with the most depraved vices" (Rosenstock 1956b:41). This same man alleged that stables in France were cleaner than synagogues in Algeria.

As a strategy to control the Algerian Jews, the French Jews moved to have the Algerian Jewish communities placed under their religious jurisdiction. In France (until 1905) all religious organizations were incorporated into the government. Religious groups were part of the French bureaucracy; clergy and religious administrators were civil servants paid by the state. The Jewish communities in France were centrally organized into regional "consistoires" subordinate to the Consistoire Central of Paris. For the Algerian Jews to become part of the French system meant that the Parisian authorities would control their religious, educational, and community activities. The French Jews wanted this power in order to be able to educate and control the younger generation of

Algerian Jews. The French Jews' political strategy, discussed below, to have the Algerian Jews incorporated into the French Jewish consistoire system was an integral part of a plan to have them declared French citizens.

At the start of French rule in 1830, the Jews, like the Muslims, were left under the jurisdiction of their respective local religious organizations. The Jews were to be governed as they had been under Turkish rule. Under the Deys, as in all Islamic countries, the Jews had had a quasi-autonomous government. The Muslim rulers appointed the head of the Jewish community; he was responsible for collecting taxes and for representing the Jewish community to the Muslim authorities. The Jews themselves handled internal matters in the Jewish community ranging from taxation, to marriage and divorce, to civil and criminal offenses. Only in cases involving Muslims did Jews have dealings with the judiciary apparatus of the state.¹⁰ The Jews were considered a protected people who lived in the midst of the Muslim umma (community of believers) but were not part of it.

When the French took over Algeria, they initially adopted the Turkish form; Jacob Bacri was named "head of the Hebrew nation" in Algiers on November 16, 1830 (Martin 1936:44-45). His position depended directly on the French commanding general who nominated him for a yearly term from a list of three candidates designated by the notables of the Jewish community.

In addition, the French created a Jewish council in June of 1831. This council consisted of three men named by the French commanding general; it was renewable by thirds every six months. The general chose the

members from a list of nine candidates proposed by the Jewish community. The council took charge of tax collection, a task formerly controlled by the head of the Jewish community (Martin 1936:44-45). Judiciary matters were in the hands of a rabbinic court which judged civil, religious, and criminal matters. The Muslim courts handled cases involving Jews and Muslims.

Both Jews and Muslims became part of the municipal governments created by the French. As early as 1831, a Municipal Council was formed in Algiers having two Jewish and seven Muslim members. The Chamber of Commerce as well had Jewish and Muslim representatives (Martin 1936:46).

For the Jews, this co-existence of traditional and modern forms did not last long. As a result of a commission of inquiry sent to Algeria in 1833, the government decided to place the Jews under French jurisprudence. One of the decisive factors in this recommendation was the state of corruption and disorder in which the commission found the rabbinic courts.¹¹ The commission's proposal reduced the jurisdiction of the rabbinic courts to religious and marital matters and the reconciliation of persons who came to them voluntarily.¹² The rabbinic tribunal continued to function until 1842 when the Jews were placed under the total jurisdiction of French courts.¹³ The French courts decided questions of marriage, divorce, and other aspects of personal status in accordance with Jewish law; the courts followed the written advice of rabbis in such matters (Martin 1936:48).

These laws radically changed the structure of the Algerian Jewish community. When the French conquered Algeria, the Jews were a corporate community based on religious law. In just twelve years, the

French dissolved the Jews' corporate status and incorporated them (at least partially) as a group of individuals into a system of civil law.

The Ordinance of November 9, 1845, accelerated this process. This piece of legislation created an Algerian Consistoire headquartered in Algiers and independent of the Consistoire Central of France. Provincial (subordinate) consistoires were formed in Constantine and Oran. The French king officially appointed the Grand Rabbi of Algeria and the members of the Consistoire of Algiers upon the suggestion of the Secretary of War.¹⁴ The latter named the members of the Oran and Constantine consistoires following the advice of the Governor General of Algeria who in turn named the candidates for the Consistoire of Algiers. French Jews, who were the appointed advisors to French officials, thus had indirect control of the lay and religious structure of the Algerian Jewish communities.¹⁵

Some of the Algerian Jews resisted this domination. They balked at sending their children to the schools the French Jews established. On a community level, they took certain retaliatory actions against French Jews who came to settle in Algeria. (There were an estimated 500 to 600 French Jews in Algeria in 1840 [Rosenstock 1956b:43]). Algerian Jews in Oran and Constantine refused to bury French Jews in their cemetery. However, most of the members of the Algerian Jewish communities were too poor and powerless to take any direct actions. In the discussion below of the Decree Cremieux, we will see further evidence of Algerian Jewish resistance and strongarm tactics of French Jews.

Before discussing the next two major pieces of legislation affecting Algerian Jews, the Senatus-Consulte of 1865 and the Decree

Cremieux of 1870, let us examine some of the political ploys of the French Jews. Many Jewish writers (see Chouraqui 1973; Eisenbeth 1931; Ansky 1950; etc.) portray the legal process by which the Algerian Jews became French citizens as a natural evolution: they argue that the Jews were receptive to French civilization and did not want to preserve their traditional jural and governing bodies. In the eyes of these writers, the piecemeal nature of the legislation dealing with the Jews created such an ambiguous legal situation that the only resolution possible was collective naturalization.

The evidence, however, indicates that all was not so straightforward and simple. The role of the French Jews in the series of legislative acts affecting the Algerian Jews is quite important. While a full analysis of the motivations and interests (political and economic) of the French Jews is beyond the scope of this study, I will discuss some of the political maneuvers of the French Jews. It is worth noting that there was a great deal of wealth and power to be gained by those Jews who came to Algeria and were placed as heads of Jewish communities. Some of them abused their power and were forced to resign on charges of corruption.¹⁶

Let us refocus our attention on the Ordinance of November 9, 1845, and trace some of the steps in its genesis. As early as 1833, the Consistoire Central of France made a suggestion to the French government that it create a consistoire system in Algeria. In a letter dated December 12, 1836, the Consistoire Central wrote to the Minister of Justice and Religious Affairs that

. . . some advantage to the Government could result from the establishment of a Jewish Consistory in Algeria placed, as all departmental consistories, under the direction of the Central Consistory. It

appears to us that this would attach to France an important part of the African population and accelerate the moral regeneration of these new fellow-citizens [quoted in Szajkowski 1956:28; emphasis added].

In 1839, the Ministry of War began action towards the religious reorganization of the Algerian Jews. In 1841 a commission was named to investigate and make suggestions concerning the Algerian Jews: Jacques Altaras (a wealthy Marseille merchant and president of the Consistoire of Marseille) and Joseph Cohen (a lawyer) went to Algeria in 1842 and upon their return submitted a report. Among their suggestions were that the Algerian Jews be given civil rights, do military service, be obliged to dress in European garments, be placed under French law in civil matters, etc. (Szajkowski 1956:31).

Joseph Cohen was subsequently appointed adviser on Jewish affairs to the War Ministry in Algeria and installed himself in Algiers, whereupon "clothed with semi-official approval, he appeared to the native Jews as the actual, if not the legal head of the community. [Cohen] . . . unofficially arrogat[ed] to himself the powers of a consistory president" (Rosenstock 1956b:49).

As a result of the Altaras and Cohen report, the Ministry of War named a commission to prepare a statute for the Algerian Jews. Included in this commission were three members of the Consistoire Central, two of whom, Adolphe Cremieux and Max Cerfberr, were deputies in the French national assembly. This commission proposed that the Jews be placed entirely under French jurisprudence and that a consistorial system be set up which would be part of the French one.¹⁷ As we have seen, the law of November 9, 1845, did not contain these provisions. A student of the period, Z. Szajkowski (1956:35) interprets this as a victory for the

military authorities of Algeria who did not want to see the Jews come under the control of the Consistoire Central of France. Nonetheless, French Jews did obtain indirect control over the Algerian Jews as a result of this law.

With the establishment of the consistoires in Algeria, their French Jewish directors made a systematic effort to incorporate them into the Consistoire Central. These directors fought against autonomous religious organizing by the native Jews. The Chief Rabbi of Algeria, the President and the majority of the Consistorial leaders were French Jews residing in Algeria. In November of 1846 Rabbi Michel A. Weill was appointed head of the Algerian Consistoire (Szajkowski 1956:36). He soon became involved in petitioning the French government to place the Algerian consistoires under control of the French system. Weill's petitions included such demands as replacing the small synagogues in the large cities with a few large ones, reducing the power of the local rabbis, etc. These were moves to consolidate control. The local Jews protested: "On July 8, 1857, the orthodox majority of Algerian Jewry sent a petition to the Government denouncing the proposals of Rabbi Weill and his friends, but these were nevertheless supported by the Central Consistory and in an official Government project of 1858" (Szajkowski 1956:39).

The French Jews won this struggle. The French government placed the three consistoires of Algeria under control of the Consistoire Central in 1862 and incorporated them into it in 1867.¹⁸ One of the consequences of this centralized control was that the appointment and certification of all religious practitioners (including rabbis, religious teachers, ritual slaughterers, and circumcisors) came under the

jurisdiction and control of the French Jews. For example, in the 1867 decree, there was a stipulation that the Grand Rabbis of Algeria have a secondary rabbinical degree ("diplome du second degre rabbinique"). As these degrees were from French rabbinical schools, the decree in effect handed over those positions to French rabbis.

The next major piece of legislation affecting the personal status of the Jews was the Senate decree of July 14, 1865. This decree declared both Jews and Muslims to be French subjects and set forth procedures by which they could become French citizens.¹⁹

The *Senatus-Consulte* of 1865 did not give Jews preferential treatment over Muslims. The naturalization process was quite complicated and only 289 Jews took advantage of it in the four-year period it was in effect (Chouraqui 1973:149).

Throughout the 1850s and 1860s members of the judiciary and Municipal and Department Councils in Algeria attempted to have the Jews naturalized collectively. One of the most outspoken proponents of Jewish naturalization was Casimir Fregier, a judge from the town of Setif. His position was that only by granting the Jews citizenship en masse could the legal contradictions in their situation be resolved (Fregier 1860, 1862, 1863, 1864, 1865).²⁰

Jacques Cohen (1900), in a history of the Algerian Jews and the Cremieux Decree, argues that there was popular consensus among the Christian colonists of Algeria to naturalize the Jews. From the late 1850s to the mid-1860s the general councils in Algeria passed resolutions urging naturalization for the Jews. However, these resolutions did not explicitly call for collective naturalization, simply easy access to

citizenship. Some of these resolutions (e.g., Algiers, 1859) included a provision for Muslims as well (Cohen 1900:100-111). After the passage of the Senatus-Consulte of 1865, the general councils changed and began to advocate collective naturalization (Roland n.d.:98). However, I maintain that it is virtually impossible to gauge popular sentiment among the Algerian colonists by these resolutions. The colonists of foreign origin were largely disenfranchised and the Republican element out of power. Further evidence is necessary to judge the internal politics of these councils.

Just before the collapse of the Second Empire, legislation was pending for collective naturalization of the Algerian Jews. Emile Olliver, the Minister of Justice, presented a draft of a collective naturalization law to the Conseil d'Etat in March of 1870. Formal complications briefly stalled its passage. Then, overwhelming outside events--the military defeat of France by the Prussians and the fall of the Second Empire--halted consideration of it. Adolphe Cremieux was one of the most important members in the newly constituted Government of National Defense. He served as Minister of Justice and took charge of Algerian affairs. Cremieux presented a series of decrees on October 24, 1870, to the Cabinet dealing with the further incorporation of Algeria into France. They involved a political, legal, and administrative revamping of the colony's relation to France. The decree, now referred to as the Decree Cremieux, collectively naturalizing the Algerian Jews, was also presented that day. The text of the decree reads as follows:

"The indigenous Jews of the departments of Algeria are declared French citizens; consequently, their real statute and their personal statute will be, starting with the promulgation of the present decree, regulated by French law.

All legislative provision, decree, regulation or ordinance to the contrary are abolished.

Enacted at Tours, the 24 October 1870"

Signed by Crémieux, Gambetta, Glais-Bizoin, Fourichon [Uhry 1887:65 (all translations are my own unless reference indicates translation)].

There has been a great deal of controversy surrounding the Crémieux Decree. One of the claims against it was that it had been signed only by Gambetta and Crémieux; this has been disproved. Another objection alleged that it was issued at an inopportune moment: France was at war and the government should have concentrated on the war effort and not passed civil legislation. There were those who claimed that the Government of National Defense had been constituted with the purpose of defending the country and did not have the jurisdiction to pass such laws. Jacques Cohen's (1900) study of the Jews and the Crémieux Decree presents a refutation of this position; I am not qualified to judge the merits of the legal debate. A common complaint against the Decree Crémieux was that it caused the Muslim rebellion of 1871; the evidence presented in the inquiries into the rebellion reveal that this was not a primary factor (Forest 1897). Many critics claimed that the Jews were not prepared educationally or culturally for the responsibilities of citizenship.

There has been virtually nothing written about how the Jews greeted their new status. I would like to advance the hypothesis that there was a strong sentiment among part of the population against citizenship, in that citizenship meant that they were placed under a nonreligious system in regard to marriage, divorce, and other related matters. The Jews most likely experienced the state as impinging on religious prerogatives. Crémieux himself recognized the existence of such sentiment among the Algerian Jews; he had made seventeen voyages to Algeria and consequently

had a feeling for the situation there. He had, therefore, argued against legislation which would give the Algerian Jews the choice to become citizens. "Cremieux had no illusions concerning the conservative spirit of his coreligionists and the force of religious resistance: [Crémieux said] 'Do not say to them [the Algerian Jews]: be French if you care to, because, voluntarily, they will not abandon the law of God'" (quoted in Julien 1964:467). Julien observes, apropos of the role played by Cremieux in the passage of the Cremieux Decree, that "[b]y opting for legal constraint, the Minister of Justice [i.e., Cremieux], who had fought all his life against the abuse of power, rallied, for the needs of a cause to the procedure of compelle intrare" (Julien 1964:467).

After passage of the Decree Cremieux, there was widespread refusal on the part of the native Jews to be married civilly. The Consistoire Central, enraged by this rebellion, wrote the Algerian regional consistoires a harsh letter of reprimand. (See footnote 21 for the text of the letter.) The letter called the regional consistoires' attention to the fact that indigenous rabbis continued to perform religious marriages without the spouses having first contracted the prescribed civil marriage. It ordered local synagogues to cease from performing any religious ceremonies for 'illegally' married persons and their families. The letter informed the regional consistoires that they were obliged to initiate legal proceedings against persons conducting such marriages. It warned that if abuses continued, the Consistoire Central would have legislation passed necessitating that parents furnish proof of civil marriage before their children could be registered as legitimate with the Etat Civil (vital statistics). Thus any Jew who defied Consistoirial authority would risk

having his offspring considered illegitimate or, worse yet, a non-person, denied all legal existence. The letter made the Consistoire Central's position abundantly clear: French Jews had put forth a great effort for Algerian Jewish citizenship and now it was incumbent on the latter not to embarrass the French Jews.

Despite the Pyrrhic victories of the 1860s and the passive resistance to the Crémieux Decree, the Algerian Jews succumbed to the destruction of their traditional community structure and gradually began to form a consciousness of, and a pride in, being French. However, the shattering effect of French Jewish intervention is evidenced in the (temporary) disappearance of organized religious education by the turn of the century. Its importance cannot be overemphasized: without religious preparation for the Bar Mitzvah ceremony, a boy cannot ritually pass to adult status. The collapse of the indigenous system was due most likely to suppression of unauthorized religious schools conducted by local rabbis.

The French Alliance Israelite about 1900 helped reorganize religious instruction in Algeria. They founded religious schools in Algiers, Oran, and Constantine. However, the Algerian Jewish communities "simply did not desire or accept the influence of the Alliance as they had in other countries . . . they disliked the idea of a tutelage . . . [they considered themselves] to be every bit as much Frenchmen as the members of the central committee [of the Alliance]" (Roland n.d.:272).

Thus, the Algerian Jews came full circle; they embraced the notion that they were French. There were a number of very sound economic and political reasons for them to do so. Citizenship gave them the right to vote and opened civil service and military careers. As citizens, their

children had priority access to schooling. By the turn of the century, a generation of Jews, who had been citizens from birth, reached adulthood. They most likely had a sense of citizenship as 'natural.' These Jews began to move into the European economic and political sectors. As we see in Section II, problems resulted.

Section II

The 1898 Antisemitic Riots

The ethnic structure of Algerian colonial society played a vital role in the formation of Algerian Jewish consciousness. In this section, we examine the ethnic composition of Algeria's European population, touch briefly on politics, and then delve into the antisemitic movements which culminated in colonist-instigated antisemitic riots. These riots took place in Algiers in 1898 and had minor counterparts throughout Algeria.

The 1898 riots are of vital importance to our understanding; they are one of those events which, by their intensity, allow us to dissect more readily a whole social process. Through an analysis of the riots, I show how the basic contradiction of the position of the Jews in colonial Algeria is manifested. For, in a society in which native and colonizer are the two social categories, the Jews are neither, yet partake of the characteristics of both. In so doing, the structure of domination in Algerian colonial society will be explored.

Before examining the antisemitic movements, let us sketch quickly the ethnic and social profile of Algerian colonial society. Algeria was colonized by French, Maltese, Italians, Spanish, and some Greeks, Germans, and other Europeans. The numerical importance of the non-French immigrants must be emphasized. In 1886 the European population consisted of 219,000

French citizens (including Jews) and 211,000 foreigners (Ziegarth n.d.: 13). The law of June 26, 1889, gave automatic French citizenship to persons of European parentage born in Algeria (unless they specifically refused it). Algeria's legal profile thus changed in a decade, with 318,000 French citizens and 212,000 Christian foreigners by 1896 (Ziegarth n.d.:13).

There were several major influxes of French colonists into Algeria: the Second Republic sent 20,000 persons to the Algerian countryside, partly as a political device to rid themselves of dissident elements. This policy continued in stronger measures under the Second Empire when Republicans were deported.²² Many people from Alsace-Lorraine immigrated to Algeria in 1871 following the French defeat by Prussia.

Although Europeans dominated Algerian agriculture, having seized virtually all the best lands from the Muslims, the bulk of the European population was urban.²³ In the last three decades of the nineteenth century, somewhat over 60 percent of the Europeans lived in urban areas (Ziebarth n.d.:8). The cities were characterized as much by their European flavor as by the separateness of the different European national groups.

. . . Algeria, that is French Algeria, European, is somewhat of a checkerboard, a mosaic. There are ten, twenty little closed clans, which are organized to be self-sufficient, and to ignore one another. There is a Spanish group, an Italian group, a French group, and, in each, sub-groups [Gautier 1920:179].

Housing, trades, customs, and politics all had an ethnic cast.

The novels of Louis Bertrand (1899, 1901), a Frenchman who immigrated to Algiers, enveloped the flavor, if heavily romanticized, of the brawling, frontier rawness of Algerian life. August Robinet, a French

civil servant, writing under the nom de plume, Musette, created the character Cagayous from the working class quarter of Bab-el-Oued, Algiers at the turn of the century. Robinet satirized the racial and antisemitic prejudices of these people. His stories are a fascinating study of intergroup relations.

Insofar as one can reconstruct ethnic consciousness from novels and travelers' accounts, it appears that, much as in 20th century Algeria, identity was contextualized. One was "français" when in contact with Muslims or newly arrived immigrants. Yet, one guarded one's national identity with social and political acquaintances.

Let us now turn to Algerian politics of the last three decades of the 19th century. The electoral battles of this period, in Algeria as in France, involved contests between the Opportunist (or Moderate) and Radical factions of the Republicans. However, in Algeria, politics followed much more of a party-boss system than a serious regard for political doctrine. According to Marc Baroli, "their oppositions corresponded neither to the divisions between parties, nor a separation into French of origin and naturalized French, nor to any large political options. These were in fact battles of clans attached to men . . ." [Baroli 1967:242]. The recent work of Prochaska (n.d.) indicates that Baroli grossly underestimated the ethnic make-up of these political clans.²⁴ But the general notion of Algerian politics as one of personal loyalties and granting of political favors is valid. Political corruption was the hallmark of Algerian politics: vote buying and distributing jobs to political allies were common practices (Ageron 1968:588; Martin 1936:228).

The Jews participated in this political arrangement. Although they were a minority of the total vote (ranging from 8 to 15% in the large urban areas), they voted as a group and were able to provide the swing vote. According to one student of the period, "The Jewish minority, in the big cities, became, in fact, the arbitrator of the political situation" (Martin 1936:193).

Jews gained the right to vote in 1870. This coincided with the Algerian colonists' obtaining a much greater degree of political autonomy as, prior to 1870, Algeria had been governed by the French military and by appointees of the government in Paris. Thus, the political process in Algeria was just beginning for the colonists when the Jews entered the arena. In the first elections held in Algeria in 1871 and 1872, the Jews brought the Moderates to victory in Oran and Constantine and helped elect a Radical mayor in Algiers.

During the 1880s and up until the 1896 elections, the Opportunists, supported by the Jews, were in control. The Radical press referred to the "union of Jewish-Opportunists" ("syndicat des judeo-opportunistes") and the "Jewish-Opportunist system" ("le systeme judeo-opportuniste") (Ageron 1968:586). The Radicals, however, until just prior to the outbreak of the 1898 riots, still attempted to court the Jewish vote.

All the scholarly literature about this period cites the electoral corruption of the Jews. Martin (1936) writes the classic interpretation: the Jews were controlled by the Consistoires which were the fiefs of Jewish notables who allegedly ordered or paid their constituency to vote. The consistoires owed their influence to the extreme

poverty of the Jewish community. The Jews had become impoverished as a result of the economic decline of the Muslims who were their principal clientele (see Rosenstock 1956a). Many Jews were without means of support and lived off the charity of the Consistoires. Jewish leftist reformers advocated that the Jewish poor be placed on municipal relief rolls so as to end their dependence on and control by the Consistoires.²⁵ (As we see in Chapter 2, pp. 69-70, the poor members of the Jewish community remained under control of the Jewish elite throughout the colonial period.)

Although it seems apparent that the Jews were involved in dubious political dealings, this must be interpreted within the general context of Algerian politics. Even Baroli (1967), a staunch defender of the Algerian colonists, writes that "Algeria has always known the vote by command, this is perhaps the essential given of its political life" (Baroli 1967:241). However, undocumented claims (see Baroli 1967:240) blaming Jews for starting political corruption in Algeria must be dismissed.

Let us now turn to the antisemitic movement in the 1880s and 1890s and examine some of the major incidents. Politics is the arena and, to an extent, the metaphor for antisemitic sentiment.

The first antisemitic league was founded in July, 1871, in the town of Miliana as a ploy against the newly enfranchised Jews (Ageron 1968:594). The first violent acts against the Jews took place in the early 1880s in the city of Tlemcen.²⁶ Displeased with election outcomes, the defeated group announced that Jews were not invited to a municipal dance. The Mayor, attempting to prevent trouble, canceled the dance.

Angered, the Christians ransacked the Jewish quarter. The Jews fought back, opening gunfire on the attackers. A three-day riot ensued; neither civil nor military authorities intervened.

In 1884, in Algiers, there was a week-long period of attack on Jews.²⁷ This also was precipitated by a brawl over a dance.²⁸ Christian and Jewish draftees were in the process of organizing a pre-induction dance when some of the Christians tried to exclude the Jews. A fight broke out between the Jews and the Christians. During the week following this incident, roving bands of Christians attacked Jews, Jewish-owned stores, and Christians and Christian newspapers known to be sympathetic to the Jews. According to Aumerat (1885), politics lay at the root of this riot:

The movement was caused by electoral grudges. There were insults, blows, people laid unconscious, stores forced open which were broken into and laid to waste, but not pillaged; it is the latter which proves that it was only political passions which were in play [Aumerat 1885:18].^[29]

In the 1870s and 1880s there were two short-lived antisemitic leagues formed. In 1892, in Algiers, the antisemitic journalist, Fernand Gregoire, founded an anti-Jewish league which provided the leadership of antisemitic politics in 1898. Antisemitic organizations were constituted in the 1890s in Constantine and Oran as well as in the smaller cities throughout Algeria.

1896 was the turning point for the political power of the antisemitic groups: in that year the city of Constantine elected its first mayor and municipal council on an antisemitic platform. The mayor pledged in his victory speech to fire all Jews from municipal jobs; the threat was carried out (Martin 1936:264). Less than a year after the Constantine

elections, Oran elected an antisemitic municipal government (Martin 1936: 299). Algiers also followed suit. Thus the three main cities in Algeria were controlled by antisemites. Once in positions of power, the antisemites enacted various pieces of municipal legislation to harass the Jews.³⁰

These victories were in part due to a new strategy the antisemites had begun in 1895. Utilizing the Decree Lambrecht of 1871 (which required Algerian Jews to furnish proof of their indigenous status before being inscribed on election lists), the antisemites disqualified Jewish voters. In 1896, for example, in Constantine, 900 out of 1100 Jews were forced off electoral rolls (Ageron 1968:587). This took place all over Algeria. The Jews organized lengthy legal battles to be reinstated (Martin 1936:260; Ageron 1968:587).

Municipal and departmental councils throughout Algeria passed repeated demands to the central government for a repeal of the Decree Cremieux. In 1897 the Ligue Antijuive started a petition campaign to repeal the Cremieux Decree; its success worried officials in the French government (Martin 1936:297).

Violent outbursts against the Jews began in 1897 in the department of Oran.³¹ In three other towns in the same department, synagogues were burned or profaned. Some scholars allege that Muslims joined the Europeans in attacking the Jews (Martin 1936). Later scholarship reveals that Europeans paid Muslims to participate in the violence (Ageron: 1968). When rioting erupted in the city of Oran, a Jewish leftist, Mardochee Chaloum, fired on the attackers.

The 1898 Riots in Algiers

It was in this atmosphere of antisemitic tension that the news of Zola's famous defense of Dreyfus, J'accuse, was announced in January of 1898. In response, a crowd of students gathered in Algiers to burn Zola in effigy. The police intervened. In the ensuing violent confrontations over a ten-day period between Jews and demonstrators, two men, a Jew and a non-Jew were killed and large-scale looting and destruction of Jewish property took place.³² Violence spread to at least seven other cities and towns among which were Blida, Boufarik, Oran, Mustaganem, Setif, Affreville, and Mareno.

The Algiers municipal authorities kept a low profile during the riots. The Mayor, A. Guillemin, a self-proclaimed antisemite, issued the following statements after five days of riots:

. . . no one can doubt any longer that the most pure French blood runs in the veins of the Algerians [i.e., the colonists]. The sudden emotion of the mother country [i.e., the French response to Zola's J'accuse] vibrated immediately in your hearts. . . . You have shown superbly your French fury; show now that you have the strength of calmness [anonymous 1895:59].

While calling for an end to the riots, he makes his own position abundantly clear.

During the riots, Regis and his followers urged on the mobs. Their rhetoric was filled with revolutionary phrases. The antisemites threatened the French government with revolt if their demands for dealing with the Jews were not met: "Algeria is decided to revolt. . . . Algeria will be capable of demanding or taking its emancipation . . ." (Ageron 1968:596). The demands escalated from repeal of the Decree Cremieux to expulsion of all Jews from Algeria.

Also in 1897, Max Regis, who was to become the most important antisemitic figure of the period, began his rise to power. Regis gained prominence in antisemitic circles for his leadership of violent antisemitic demonstrations in the Algiers law school. He became head of the Ligue Antijuive of Algiers and started publishing an antisemitic newspaper, L'Antijuif, the first issue of which appeared on July 14, 1897.

Regis' leading role in the antisemitic riots of January 1898 and his subsequent arrest and incarceration by the Governor General served to make him the most popular grassroots leader in Algiers. He played on mob sentiments and his antisemitism was charged with revolutionary rhetoric: "We will water, if necessary, the tree of our liberty with Jewish blood" (Ageron 1968:596). His turbulent political career as mayor of Algiers and his exiles in Spain and France made him a popular legend. It is important to note Regis' ethnic background: his real name was Maximilien-Regis Milano. His father was an Italian immigrant who had made a fortune in Algeria (Ageron 1968:595).

In July of 1897, a serious boycott campaign, spurred on by Regis' newspaper, was started against the Jews. The goal was to separate the Jews economically from the Europeans. L'Antijuif named Jewish-owned businesses and urged its readers not to patronize them; it furnished readers with a list of Christian stores which sold like products. The paper denounced European businesses which were supplied by Jews or which employed Jews. The names of Christians maintaining commercial relations with Jews were printed in an effort to shame them. The paper reported, and congratulated, bands of women who forcefully stopped their fellow women from shopping at Jewish stores. Christians were exhorted to fire Jewish maids (anonymous 1899:107-135).

It is this revolutionary rhetoric which in part leads Ageron (1968) to interpret the riots as an abortive revolution. The highest civil authority in Algeria, Governor-General Lepine, appeared to have felt the threat. He summed up popular sentiment in Algiers following the riots: ". . . the only thing which the majority of the population regrets is that the Jews and the representatives of authority [i.e., the French central government] did not suffer more from the people's anger" (Ageron 1968:596, fn. 3).

The classical interpretation of the 1898 riots was furnished by E. F. Gautier (1920). It held sway until Ageron (1968) provided a new conceptualization of the events.

The Gautier position is two-fold: the Dreyfus affair set off, by "sympathy," the Algerian riots. Underlying the readiness of the Algerian colonists to be drawn into extreme actions was an economic crisis resulting from an alleged severe slump in wine sales (Gautier 1920:188).

Ageron makes short work of the wine thesis by examining sales figures and demonstrating that the most intense periods of antisemitism, 1895-1899, "were years of great prosperity for Algerian viticulture" (Ageron 1968:590). He sees the Gautier explanation as a clever political move to have an "honorable explication, a means to save face in the eyes of the metropolitans [i.e., the French]" (Ageron 1968:590).³³

From the historical material reviewed, it is quite evident that the other half of the Gautier explanation ". . . it was a Metropolitan [i.e., French] crisis, antisemitism, which set off by sympathy the Algerian crisis . . ." is not adequate (1920:180). We have seen how Algerian antisemitism developed for two decades prior to Dreyfus' treason

conviction's becoming a major French issue. However, the Dreyfus affair was certainly a precipitating factor.

The most intense period of violence in Algeria directly followed Zola's publication of J'accuse and coincided with French antisemitic violence. Antisemitic riots took place in a number of French cities in January of 1898 as a reaction to Zola's pamphlet. Ever eager to identify with France, this did not go unnoticed in Algeria. Max Regis' comments are telling:

The whole of France vibrates at this moment, in Lyon, Marseille, Toulouse, Grenoble, all over, the Jews are hissed and with great cries their expulsion is demanded. The battle is therefore clearly affirmed; there is no longer any possible hesitation to descend into the arena [anonymous 1899:58].

Recall as well the Mayor of Algiers' statement (cited above) giving the "sudden emotion of the mother country" as a reason for the Algerian violence.

Thus the events in France can be seen as precipitating and serving as a justification for Algerian antisemitism. Given the colonial mentality of looking to France as the model, of claiming Frenchness in all their actions, the influence of the Dreyfus affair on them cannot be underestimated.³⁴

Ageron argues that the antisemitic riots were really an abortive separatist movement largely undercut when the French government conceded to the colonists' demands for a separate legislature and control by the colons of the Algerian budget.

All told, the riots and the political agitation which took place in Algeria from 1897 to 1901, appear therefore in their deepest inspiration to have been less antijewish than antimetropolitan. In the disordered action of the antijews, that which is the clearest is the desire of colonial Algeria to make the Metropole give concessions or to free itself from its rule. The antijewish crisis was an abortive revolution [Ageron 1968:608].

Ageron sees the colonist's antisemitic rage as a displacement onto the Jews of anger toward France. Given the love/hate quality of the colonists' relationship to France, the hostility could only be vented on a third party.

Although I agree with Ageron, there are certain questions his theory fails to answer conclusively. Why were the Jews chosen as the group on which to vent the anger towards France? Why were the most Europeanized Jews, or those who had the most contact with the colonists, the principal victims of the riots? Ageron attempts to answer these questions by showing the development of electoral antisemitism. He acknowledges that this is only a part of the cause and points to "the racial antisemitism [which] can be considered as one of the givens of the psychology of colonial Algeria" (Ageron 1968:588). He relates that the colonists had memories of the Jews' living an Oriental lifestyle and thus could not accept them as truly French. He also cites the "traditional" hatred of the Mediterranean Catholic immigrants (especially the Spanish) for the Jews.

While not denying Ageron's insights as possible factors underlying the riots, we will now examine the antisemitic literature of the period to discern the relationship of the antisemitic reaction to some basic contradictions in the colonial situation. There is an important change taking place in the content of Algerian antisemitic literature over a 25-year period. Emphasis shifts from one which condemns Jewish actions to one which condemns the Jews for their alleged essential nature.³⁵ There are stereotypes of the Jews in the earlier literature, but the focus is more anecdotal with denunciations of the Jews as

conclusions rather than as premises. The change of content from action to essence follows the course of the intensification of antisemitic activity.

Let us take as examples of emphasis on alleged Jewish actions two antisemitic authors writing in the 1880s: Gourgeot (1881) and Meynie (1887, 1888). Gourgeot denounces the alleged role of the Jews as usurious moneylenders; he claims that the Jews are responsible for ruining the Muslim peasants. Meynie portrays the Jews as "fleecing the colonists, exploiting the civil servants, and stealing from the Arabs." Meynie's tales of the Jews have themes of cowardice, avarice and trickery as conclusions.

The writings of Fernand Gregoire in the late 1880s and early 1890s mark a transition in antisemitic rhetoric. His book, La Juiverie Algérienne, and his antisemitic newspaper continued the tradition of denouncing alleged Jewish actions, but started to place emphasis on the nature of the Jews. His stereotypes of Jews are illuminating in that they foreshadow themes which will be used to incite popular fury in the 1898 antisemitic riots. Gregoire states "the characteristic sign of the semitic race . . . is cupidity" (1888:95). The Jews are "incapable of good deeds unless there is money in it" (1888:31). The Jews have by their greed become the corrupting influence in Christian society: "Deadly parasite, the Jew has brought decomposition into our social milieu. Adorer of the golden calf, he has his hold on us through money, by contamination he has conquered us to his cult" (1888:5). The Jew, as usurer, is characterized as a "burrowing worm" (1888:3). At the same time, the Jews are the essence of selfishness and apartness: "Egoism and Jewishness are synonymous . . . social egoism which explains the

vital power of the Hebraic group, which like underwater currents has traversed the ocean of peoples without being absorbed" (1885:5).

Thus, in Gregoire's portrait the Jews are parasites, the contaminants who seek to pull all the rest of society down. He warns that the Jews will never be absorbed into French society. The obvious conclusion to be drawn by readers who agree with Gregoire's portrait is to demand the expulsion of the Jews. And, as we have seen, this was indeed one of the demands made during the 1898 riots.

Let us now turn to the newspaper, L'Antijuif, published by Max Regis, and examine the images of the Jews presented during the critical period surrounding the 1898 riots in Algiers.³⁶ Jews are depicted as disease, dirt, and rot; they are seen as spreading contamination. L'Antijuif refers to them as "this infected race," "dirty" (sale), "hideous personages," "horrible," "scrofulous," etc. The Jews are likened to vermin and fleas, to vile pigs and dirty cockroaches. A storeowner, whose Jewish stockboy L'Antijuif depicts as "a horrible kike who vomits daily on the French all the Jewish slobber that he distills," is ordered to fire his employee or lose his clientele (anonymous 1899: 122). French officials sympathetic to Jews are seen as under the "Jewish stain" (souillure juive).

When the representatives of the central government reacted negatively to the antisemitic riots, L'Antijuif responded with this editorial lament on the state of things in Algeria: "Algeria, delivered over since the conquest to the pillage of these voracious birds of prey [i.e., the Jews] and left to see this desolation augment as a result of the shameful attachments to the Jews held by those who govern us . . ." (anonymous 1899:94).

In L'Antijuif kosher meat is referred to as carrion (1899:131); a butcher store advertised itself as the "Boucherie de l'Antijuif" and presented itself as an alternative to the poisoned meat allegedly sold by the Jews. Attempting to ban the Jews from their school, a student group claimed that the Jews "make things dirty by their [mere] presence" (anonymous 1899:48). The Jews are thus being defined by and in relation to things which are dirty and rotten. They are polluting.

In the anthropological literature a great deal has been written about pollution. However, the dialogue has largely been limited to pollution ideas in the realm of ritual and religion. Mary Douglas, in Purity and Danger, makes a brief foray into analyzing purity and pollution in everyday life. She defines dirt as matter out of place: "Dirt, then is never a unique isolated event. Where there is dirt, there is a system. Dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter . . ." (Douglas 1970:48). According to Douglas phenomena which do not fit classificatory schemes are anomalous. One way of handling such anomalies is to see them as polluting and dangerous.

With a slight twist on Douglas' idea, we can see how a social group which has upset the social classification scheme may be perceived as polluting. The situation of the Jews in Algeria can be interpreted in this way. The Jews were in the process of crossing, or attempting to cross, the dividing line between native and colonist. Instead of remaining "Arabs of the Jewish religion" (du Bouzet 1871:4), they had become legally, and to an extent socially, French.

By the 1890s, Jews were beginning to become more noticeable in the "French" occupational sphere. Proportionately, they were still

under-represented in such positions.³⁷ In economic terms, the Jews were not a "real" threat to their European counterparts. The antisemitic rhetoric used during the riots was not couched in terms of "the Jews are stealing our jobs." I am suggesting that the increased visibility of the Jews led to a more acute awareness on the part of the colonists that the Jews were transgressing the socially defined categories of colonizer and colonized, French and Arab. In support of this argument, it should be noted that, during the antisemitic riots in Algiers, the only Jewish shops ransacked were located in the European part of the city.³⁸ Those Jews who worked for Europeans were singled out and assaulted. The Jew who was killed was a well-known Europeanized Jew. These Jews were most flagrantly overstepping the social categories.

Let us look again at the antisemitic imagery. The dirt images portrayed the Jews in a threefold relation to things dirty: the Jews incorporate (as pigs, cockroaches, eaters of carrion) dirt. They are dirt: they are seen as tetes crasseuses, infection, scrofulous. They spread dirt: their acts "ooze pus of low vile corruption," they poison, they vomit slobber, their mere presence is enough to make things dirty, as fleas and vermin their dirt is spread. Their contamination extends itself to the most innocent: after all, who falls into the entrapment of spiders and birds of prey but innocent victims caught unaware? Jews were seen as actively breaking the society asunder, slipping in and destroying the fabric of the whole system.³⁹

The Algerian colonists attempted to socially construct "French" as a bounded, solid category. Although approximately one-half of the European immigrants were not of French origin, they all claimed to be

French and so consolidated their privileged position vis-à-vis the Muslims. Many of the colonists (including Max Regis) were legally French dating only from the naturalization law of 1889. We saw an example of the extremes to which this cultural redefinition of reality went in the speech (see page 43) given by the Mayor of Algiers during the course of the riots. When praising the rioters' actions, the Mayor remarked: "No one can doubt any longer that the most pure French blood runs in the veins of the Algerians [i.e., the colonists]" [anonymous 1899:59; emphasis added]. He was trying to create a "natural" foundation (i.e., blood) for social categorization, and thus to legitimate the colonists' position of power and privilege in Algeria.⁴⁰

The Algerian Jews were threatening to the colonists' formulation of the social world. The Jews had been considered part of the native population for the first 40 years of colonization. It was quite a different matter for the Jews to put a claim on being French than for the non-French European nationals to do so. The latter had never been thought of as natives; thus they could begin to call themselves French without contradicting the colonizer/colonized social categories. (In fact, in everyday parlance, the terms "European" and "French" were substitutable.) For the Jews to call themselves "French" undermined the very foundations of the category (and social) demarcation. If "native" and "European" are categories based on "natural" (i.e., racial) distinctions, then to have a group make the transition from native to colonizer threatens the "naturalness," and ultimately the rightfulness, of the system of colonial domination.⁴¹

We can now understand why antisemitic demagogues such as Regis focused their attention on the essence of the Jews. It was precisely around cultural ideas of natural essence of the different groups that the legitimization of the colonial power structure rested.

In this chapter, we have seen the historical circumstances underlying the Algerian Jews' claim to inclusion in the European population. Initially forced by the French Jews to abandon their traditional lifestyle and community structure, they came to embrace and identify with the civilization of their conquerors. This is not a unique phenomenon; it has occurred repeatedly in the history of colonialism (Fanon 1952). We have examined Algerian colonial society from the perspective of its ideological structure through the 1898 antisemitic riots. As the focus of the analysis narrows to the town of Batna, we can understand the ideological context in which intergroup relations took place.

NOTES

¹Some of the scholars who take this position are Ansky (1950), Chouraqui (1973), and Eisenbeth (1931). Rosenstock (1956b) and Szajkowski (1956) present a somewhat critical view of the tactics of the French Jews, but do not draw the conclusions I do from it.

²It was only in 1965 that a complete and serious work appeared: Hirschberg, A History of the Jews in North Africa. On the Jews in Morocco there is Haim Zafrani's excellent monograph, Les Juifs du Maroc: Vie sociale, economique et religieuse.

³The Kahina's people were Berbers of the Aures mountains which jut up behind the town of Batna.

⁴The merits of this argument are not essential to examine, but it is interesting in this regard to note some present-day versions, and their implications for identity, of this account. Informants were generally acquainted with the legend of the Kahina. They said that she was a Jewish queen who fought against the Arabs and they told of a spring bearing her name in the region. One informant, a young man in his thirties, related the following story that his father had told him: their remote ancestors had been a part of the Kahina's tribe and, following her defeat, fled to Morocco and took and took refuge with a related tribe (also Jewish). They practiced a Berber lifestyle--herding and agriculture. When the French took over Algeria, they came back and bought land in Khenchela where the family originated some 1000 years before; they raised animals and farmed. This young man, and another man--who is an unusual case in that he has remained in Algeria--were the only ones to say that they were of Berber origins. A family from Batna with the same last name as this young man said also that they came from Morocco. But they specified "Spanish Morocco" and claimed to be descended from Spanish Jews. Most other informants said that they were descended as well from the Iberian refugees. Some of them are indeed of Spanish origin: one family in Batna bears the name of a famous 15th century Spanish rabbi who settled in Tlemcen. When the Spanish Jews came to North Africa, they quickly became the elite of the Jewish community, literally taking over the religious leadership. They tended to marry endogamously. Thus there is historical precedent for higher status as a result of Spanish origin. In the colonial period, Jews were seeking to identify themselves with the "European" population; thus claiming that their ancestors came from Spain reinforced their position. Leaving the origin question unresolved, it is important to mention that there is a great deal of documentation from both Morocco and Algeria that groups of Jews lived as transhumants in the same manner as their Berber neighbors.

⁵The Dey had requested on numerous occasions prior to this incident that the consul be replaced. For details see Julien 1964:26-28.

⁶Ageron (1968) and Julien (1964) are the main works on the effect of the French conquest on the Muslim population.

⁷Cohen (1900:71-74) details names and combat records of Jews who fought with the French during the conquest of Algeria.

⁸Among the influential French Jews who interested themselves in Algerian Jewry were Adolphe Cremieux (deputy in the French National Assembly and later Minister of Justice in the Government of National Defense), the Rothschild family, Jacques Altaras (a wealthy Marseille merchant), Max Cerfberr (deputy in the French National Assembly and member of the Consistoire Central), Albert Cohn (a well-known Orientalist and Rothschild employee), and the group of Jewish intellectuals around the publication, Archives Israélites. For further details see Rosenstock (1956b) and Szajkowski (1956).

⁹See Hertzberg (1968) for a history of the Jews and French Enlightenment philosophy.

¹⁰See Gotein (1967, 1971) for descriptions of the way Jewish communities functioned in the Muslim world.

¹¹Martin (1936:46) cites the following passage from the commission of inquiry:

One could justly suspect the impartiality of the Muslim judges and accuse them of venality, but the rabbinical tribunal was differently degraded: there are hardly the words which could render the degree of disrespect and suspicion into which it has fallen in the eyes of the Jews themselves.

¹²This was enacted by the Ordinance of August 10, 1834.

¹³Ordinances of February 28, 1841, and September 26, 1842.

¹⁴Algerian affairs came under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of War.

¹⁵The official duties of the consistoires were as follows: (1) to maintain order in the synagogues and to prohibit private assemblies for prayer; (2) to see that parents sent their children to proper schools; (3) to encourage Jews to engage in useful professions, particularly agriculture; (4) and to supervise the expenditure of communal funds. The duties of the rabbis were . . . (1) to teach religion and patriotism, and inculcate obedience to French law; (2) to recite prayers for the royal family; (3) to perform burials and marriages; (4) and to inspect the schools to be established for both sexes [Rosenstock 1956b:50].

¹⁶The French rabbi of Constantine was fired by the Consistoire Central in 1862 as a result of corruption. The first presidents of the Consistoires of Algiers and Constantine were forced to resign because of financial scandals. The latter was incarcerated "sous prevention de faux en écriture commerciale." Even the Grand Rabbi of Algeria, Rabbi Weill, was asked to resign in 1863 as a result of charges of corruption.

There is some evidence, though, that charges may have been trumped up by Weill's political enemies amongst the native Jews (see Martin 1936:91 infra).

¹⁷In questions of état civil Jews were still under Jewish law, although it was administered by French courts. Some of the differences were that the Jews had the right to divorce, inheritance favored males, polygyny was permitted, etc.

¹⁸The Décret du 29 aout 1862 stated "The attributes of the Consistoire Central . . . includes the ultimate supervision of the Jewish cult in Algeria" (cited in Uhry 1887:47; see also Uhry 1887:63-64).

¹⁹The text of the law concerning the Jews reads as follows:
The indigenous Jew is French. Nevertheless he will continue to be regulated by his [own law of] personal status. He can be admitted to serve in the armies of the land and sea. He can be called on for public office and civil employment in Algeria. He can, on demand, be admitted to exercise the rights of a French citizen. In this case he will be regulated by French law [Cohen 1901: 119].

²⁰Fregier pointed out, for example, that Jews could be married by an officer of the French Etat Civil. However, in the case of such a marriage it was questionable what the legal implications were. In other words, how could one go through a legal procedure and not have the usual results of that procedure binding on them (Fregier 1862:41)?

²¹Instructions of 5 November 1872 from the Consistoire Central to the Algerian Consistoires, on the subject of measures taken to assure the respect of French law in Algeria as concerns civil marriages.

Messieurs,

We are informed that grave infractions of French laws are often committed in the three provinces of Algeria. We learn with the deepest regrets that, despite the assimilation which has been the object of our dearest wishes and your most legitimate aspirations, many of our Algeria coreligionists, placed from now on under the common law, do not fear to contract their religious marriage without preceding this ceremony with the celebration of the civil marriages, seconded in this blameable conduct and in this infraction of the law by individuals without legal right and without religious mandate who usurp the rabbinic functions and make themselves, by criminal interest, the agents of these clandestine marriages. The consequences of such abuses will be disastrous from all points of view, as much under the religious rapport as under those of moeurs, and the continuation of such disorder will provoke nothing less than the upset, the shame of our coreligionists, and a crowd of inextricable embarrassments, you understand, it is useless to dwell on it. To remedy this state of things, and above all to inspire our new

compatriots with respect for the law and the sentiment of the duties that it imposes, we have . . . [in accordance with the past legislation giving them authority over the Algerian Jews] made the following resolutions:

1. The Grand Rabbis of the Consistoires of Algiers, Oran, and Constantine, or the delegates named regularly by them for religious functions in the communities of their respective jurisdiction, will have to in the future, only proceed with the religious marriage act for those Algerian Jews who shall have proven in good and proper form to have contracted marriage before the officer of the Etat Civil;
2. The Consistoires shall have, under their personal responsibility to signal to the superior authority, as a lawbreaker anyone [who] shall exercise the religious functions without a legal character;
3. The Consistoires shall make sure that no religious honors are accorded in the synagogues of the circumscription to the spouses and their family in the case of marriages which have not been contracted in conformance with the prescriptions of the Civil Code;
4. . . .

We count on your patriotic sentiments, on your devotion and your enlightened assistance to aid us to promptly accomplish the regeneration of our coreligionists of Algeria. You will please help them understand that their religious and moral interests are the object of our most serious solicitude; that their complete assimilation to the Israelites of the Metropole imposes on them the obligation to submit without reservation to all the prescriptions of French legislation that the Grand Sanhedrin has declared conform to the principles of our holy religion. You will not neglect above all to mention to them that if the abuses that we have warned you of continue, we shall propose to the Government to prescribe for the mayors of the communes of Algeria to exige that for the inscription of legitimate births, a certificate certifying that the marriage of the parents had been celebrated by the officer of the Etat Civil. It comes down to the thing the most holy: the honor, the legitimacy and the future of the children. We have the conviction that our Algeria coreligionists, who have to such a high degree the cult of the family, will not expose themselves from now on to bring upon their children the deplorable consequences which will result from the incompleteness of their duties [Uhry 1900:12-14; my translation; emphasis added].

²²Lambese, a town five kilometers from Batna, began as a penal colony under the Second Empire.

²³See especially Ageron (1968) and Nouschi (1961) for documentation on French seizures of lands from the Muslim population. Nouschi's study deals with the Department of Constantine in which the town of Batna is located.

²⁴David Prochaska (dissertation in progress) has documented the role of Jerome Bretagna, a political boss in Bône (present-day Annaba), during the late 19th century.

²⁵Jewish leftist reformers in Algeria, such as Tubiana (1898), advocated that the Jewish poor be put on the relief rolls of their respective cities so as to free them from their dependence on the Consistaires.

²⁶Martin (1936:211) and Aumerat (1885:23) cite 1882 as the date whereas Ageron (1968:595) gives 1881.

²⁷The account of the 1884 violence is taken from Aumerat, a pro-Jewish Christian newspaper editor who wrote a detailed account of the riots which includes reproductions of articles from newspapers of the period.

²⁸The public dance as a testing ground and a place of confrontation between Jews and Christians will be examined in Chapter 4.

²⁹Aumerat explores the role of Basset's newspaper, Le Radical Algérien, in urging on the rioters. Basset was a Radical who had just lost in the latest legislative elections. Aumerat claims as well that the Jews had just cast the decisive vote for a Moderate.

³⁰In Oran, for example, the market in the Jewish quarter was closed by the city officials and Jewish schoolchildren were denied scholarships.

³¹Martin (1936) alleges that the month-long chain of attacks on Jews and their synagogues was set off by Jews from Mostaganem attacking a well-known antisemitic leader from Oran who had come to their town for a sporting event. The official dossier of the incident reveals that "the brawl was set off by the antijewish sportsmen who came into the Jewish quarter to provoke the Jews" (Ageron 1968:602, fn. 2).

³²Zola's famous defense of Dreyfus, J'accuse, was published on January 13, 1898. In response, on the 18th of January in Algiers, a crowd of Christian students gathered to burn Zola in effigy. The police intervened. The next day, the students repeated the demonstration: a confrontation with the police resulted and there were arrests. The violence spilled over into the Jewish business district with a crowd going to attack the Jews. On the 20th, the students and their followers went to attack the Jews and met with Jewish resistance: one rioter was knifed and two Radical journalists were stoned. From the 20th to the 22nd, Jewish stores were continuously sacked. On the 22nd of January, a large anti-Jewish demonstration was held in the neighboring city of Mustapha giving the Jews the opportunity to hold a counter-demonstration in Algiers. Three hundred Jews participated in this demonstration. On the 23rd and the 24th the sacking of Jewish stores intensified and the Governor-General, Lepine, who personally came to stop the pillage, was forced to quit the scene by the mob. The army and the municipal police made only half-hearted attempts to stop the destruction. An official inquiry shows that soldiers had in their possession tobacco from the looted stores; one may assume that at least some of the troops joined the sacking (Martin 1936:397).

In the Jewish quarter on the night of the 23rd, a mason (of Spanish origin) was knifed to death in a fight and several others wounded. The identity of the killer remained unknown, but the antisemites assumed he was a Jew. The rioters had a martyr. The mason's funeral was held on the 25th of January. Max Regis gave a fiery funeral oration in which he demanded that the man be avenged. On the way back from the funeral, the crowd attacked three Jews; one was killed and the others were left for dead. The murdered man was "known for his modern tendencies" (Martin 1936:298).

The damage in Algiers to persons and property was quite extensive. Two men were killed, 100 others wounded, and 700 arrests made. There were over 100 (Ageron cites 150, Martin 130) attacks on property and material damages amounting to 500,000 francs (Martin 1936:298). Fifteen million francs were taken out of the city (and presumably out of Algeria) by rich Jews who fled. From all the major cities affected by the riots there was a flight of the richest Jewish families to France or Tunisia; it is not recorded whether or not they returned once the situation calmed down.

³³The fact was that there was an agricultural crisis--a crisis of credit. Agricultural credit had been over-extended in the early 1880s and from 1886 onwards it tightened abruptly and many foreclosures took place. However, this only affected the rural populations and the main antisemitic outbreaks were urban phenomena. The politicians designated the Jews as bankers and usurers and directed animosity of tight credit towards them (Ageron 1968:592-593).

³⁴Pierre Nora (1961) argues that over-identification with France, the fictive homeland, coupled with resentment toward it are important elements in the Algerian colonists' psychological makeup.

³⁵See Sartre (1974) for an analysis of how Jewish "nature" is created by French antisemites.

³⁶All quotes from the newspaper, L'Antijuif, are taken from L'oeuvre des antijuifs d'Alger, a compilation of antisemitic articles by an anonymous pro-Jewish journalist of the period. Page citations refer to this book.

³⁷The vast majority of the Algerian Jews were extremely poor. Most were artisans and shopkeepers specializing in goods and services for the Muslim population (see Durieu 1899).

³⁸In a deposition the Grand Rabbi of Algeria, Abraham Bloch, stated to an official commission of inquiry:

The stores in the Jewish quarters which only contained products for the 'Indigenes' were not touched. Only the stores on the streets Bab Azoun, Bab el Oued, Dumont d'Urville and Isly (in the European city) were pillaged. And furthermore it was not done by the Arabs [quoted in Ageron 1968:603].

³⁹Let us consider further some of the political events taking place in Algerian antisemitic circles. One of the more curious happenings was the alliance of Max Regis and Edouard Drumont, the famous French antisemite. Regis met Drumont in Paris in March of 1898; he had come to France with a delegation of leading Algerian antisemites to combat the negative coverage given the riots of January 1898 by French newspapers. Regis proposed to Drumont that he run for the seat of deputy from Algiers. Now, if the Radical antisemites from Algeria with their "leftist" attacks on Jews (Jews as oppressors, capitalists, etc.) represented one end of the antisemitic spectrum, then Drumont with his right-wing, nationalist politics and Catholic, pro-clerical position (which he was forced to modify to go along with his Algerian constituency) represented quite the opposite. However, largely due to Regis' popularity (enhanced by a timely political martyrdom--being jailed by the governor-general shortly before the elections), Drumont handily beat his two opponents.

Drumont's own political past perhaps explains in part his appeal to the citizens of Algiers. In 1892, Drumont was the editor of an insignificant antisemitic newspaper, La Libre Parole, when the Panama Canal scandal thrust him and his paper into overnight prominence (Arendt 1973: 96; Wright 1966:319). Jacques Reinach, a Jew who had been implicated in the Panama affair, furnished Drumont with a list of deputies who had taken bribes. "Drumont's journal, and with it the entire antisemitic press movement, emerged at last as a dangerous force in the Third Republic" (Arendt 1973:96). Although there were no Jews among the bribed deputies nor on the board of the Panama Company, two Jews had handled the bribing of the deputies. As Arendt (1973) so perceptively points out, this disclosure

. . . showed that the intermediaries between private enterprise (in this case, the company) and the machinery of the state were almost exclusively Jews.

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The antisemites could at once point to the Jewish parasites on a corrupt society in order to 'prove' that all Jews everywhere were nothing but termites in the otherwise healthy body of the people. It did not matter to them that the corruption of the body politic had started without the help of the Jews . . . [Arendt 1973:96; 99]. Thus Drumont had made his reputation both by exposing Jews and by attacking leading members of the government whom he revealed as being in league with the Jews. This coincides well with the separatist sentiment in Algiers which wanted to shake off control of a government which was perceived as run by and for Jews.

⁴⁰David Schneider (1968) has developed the notion of what is considered to be 'natural' to the person being expressed through the metaphor of blood.

⁴¹See Louis Dumont (1966:321) for a discussion of how racial distinctions become the ideological justification for domination.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORY AND DEMOGRAPHY OF BATNA

In this chapter, I present a broad historical and demographic profile of the town of Batna and its Jewish and Christian communities. Drawing on a military history of Batna, we learn how the town was founded, its role as a military center, and the implantation of a civilian population.¹ The French government kept complete records of death, birth, marriage, and divorce for French citizens and Europeans of other nationalities. After 1870, when the Jews became citizens, we have complete documentation for them as well.² These records will be used to reconstruct the occupational structure of the Jewish and Christian communities, to document change, and to provide evidence for the social separation between Jews and Christians. Unfortunately, records of this sort are unavailable for the Muslims of Batna (with the exception of the very few who were French citizens).

We begin the chapter with the founding of the town of Batna and then move to the origins and structure of the Jewish community. The third section of this chapter provides additional information about the Jews and contrasts them with the Christian population. This information is vital to our argument as it corroborates the ethnohistorical reconstructions found in Chapters Three and Four. Jewish informants perceived a separation between themselves and the Christians: their perceptions are confirmed by the sociological differences in the government

records. We shall examine the following items comparing Jews and Christians: marriages between Christians and Jews, differences in occupation, and endogamous versus exogamous marriage patterns. For the Jews, we analyze patterns of witnesses for marriages, naming practices, and literacy rates.

Section I

History of the Founding of Batna

Batna was founded as a military garrison in the course of the French conquest of the province of Constantine. After the capture of the city of Constantine in 1837, the French commander, the Duke d'Aumale, prepared to launch a campaign in the Sahara. The camp at Batna was set up as a supply base to facilitate the provisioning of his troops. In February of 1844, advance French troops constructed fortifications and installed a garrison with supplies. This military installation met with immediate reaction from the Muslims. Unfortunately, the military history does not specify if these were peoples living in the immediate vicinity. Some two or three hundred Muslims attacked the camp: three were killed and the raid was repulsed. Several days after this raid, the Duke d'Aumale arrived in Batna and departed shortly thereafter for an expedition in which he conquered Biskra and the oasis towns in the Biskra region. During the time he was gone, the Batna camp was again the object of attacks. The military history specifies the tribes of the Aures mountains as the attackers.

In June of 1844, Batna received a new commander who changed the site of the encampment to a location more amenable to permanent settlement. The Batna garrison became the center for French raids into the

Aures mountains against the Shawia tribesmen. The military history calls these raids "razzias," indicating that the villages were burned to the ground, crops and livestock were destroyed, and as many inhabitants killed as possible. By 1847 most of the tribes had submitted to the French: the tribes were forced to pay tribute to the French. In 1846 a "Bureau arabe" was created in Batna.³ 1848 through 1850 were years in which there were numerous attempts by the Aures tribes to shake off the French hold: all rebellions were brutally put down and war retributions collected.

As early as 1845, there were civilians in Batna: "around the camp people of all professions have set up business, notably . . . liquor salesmen, bakers, butchers, etc." (Anonymous 1904:84). Jews were not specifically mentioned, but it is likely that enterprising Jews from neighboring Constantine were present. The civilian population increased: construction projects in the military encampment attracted workers. The first farmer was given land in 1846 and three and four hectare concessions became available to soldiers completing their military service. The land offer included free well drilling.

In 1847 Batna was established as the seat of a military subdivision. The planning commission for the Department of Constantine (the Commission Consultative) decided that Batna was to become a city, not a village, because of its location on the juncture of the routes to Biskra, Tebessa, Constantine, and Setif. In accordance with this, the military started construction projects geared to civilian and military needs. A hospital, wells, stores, a slaughter house, stockyards, mills, etc., were built.⁴ A weekly market started to function in 1847.

The French government, by decree, officially created the city of Batna on September 12, 1848.⁵ At this time an area of 8700 hectares was made available for European settlement. No mention is made of the Muslim occupants of these lands. 1848 also saw the installation of a priest in Batna and the creation of a militia and a fire department. Part of the municipal planning included building a separate "village arabe." The civilian population of Batna was reported as between 800 and 900 in 1848. The location of Batna and the lumber resources of the nearby mountains attracted settlers.

In the early 1850s the militia built roads connecting Batna with Biskra, Constantine, Khenchela, etc. A telegraph line linking Batna and Constantine was completed in 1853. The army provided security for European voyagers on these roads. The economy of Batna in the 1850s centered around wheat, commerce in animals (presumably with the tribes), and lumber. The army garrison, of course, was probably a major source of income for the civilians.

The military history briefly noted Jews among the civilian population; their presence at this early date is verified by census material and birth records. The census listed 36 Jews in 1851 (see Table I). Jews appeared in birth records in 1855. In this year, six Jewish births are recorded; the fathers' occupations are listed as two jewelers and four merchants. The presence of Jewish jewelers is especially interesting as their customers were Muslims. Thus Batna, even at this early date, must have been a market center of some consequence for the tribes of the region. These records also reveal the presence of a rabbi at least as early as 1858.

TABLE I
THE POPULATION OF BATNA, 1851-1930

Year	Jews	Christians	Muslims
1851	36	971	228
1861	275	1832	2981
1866	385	2064	1721
1871	325	1588	1316
1876	321	1793	1643
1881	315	1745	2394
1891	432	1950	2846
1896	382	2383	1617
1901	542	2381	3991
1906	655	2608	4933
1911	647	2629	5614
1921	745	2014	6120
1926	900	2687	8635
1930	878		

Source: Maurice Eisenbeth, Le Judaisme Nord-Africain: Etudes Demographiques sur les Israélites du Departement de Constantine, pp. 165-179.

Throughout the 1850s further development and planning of the town took place. A grade school was started in 1851. Sanitation projects were started and the layout of the town planned. Urban land concessions were given to French, Italians, Jews, and Muslims. A justice of the peace and a notaire post were created for Batna. In 1858 a civilian administration of the city was formed. An Imperial decree in September of 1859 reorganized the territory of Batna. Its land area extended over 20,000 hectares (30 kilometers long) and followed the configuration of the valley separating the Belezma from the Aures. This territory was not vacant: the tribe of Haractas Djerma lived there. However, the reorganization plan allowed the European population to seize this tribal land. As the author of the military history so smugly understates: "The taking possession of the land by the Europeans in this part of the province was from then on [virtually] accomplished."⁶

From 1858 and throughout the 1860s periodic tribal rebellions occurred in the Batna military district. None of these affected the town of Batna nor its outlying farms. These revolts were brutally repressed.

The famous Mokrani revolt of 1871, however, directly involved Batna. In the early weeks of the revolt (April 1871), Mokrani's forces encircled Batna. They burned European-owned farms in the region and killed 42 European civilians. (A number of European farmers from an outlying agricultural center were saved by their Muslim employees who hid them and then escorted them into Batna.) French reprisals devastated the Aures tribes: more than 60 million francs were taken in war retributions, most of their livestock were killed, and large portions of land were confiscated. The toll of human life was enormous (see Nouschi 1961).

Although these events took place within the lifetime of parents and grandparents of informants, the Jews of Batna have little consciousness of, or sense of, connection to these events. No one mentioned them to me and most Jews displayed little interest in speaking about them. Certainly the economic ruin of the tribes which was a result of the French conquest is unknown or unacknowledged by the Jews.⁷

Section II

The Origins and Structure of the Jewish Community of Batna

To find the origins of the Jewish population of Batna, I inspected death records from 1865 to 1895; these records listed the birthplace of the deceased. Approximately one-half of them were born in the city of Constantine. Eighteen percent came from the city of Setif and fourteen percent from the Kabylia region. Oran, Biskra, Tebessa, Tangiers (Morocco), M'zab, Annale, and Tunis (Tunisia) each had one person listed as born there. If one can extrapolate from this rather limited sample, it would appear that the majority of the Batna Jews came from Constantine. Constantine was a major urban center prior to the French conquest, and records of its Jewish population date from pre-Roman times. The group coming from the Kabylia is intriguing. In the early French accounts of Algeria there is some mention of Jews called "Bahoutzim," semi-nomadic groups living among the Berber tribes (Eisenbeth 1931:40). A number of informants told me that 'before the French came, Jews were not allowed to settle in the cities and lived in the mountains.' Perhaps those persons from the Kabylia were descendents of such semi-nomadic groups. One Batna family traced its ancestry to a well-known

Spanish rabbi who settled in Algeria following the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. Other Batna Jews also claimed descent from Spanish Jews. The only thing which can be directly affirmed is that the immediate ancestors of most of the Batna Jews were from the city of Constantine.

The Structure of the Batna Jewish Religious Organization

The Jewish religious community in Batna dates from at least the year 1858. The town birth records listed the occupation of rabbi for the father of an infant. The official records of the Jewish religious and charitable organizations began in 1908 when in compliance with new legislation all religious groups had to register with the government. The two main branches of the Jewish religious community, the Cultuelle (religious matters) and the Société de Bienfaisance (charity work) were registered in 1908 and 1909 respectively.

The Cultuelle was governed by the Batna Consistoire consisting of ten members and a president elected every three years by the adult male members of the community.⁹ The Consistoire met on an ad hoc basis. The President of the Consistoire was a very powerful figure; he usually belonged to one of the richest Jewish families in Batna. Often, the president had more power than the head rabbi and certainly outranked the secondary rabbis. The presidency went back and forth between the heads of two major families for most of the period between 1920 and 1960.

The charitable organization, the Bienfaisance, had six members also elected every three years. They were in charge of assessing which families had need of supplementary funds and of distributing money and food. Poor families received money on a weekly basis and supplementary food for the Jewish holidays. The Catholic charitable organization,

Secours Catholique, contributed flour, sugar, soap, and oil to be distributed to Jewish families. When questioned as to how a family or individual became eligible for aid, the former head of the Bienfaisance gave the following explanation: someone (usually a neighbor) would report to the Bienfaisance that the persons were needy. Then, a member of the charitable organization would conduct an investigation--by inquiring around--to ascertain if this was true. My informant stressed that this was all done "en cachet" (in secret) so as to spare feelings.¹⁰ The money would be delivered to the person's home on Thursdays to insure that there would be sufficient foodstuffs for the Sabbath. There were some 25 to 30 households (approximately ten percent of the households in the Jewish community) who received this aid during the 1950s. The recipients were generally elderly or handicapped persons. Informants from poor families were very scornful when I discussed this aid with them; they stressed that it was totally inadequate to alleviate lack of food and fuel.

The source of the Bienfaisance's budget are important to scrutinize. According to the man who headed the Bienfaisance during the 1950s, the yearly budget for that period was as follows: (1) 150,000 francs (ancien) allocated from the community budget from the monthly dues paid by all households, (2) 500,000 francs from the Conseil General de Departement (the governing council of the Department of Constantine), (3) 200,000 francs from pledges made by individuals on Saturdays and holidays. The poor were under the control of the wealthy, as it was the prosperous members of the Jewish community who donated the charity funds and served on the Bienfaisance. This was the same situation which

leftist Jews had criticized in the 1890s (see Chapter 1). The government filtered its aid to the Jews through their religious organization, an amazing situation considering the ostensible separation of church and state.

The community provided its indigent members with a free funeral and grave marker. The charitable organization supplied the households of deceased poor members with coffee for the mourners during the initial eight-day mourning period. (Coffee was served in the morning and in the mid-afternoon). Food was provided for the ceremonies marking the end of the first month of mourning and the end of the first year of mourning.

Because of the number of tasks rabbis had to perform, the Batna community in the 1950s had from three to five full-time religious practitioners. There was one Grand Rabbin (chief rabbi) whose salary was paid by the government and two to four rabbis who were paid by the Jewish community.¹¹ The rabbis performed religious ceremonies (prayer services were held three times daily), taught religious classes to the boys, and slaughtered all the meat for the community. According to the Jewish religion, animals must be slaughtered in a prescribed fashion with the proper prayers. One had to be trained and licensed by the Algerian Consistorial authorities to perform ritual slaughter. Sheep and cattle were slaughtered in the public slaughterhouse whereas poultry, which Jews purchased live, would be brought to the synagogue courtyard and ritually killed there by a rabbi. The religious ceremonial duties included, in addition to daily and holiday prayers, performing circumcision, marriage, funeral, and bar mitzvah ceremonies.

The nature of the power relations between the rabbis and the lay leaders of the community is an important subject. The Grand Rabbin

had a certain degree of autonomy as he was not dependent on the community for his salary. However, as his appointment as Grand Rabbin had been made by the Consistoire, he had certain obligations to fulfill.¹² The lesser rabbis were clearly subordinate to the president and the Consistoire. Synagogue records reveal an uneven struggle between the rabbis and the president. The rabbis, for failure to carry out their duties to the satisfaction of the president or prominent members of the Consistoire, were docked pay, fined, and threatened with dismissal. Some of the "offenses" which the rabbis were cited for were tardiness for religious services, dismissing their religious classes too early, failure to keep a poultry slaughtering appointment, frequenting cafes, etc. The tone of the communications between the president and the rabbis was one of an employer rebuking a very subordinate employee. The rabbis were for the most part ill-educated (in French), came from poor families, and thus had few alternatives. Occasionally, rabbis changed professions. One rabbi recalled how in negotiations for a pay raise he had threatened the Consistoire that he could make more money as an accountant and that they had better raise his salary concomitantly or he would quit. In general, however, the president of the Jewish community was the one with the real power in terms of his status as a member of a wealthy family and the fact that he was often also a political figure in the town. The president for many years was one of the assistant mayors of Batna. Other presidents were members of the Batna Municipal Council or had close relatives in such positions.

In addition to the rabbis, other employees of the Jewish community were the concierge (shamas) of the synagogue and the woman who was

in charge of the mikvah, the ritual bath. Both of these persons were lodged in or near the synagogue and given a small salary. The concierge also came in for criticism of his personal conduct.

The dominance of the Jewish community by its wealthy members manifested itself in other aspects of religious life. Over 90 percent of the budget of the Jewish community derived from the sale of religious honors. These honors were ceremonial actions during the course of the religious service. Some examples are the right to read from the torah, the opening and closing of the arc where the torah is kept, carrying the torah in its procession around the synagogue, etc. Thus access to participation in the religious ceremony was related to wealth. These honors did not have a fixed price, but were auctioned to the highest bidder. The wealthy exhibited their dominance and generosity (after all, the money went to the synagogue) in the buying of honors. As an act of charity, a well-to-do man bought a poor man the right to read a prayer. The seating arrangements in the synagogue reflected social position as well. The prized seats closest to the torah were reserved for important men and their male relatives.

Section III

Jews and Christians: A Demographic Profile

Marriage Statistics

Marriage records are an important index of the degree of separation between the three communities in Batna (see Table II). With the exception of the years missing from the official records, there are complete data on Jewish and Christian marriages from 1872 to 1961.¹³ While

TABLE II
MARRIAGES IN BATNA, 1872-1954

Partners	Marriages	
	Number	Percent
Jewish/Jewish	372	20
Christian/Christian	1435	78
Jewish/Christian	26	1
Other	14	1
TOTAL	1847	100

most Muslim marriages were not listed, those Muslims who were French citizens or who married French citizens were registered with the Christians and Jews. Thus while there are no records of Muslim marriages per se, there are reliable data concerning unions between Muslims and other groups. As we see from the chart on the following page, there was virtually no intermarriage between the three groups.

Jewish/Christian marriage counted for only one percent of all marriages taking place from 1872 until 1954. There were no Muslim/Jewish marriages recorded. It is significant that when the Batna Jews spoke of "mixed marriage," they meant Christian/Jewish unions. From 1893, the date of the first Christian/Jewish marriage in Batna (which ended in divorce several years later), until 1954, there were 26 marriages between Jews and Christians. In the four years for which records exist from 1955 through 1961, there were 18 marriages between Jews and Christians.

Several factors account for this change. The beginning of the Algerian Revolution in November 1954 brought a massive buildup of French troops in Batna, which became a major military center. There was an influx of soldiers, a number of whom married Batna Jewish women. Throughout the Algerian War the Jewish community progressively disintegrated as members left for France. There was a growing sense that eventually all the Jews would have to leave. It is likely that the cohesive force of the community which in the past prevented marriage to Christians greatly diminished. The Christian soldiers from France were not susceptible to the colonists' social stigma against marrying Jews.

The one percent of the marriages labeled "other" in Table II are marriages between Christians and Muslims or Muslims with Muslims in which

one of the partners was a French citizen. About half of these cases are Christians marrying Muslims. They are evenly divided between Christian men marrying Muslim women and Muslim men marrying Christian women. In most instances the Christian partner was from France.

Marriage Witnesses

All acts of marriage, birth, and death had to be signed by witnesses, the mayor (or his representative), and the parties concerned. This provides us with a means of measuring contacts between Jews and the Muslims and Christians. Witnesses were generally close friends or co-workers; women did not serve as witnesses. In the chapters which follow, I argue that there were limited social contacts between the Jews and the other groups. One way of illustrating this quantitatively is to examine the religious affiliation of witnesses selected by the Jews.

Birth and death certificates required two witnesses and marriages four (until 1919 when it was reduced to two). During the period from 1855 to 1870, there were 80 births registered for the Jews in Batna. Of 160 witnesses, there were only eight non-Jews: two Muslims and six Christians. These were the only Muslim witnesses I discovered. In marriages which I surveyed from 1872 through 1954, no Muslim witnesses appeared. Indeed, there were very few Christians who served as witnesses for the Jews. Christians (see Table III) averaged about six percent of the total number of witnesses.

In examining the chart of witnesses for marriage acts, it is important to note that statistically there is no significant difference in the number of Christian witnesses for each successive period.¹⁴ This indicates that the level of contact between the two communities remained

TABLE III
WITNESSES FOR JEWISH MARRIAGES, 1872-1954

Year	Total Number of Witnesses	Christian Witnesses	
		Number	Percent
1872-1899	220	18	8.2
1900-1913	268	9	3.4
1920-1937	222	16	7.2
1945-1954	118	5	4.2

fairly constant throughout the 80 years under consideration. The only exception indicated in the records was the period surrounding the 1898 antisemitic riots. The marriage records for the years 1895 through 1902 show no Christians witnessing Jewish marriages.¹⁵ There is no similar gap in later or earlier periods.

Inspection of some of the cases in which marriage acts were witnessed by Christians revealed that the groom often worked in a civil service or office position where the Christian witness was also employed.

In the case of marriages between Jews and Christians, the witness picture is quite different (see Table IV). In 18 marriages between Jews and Christians taking place between 1921 and 1954, there was only one instance in which all the witnesses were Jews. Two-thirds of the witnesses were Christians in these cases. These figures confirm informants' perceptions that Jews who married Christians were ostracized by their families and to a degree by the Jewish community.

A Comparisons of Christians and Jews: Grooms' Occupations

Marriage records included the occupations of the bride and groom and their parents. Thus it is possible to compare the type of occupations exercised by Jews and Christians over a period of more than 80 years.¹⁶ Before examining these data for Jewish and Christian grooms, let me make some broad generalizations concerning occupation. Agriculture, with few exceptions, was a Christian (and Muslim) occupation. Two or three Jewish families owned land at various points in time, but none cultivated the land themselves. Some of the Christian population were truck farmers who farmed the land themselves. Other Christians had

TABLE IV WITNESSES FOR JEWISH/CHRISTIAN MARRIAGES, 1921-1954			
Witnesses	Number of Marriages	Number of Witnesses	
		Jewish	Christian
Both witnesses Jews	1	2	-
One Jewish/one Christian witness	10	10	10
Both witnesses Christian	7	-	14
TOTAL	18	12 (33%)	24 (67%)

large holdings and raised wheat, barley, sheep, and cattle; they employed Muslim laborers.¹⁷

In other sectors of the economy (with the exception of the professions and the army) Jews and Christians were fairly proportionately distributed. However, examining manual occupations and commercial enterprises in detail, evidence of Jewish specialization within certain economic sectors occurs.

Taking the category of civil service, we find that the Jews gradually moved in increasing numbers into the nonmilitary positions over the 80-year period under study.¹⁸ From 1872 until 1899 eight percent of the Jews were in the civil service. From 1900 to 1913 no Jews are listed with civil service positions. Perhaps this is due in part to the antisemitic outbreak at the turn of the century when many Jews were fired from municipal posts. After the First World War, the percentage of Jewish grooms employed by the civil service climbed to 20 percent and after the Second World War to 29 percent. Batna Jews served in both World Wars and, as veterans, received government priority for civil service posts. The percentage of Christian grooms employed in civil service positions fluctuated slightly over the 80-year period, but the changes are statistically insignificant.¹⁹

There is no statistically significant difference between the percentage of Jews and Christians owning or working in commercial enterprises.²⁰ Among the Jews, we note a very slight rise over time in the percentage of those owning their own business. There were, however, important differences in the type of business and its clientele between Jewish and Christian merchants. According to informants, and from

occupational data I obtained through genealogies, many Jewish businesses had a Muslim clientele. For example, Jewish storekeepers often specialized in selling the bright-colored silk-like cloth from which Muslim women fashioned their dresses. Grocers also carried specialty products for Muslims (and Jews as well), e.g., spices, teas, semolina, etc. Over time, the wealthier Jewish merchants obtained business locations in the European sections of Batna and began to have a Christian clientele.

Examining figures on grooms in the liberal professions (see Tables VII-X), it seems likely that for the Christians these were less than the actual proportion in the population. Professionals tended to be non-Batneens who came to Batna at various stages in their professional careers and hence were often already married.²¹ These records (corroborated by genealogical data on the Jews) show that only a handful of Jews from Batna received an education and became professionals. In France today, there is a definite, self-conscious push for upward mobility through professional training; this was not the case in Batna. I discuss some of the cultural reasons for this in Chapter 3.²²

It is interesting to note that proportionately more Jews than Christians were in skilled or artisanal occupations prior to World War I.²³ This contradicts the antisemitic stereotypes of the period which characterized Jews as nonproductive parasites. In this period over 50 percent of the Jews engaged in manual occupations. Over the 80-year period we note the percentage of skilled Jewish workers seemingly declining from 48 percent to 25 percent. This decline is probably an artifact of the classification scheme as many Jews in the later period were skilled workers who held civil service jobs, for example, as

railroad workers. The occupational list of the Jews of Batna in the late 1950s is illustrative of this point (see Table VI).

Although we find proportionately more Jews than Christians employed as artisans or skilled laborers, there is much less variation in the types of occupations they exercised than their Christian counterparts. Looking at Table V, we see 77 percent of the Jews clustered in three occupations: shoemaker, tailor, and jeweler. Even more striking is that 56 percent of the Jews were shoemakers. This extremely high proportion of shoemakers is explained by the fact that the Jews made shoes for the Shawia tribes in the Aures mountains; Batna was a major market center for the Aures. Jewish jewelers also had Muslim customers; they fabricated the jewelry that figured importantly in marriages of Muslims and of Jews. According to informants, Jewish mattress-makers often had a large Muslim clientele. Thus a large segment of Jewish artisans catered virtually exclusively to Muslim customers.

The largest single occupational category for Christians is transport workers (see Table V): Batna was a crossroads town through which one had to pass on the way south to Biskra and the oasis towns of the Sahara, as well as into the Aures Mountains. In the 19th century, especially, one finds a concentration of wagoneers in Batna. It was only after the turn of the century that Jews entered the transportation sector. With the introduction of motor vehicles, Jewish entrepreneurs established truck and bus services from Batna to Constantine and the other neighboring towns.

Mason and stonecutter were occupations virtually exclusively Christian. From the available data (confirmed by informants' statements), it appears that a large number of the masons were of Italian origin.

TABLE V
 JEWS AND CHRISTIANS: DETAIL OF ARTISINAL
 AND SKILLED WORKER OCCUPATIONS, 1872-1954

Occupation	Number of Christians	Number of Jews
Shoemaker (bootmaker)	7 (5%)	79 (57%)
Tailor	1	18 (13%)
Jeweler		11 (8%)
Tinsmith	4	4
Harnessmaker	10 (7%)	1
Ironsmith	3	2
Carpenter	25 (17%)	5 (4%)
Transport worker	26 (18%)	6 (4%)
Painter	13 (9%)	6 (4%)
Barrelmaker	1	
Horseshoer	5	
Locksmith	2	
Gunsmith	3	
Watchmaker	1	
Rugmaker	1	
Wheelwright	4	
Charcoal maker	1	
Bookbinder	1	
Brewer	2	
Miner	2	
Mason	21 (14%)	
Stonecutter	4	
Woodcutter/sawyer	6	
Plasterer	1	
Electrician	2	
Mattressmaker		2
Ropemaker		1
Dyer		3
Carder		1
TOTAL	146	139

Source: Figures from combined Recruitment Register and Marriage Records (Grooms' Occupations)

TABLE VI
OCCUPATIONS OF BATNA JEWS, CIRCA 1957

Occupation	Number of Adult Men
I. Civil Servants	
1. employed by the army (civilians)	2
2. tax office	5
3. post office	3
4. railroad	10
5. social security office	1
6. prison guards	10
7. police	15
8. teacher (including 1 school director)	13
9. government hospital	5
10. career soldier	6
11. other	2
II. Artisans and Skilled Workers	
1. shoemakers	9
2. carpenter	4
3. jeweler	3
4. tailor	8
5. plumber	4
6. painter	1
7. mason	1
8. butcher	4
9. bus driver	2
10. barber	11
11. mechanic	1
III. Cafe and Hotel Owners	
1. cafe owner	5
2. hotel owner	2
IV. Commerce	
1. grocer	3
2. hardware	4
3. cloth (to Muslim clients)	2
4. liquor	3
5. fish	1
6. leather (wholesale)	1
7. garage owner	1
8. wholesaler	1
9. miscellaneous retail	18
10. gasoline station owner	1

TABLE VI--Continued

Occupation	Number of Adult Men
V. Agriculture	
1. farm manager	2
VI. Professional, Managerial, Office	
1. lawyer	2
2. judicial personnel (<u>huissier de justice, greffier de justice</u>)	3
3. legal clerks	3
4. assistant bank director	1
5. optician	1
6. rabbi and other religious personnel	5
7. insurance agent	1
8. nurse	3
9. accountant	6
10. office employees	5
11. pharmacist's assistant	1
12. university student	1
13. water source locator	1
VII. Miscellaneous	
1. owner of <u>cous cous</u> factory	1
2. owner of pasta factory	1
3. lottery ticket vendor	2
4. organizer of fairs (<u>forain</u>)	2
5. employe of commerce	1
Source: List of adult men in the Jewish community was compiled by the head rabbi at this time. Occupational data was obtained from informants.	

TABLE VII
OCCUPATIONS OF BATNA GROOMS, 1872-1899

Occupation	Christians		Jews	
	#	%	#	%
I. Agriculture	4	7	0	0
II. Workers and Artisans				
1. unskilled	1	2	3	6
2. skilled	16	28	23	48
III. Commerce				
1. owners	13	23	9	19
2. employees	3	5	5	10
IV. Civil Service				
1. civil service employees*	10	18	4	8
2. military personnel	3	5	0	0
3. teachers	0	0	0	0
V. Liberal Professions				
1. professionals	2	4	1	2
2. clerks and aides	0	0	2	4
VI. Other				
1. no profession	5	9	1	2
TOTAL	57	100	48	100

*This includes civilian employees of the military.

TABLE VIII
OCCUPATIONS OF BATNA GROOMS, 1900-1913

Occupation	Christians		Jews	
	#	%	#	%
I. Agriculture	5	8	0	0
II. Workers and Artisans				
1. unskilled	0	0	3	5
2. skilled	18	30	38	60
III. Commerce				
1. owners	9	15	13	21
2. employees	5	8	4	6
IV. Civil Service				
1. civil service employees	10	18	0	0
2. military personnel	3	5	0	0
3. teachers	1	2	0	0
V. Liberal Professions				
1. professionals	4	7	0	0
2. clerks and aides	1	2	3	5
VI. Other				
1. no profession	0	0	1	2
2. musician	0	0	1	2
TOTAL	57	100	63	100

TABLE IX
OCCUPATIONS OF BATNA GROOMS, 1919-1937

Occupation	Christians		Jews	
	#	%	#	%
I. Agriculture	3	6	1	1
II. Workers and Artisans				
1. unskilled	0	0	0	0
2. skilled	16	29	35	36
III. Commerce				
1. owners	7	13	25	26
2. employees	1	2	11	11
IV. Civil Service				
1. civil service employees	7	13	19	20
2. military personnel	15	27	4	4
3. teachers	1	2	0	0
V. Liberal Professions				
1. professionals	4	7	1	1
2. clerks and aides	1	2	1	1
VI. Other	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	55	100	97	100

TABLE X
OCCUPATIONS OF BATNA GROOMS, 1945-1954

Occupation	Christians		Jews	
	#	%	#	%
I. Agriculture	2	8	1	2
II. Workers and Artisans				
1. unskilled	0	0	0	0
2. skilled	6	24	12	25
III. Commerce				
1. owners	3	12	8	17
2. employees	1	4	7	15
IV. Civil Service				
1. civil service employees	5	20	14	29
2. military personnel	5	20	5	10
3. teachers	1	4	0	0
V. Liberal Professions	0	0	0	0
VI. Other				
1. retired	1	4	0	0
2. rabbi	0	0	1	2
TOTAL	25	100	48	100

By the late 1950s the Jews were no longer so specialized. Table VI shows Jewish occupations to be far more diversified than in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Women's Occupations

Examining Tables XI-XIV, which detail the employment ratios and occupations of brides and their mothers, we note a close fit between Jews and Christians. From the 1870s to the turn of the century brides of both groups were employed in roughly the same proportions. Their occupations were similar: mostly domestics and seamstresses. However, from informants' accounts, it seems likely that many of the Jewish women fabricated clothes for the Muslims or for other Jews, while the Christians catered to Europeans. One of the traditional occupations for Jewish women was that of embroiderer; they decorated garments with complicated gold and silver designs for the Muslims, especially for bridal trousseaus.

There was somewhat more diversity of employment among Christian mothers of brides than among Jewish ones. Although the majority of those employed, for both Jews and Christians, were domestics, among Christian women 25 percent were listed as property owners (propriétaire). The term propriétaire refers to someone who owns farm property. All the women so listed, with one exception, were widows. One can assume that they continued to run their deceased husbands' farms.

After the turn of the century (i.e., from 1900 until the beginning of the First World War), there is a sudden drop in women's employment rates for both the Jews and the Christians. There are no Jewish brides listed as employed and only three Christian brides. One

TABLE XI
EMPLOYMENT RATES: BATNA JEWISH BRIDES, 1879-1954

Years	N	Employed	
		#	%
1879-1899	56	13	23
1900-1913	60	0	0
1919-1937	103	3	3
1945-1954	57	20	35

Source: Marriage acts, 100% sample for all years included.

TABLE XII
 EMPLOYMENT RATES:
 MOTHERS OF BATNA JEWISH BRIDES, 1879-1954

Years	N	Employed	
		#	%
1879-1899	49	38	77
1900-1954	Only one woman listed as employed		

TABLE XIII
EMPLOYMENT RATES: BATNA CHRISTIAN BRIDES, 1872-1954

Years	N	Employed	
		#	%
1872-1899	63	11	17
1900-1913	69	3	4
1919-1937	67	11	16
1945-1954	29	12	41

Source: Marriages acts. 1872-1899 taken from a sample of 13 years (chosen randomly) with a 25% random sample in each year.

TABLE XIV
EMPLOYMENT RATES:
MOTHERS OF BATNA CHRISTIAN BRIDES, 1872-1954

Years	N	Employed	
		#	%
1872-1899	36	19	53
1900-1913	48	4	8
1919-1937	NA	0	0
1945-1954	24	1	4

explanation for the decline in Jewish women's employment is the 1898 riots. The reader will recall the newspaper campaigns urging Christians to fire their Jewish employees; Jewish domestic help was especially attacked. An old Jewish woman from Batna corroborated the marriage records; she said that Jewish women had stopped working as domestics for the Christians around the turn of the century and that Muslim women began to take their places.

Another reason was that with the final destruction of Muslim resistance in the surrounding Aures mountains, Batna lost importance as a military center. There were reductions in the number of troops, causing the town to lose a major source of business and employment (anonymous 1904). We can conjecture that a number of the women, both Jews and Christians, who were employed by senior military personnel as domestics lost their positions when the troop reductions took place. Another factor was competition from Muslim women who moved with their families to urban centers due to impoverishment of rural areas.

In the period between the two World Wars, Christian women began to enter teaching, civil service, secretarial, and other office positions (see Table XV). We see that 16 percent of them were employed. Jewish women, on the other hand, according to marriage records, were not employed. (In Chapter 3 I argue that this is very likely not true because a number of women worked in family-owned businesses.) It is important to stress that in the 1920s and 1930s Christian women were engaged in higher status occupations which Jewish women entered into only after the Second World War.

After the Second World War (from 1945 to 1954), over one-third of the brides were listed as employed. It is interesting to note that

TABLE XV
COMPARISON OF OCCUPATIONS:
JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN BATNA WOMEN, 1872-1954

Year	Occupation	Jews	Christians
1872-1899	beverage vendor		X
	cemetary guard		X
	day worker		X
	laundress	X	X
	maid	X	X
	property owner	X	X
	retail merchant		X
	seamstress	X	X
	wholesale merchant		X
1900-1913	laundress		X
	maid	X	X
	primary school teacher		X
	property owner		X
	retail merchant		X
	seamstress		X
1919-1937	accountant		X
	maid	X	
	office manager		X
	post office employee		X
	primary school teacher		X
	saleswoman		X
	seamstress	X	X
typist		X	
1945-1954	civil servant (office worker)	X	X
	embroidress	X	
	hairdresser	X	
	hospital employee	X	
	nurse	X	X
	office worker	X	
	post office employee	X	X
	primary school teacher	X	X
	property owner		X
	seamstress	X	X
	secondary (<u>lycée</u>) teacher		X
	social worker		X
	typist	X	X

the traditional occupation of embroiderer appeared twice. Perhaps this profession did not disappear in the earlier periods, but women so employed did not list it. Jewish women were employed as hairdressers (informants told me that hairdressing for both women and men was somewhat of a Jewish monopoly in Batna), civil service employees, secretaries, and, in increasing numbers, as schoolteachers. In the late 1950s a number of Jewish women took advantage of the increase in teaching positions (due to a long overdue and last-ditch effort on the part of the French to provide education for the Muslim population), and the decreased educational requirements, to become primary school teachers.

Marriage Patterns: Community Exogamy vs. Endogamy

Marriage records included the legal residence of the parents of both bride and groom. I take parental residence as the permanent residence of the bride or groom. This was done for the following reasons: one of the aims of looking at newlyweds' residence was to discern whether there was a difference between the Christian and Jewish population in marriage patterns. Did Jews from Batna marry other Batna Jews or persons from other towns? The same question must be posed for the Christians.²⁴

I have chosen parental residence as the best available index to show that a person was "from" Batna. For example, there were a number of instances in which the residence of the groom was given as Batna. Yet it was obvious from the records that he was a soldier stationed there on a semi-permanent basis. Taking spouses' birthplaces as the basis also leads to difficulty in that it would eliminate those who

moved to Batna as children and grew up there. Thus parental residence was the best indicator for residence of bride and groom.

The sample pool of spouses was taken from both Jews and Christians for whom residence data on parents was available and for whom at least one spouse was from Batna. A phenomenon not appearing in this comparison of Jews and Christians is that of marriages between Italians and Corsicans who had immigrated to Batna and then sent to their native villages for wives. In the random sample of Christian marriages, it occurred regularly throughout the period under consideration.²⁵

Residence figures are calculated only until the Second World War; after World War II parental residence usually did not appear in the marriage records.

Looking at Table XVI and Figure 1, a number of striking differences emerge between the Jewish and Christian population. Taking the graph, we see that the Jews of Batna married other Batneens at a very high rate. Figures ranged from above 80 percent to 70 percent over a 65-year period. From Table XVI we see that there was virtually an equal number of Jewish men and women from Batna who married outside of Batna. This indicates that, while there may have been Batna Jews marrying non-Batneens and having the wedding ceremonies in other towns, the sample is still valid. The near equality in numbers of Jewish men and women in the sample shows that there was not a disproportionate number of either men or women marrying outside Batna. The genealogical materials I gathered for a number of Batna Jewish families lend further support to the conclusions drawn from the marriage records.

These records also illustrate the point that, despite the fact that the Jews considered it proper for the wedding to be conducted in the

TABLE XVI
RESIDENCE OF BRIDES' AND GROOMS' PARENTS,
CHRISTIAN AND JEWISH MARRIAGES, 1872-1937

	N	Batna		France		Other Algeria		Other	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Christian Marriages									
Bride's Parents									
1872-1899	27	26	96%	1	4%				
1900-1913	47	44	94%	1	2%			2	4%
1919-1937	45	40	89%	2	4%	3	7%		
Groom's Parents									
1872-1899	27	10	37%	16	59%	1	4%		
1900-1913	47	17	36%	18	38%	8	17%	4	9%
1919-1937	45	23	51%	11	24%	10	22%	1	2%
Jewish Marriages									
Bride's Parents									
1872-1899	16	14	87%			2	13%		
1900-1913	22	20	91%			2	9%		
1919-1937	52	49	94%			3	6%		
Groom's Parents									
1872-1899	16	15	94%			1	6%		
1900-1913	22	21	95%			1	5%		
1919-1937	52	40	77%			12	23%		

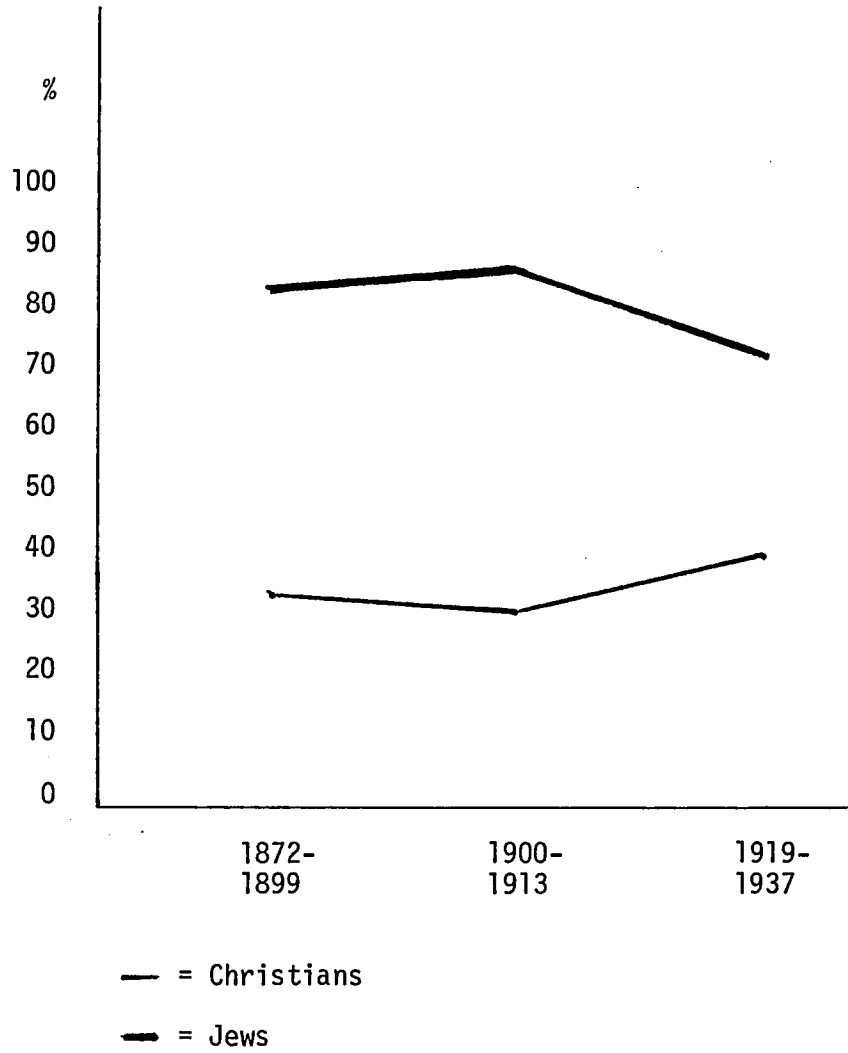


FIGURE 1. PERCENTAGE OF COUPLES IN WHICH PARENTS OF BOTH SPOUSES LIVED IN BATNA

town of the groom, many weddings nevertheless took place in the bride's town. Informants told me that, in the case of a bride and a groom living in different places, it was considered proper to have half the ceremonies in the bride's town and then journey to the groom's town to conclude the civil and religious marriages. From these figures, it seems that this was often not done.

Another major difference between the Jews and the Christians was that the non-Batneens whom the Jews married were largely from neighboring towns in the department of Constantine. As we see from the chart, the Christians had quite a different pattern. For the father of the groom, a range from 24 percent to 59 percent lived in France; many lived in other departments of Algeria, others in foreign countries (mainly Italy).

In addition to showing that Christians married outside Batna and with people from a wider area, these figures reveal important differences in marriage patterns. Comparing the number of brides whose fathers lived in Batna with the number of grooms with Batna fathers, we see that there were approximately twice as many Christian women married in Batna as Christian men. This indicates that Batna women married non-Batna men and that the marriages took place in Batna. Many of the men these girls married were soldiers stationed in Batna. It is obvious that the missing men, i.e., those Christian men from Batna of marriageable age, also married non-Batna women and had marriages performed elsewhere.

Thus the marriage records reveal that there was a considerable difference between the Jews and the Christians of Batna in marriage patterns. Jews tended to marry Batna Jews or Jews from the surrounding towns. The Christians married outside of Batna and quite often, in the case of the women, with French from France.

Naming Practices among the Batna Jews

Despite the social distance indicated in this chapter between the Jews and the Christians, to be further elaborated in subsequent chapters, the Jews of Batna sought to identify themselves with the French. One index of this is the use of French names by the Jews. Originally, Jews from Batna (and throughout North Africa) used Arabic and Hebrew first names. Prior to 1883 in Batna Jews gave their children "traditional" names drawn from various sources. Men's names such as Rahmim, Messaoud, Kalfa, Maklouf were Arabic in origin and were used also by the Muslim population. Similarly, women's names such as Ghezala, Zhaira, Aziza, Oreida, Zaina, etc., were also Arabic and likewise used by Muslims. Some women's names such as Nina, Baya, Louise are Spanish in origin and were most likely introduced by the Jews who fled to North Africa from Spain in the 15th century. Names of Biblical origin such as Isaac, Jacob, Abraham, Esther, Miriam, and Rebecca were also common.

As we can see from Table XVII, there was a gradual decrease in traditional names and an increase in French names over this 72-year period. The chart is arranged to show the difference between names given to male and female children as well as whether both French and traditional names were used. The first obvious difference is that French names were given to girls in greater proportion and at an earlier date than to boys. Thus, we see that in the ten-year period from 1905 to 1915 when an average of 70 percent of the boys received only traditional names, over 70 percent of the girls were given at least one French name. Traditionally children were given only one first name; prior to the 1880s one does not find Jews with more than one first name. Giving

TABLE XVII
CHANGES IN NAMING PRACTICES OF BATNA JEWS, 1883-1955

Year	Boys			Girls		
	Tradi- tional	French	French & Tradi- tional	Tradi- tional	French	French & Tradi- tional
1883-1895	75%	9%	17%	72%	13%	15%
1900	73%	0	9%	47%	13%	40%
1905	60%	7%	33%	29%	13%	48%
1910	85%	0	15%	38%	25%	37%
1915	64%	7%	29%	13%	40%	47%
1921	22%	0	78%	13%	20%	67%
1930	26%	16%	58%	13%	31%	66%
1940	0	66%	44%	8%	42%	50%
1946	9%	55%	36%	7%	67%	26%
1950	0	100%	0	8%	92%	0
1955	0	58%	42%	0	55%	45%

two or more names seems to have been a way of giving the traditional name (often a family obligation--see Chapter Three) and a French name as well. Often one finds the traditional name coupled with its French "equivalent": for example, Moise Maurice, Guemara Germaine, Marie Meriemme, Rahmim Raymond, Maklouf Maurice, Eliaou Leon. These would be transformations often based on the closest sounding name in French. Another naming strategy was to give the child the Arabic name translated into French: thus, for example, "Beida" (which means white) became Blanche, "Oureida" became Rose.

After the First World War, a change occurred: over three-quarters of boys as well as girls received French names. After 1940 very few individuals of either sex received only traditional names. No tendency was noted to drop the names of Arabic origin and keep the Biblical ones.

Ability of Jews to Sign Marriage Acts

Social historians often use the ability to sign marriage acts to gauge literacy. According to the literature, the ability to sign is an indication of a fluent reading level, because pupils were taught to read fluently before they began to learn to write (Furet and Sachs 1974). I am somewhat hesitant to apply this test to the Jews, as their literacy in Hebrew (including knowledge of how to write the alphabet and their names) may enable them more easily to learn to sign their names in another alphabet. However, if we accept this criterion, we must conclude that by the 1870s and 1880s many Jewish men had already learned basic skills in the French language. This indicates that they had been to school in the 1850s and 1860s.

Complete marriage records for the Jews do not start in Batna until after the 1870 Decree Crémieux; an occasional couple before this period had a civil marriage, but it was infrequent. However, even before 1870 it had become a practice for the Jews to register their children in the birth records. Birth registry called for the father and two witnesses to sign the record. Up until 1870 if the witnesses or the father of the infant could not sign in French, they wrote their names in Hebrew. After 1870 this practice disappeared and those unable to sign in French stated that they could not sign. Whether the French authorities or the Jews initiated this is difficult to establish. In a sample of five years between 1855 and 1870, somewhat over half of the signatures of the witnesses were in Hebrew.

In the case of marriage records, there was only one instance after 1870 of a groom signing in Hebrew. No women ever signed in Hebrew. (It was rare for a woman to be taught to write Hebrew; they had no formal religious training.)

As we see in Table XVIII, there was a great disparity between Jewish men and women in ability to sign their names. In the 1870s and 1880s 16 percent of the women were able to sign compared with 76 percent of the men. By the post-World War I period all the men were able to sign whereas 18 percent of the women were still unable to do so. From my ethnographic data, I suspect that the women's illiteracy rate was even higher. When I examined the marriage acts, I was startled to find that women had signed their marriages acts whom I knew to be illiterate. Clearly, they had been coached by their families so as not to be humiliated before the authorities. In 1884 (Decree Jules Ferry) schooling

TABLE XVIII
 BATNA JEWISH BRIDES AND GROOMS:
 ABILITY TO SIGN MARRIAGE ACTS, 1872-1954

Year	Groom	Bride*
1872-1889	N = 37 Signed 29** Not signed 8 (24%)	N = 37 Signed 6 Not signed 31 (84%)
1890-1913	N = 85 Signed 79 Not signed 6 (7%)	N = 85 Signed 36 Not signed 49 (58%)
1919-1937	N = 121 Signed 121 Not signed 0	N = 121 Signed 99 Not signed 22 (18%)
1945-1954	All signed	All signed

*Note that, despite the differences in N's, the women's ability to sign increases significantly ($t > .01$).

**One signed in Hebrew.

became obligatory for girls as well as for boys. However, this does not seem to have forced the parents to send daughters to school. We discuss this further in Chapter Three.

This chapter has documented social differences and social distance between Jews and Christians in Batna. As evidenced by marriage and education patterns, the Jewish community was much more isolated from the outside world than were the Christians. For most of the colonial period, Jews and Christians were employed in different sectors of the economy. Marriage witnesses point to a lack of friendship relations between Jews and Christians. It is important to bear this demographic profile of Batna in mind as we turn to the ethnohistoric accounts and examine the Jews' claim to being part of the European population.

NOTES

¹The anonymous military history of Batna, written in 1904, was in the possession of Mr. Jacob Saksik of Nice, France, who generously lent it to me.

²The microfilmed records of the vital statistics (Etat-Civil) for the French citizens of Algeria are now in government archives in Nantes (Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Service Central de l'Etat Civil, Troisième Bureau, Etat-Civil des Français d'Algérie). Some of the years were lost in transit; all years cited are complete. I would like to thank Professor Pierre Bourdieu for helping me to obtain permission from the Procureur de la République to use these records.

³These were the French governmental administrative units in charge of the Muslims.

⁴By October of 1847 Batna had 16 completed houses, four bakeries, two butcher stores, ten wells, and a mill for wheat.

⁵In this decree the city was called Nouvelle-Lambese, but the name was changed back to Batna less than a year later.

⁶"La prise de possession du sol par la colonisation europeene dans cette partie de la province etait des lors chose faite" (Anonymous 1904:48).

⁷A striking illustration occurred during a discussion with a self-styled leftist from a Batna family. He held that Algeria should now be independent from France, but maintained that French colonization was beneficial to Algeria; he mentioned railroads, roads, etc.

⁸The following years were missing or illegible: 1866-1870, 1888, 1889, 1891-1894. Infants born in Batna were not counted.

⁹Even after women were given the vote in secular elections in 1944, they did not become enfranchised by the Jewish community. This has changed in France where women now vote and serve on the Consistoires of the communities. As of 1975 no women were listed as presidents of Jewish communities.

¹⁰Batna synagogue records (Archives Nationales, Paris) reveal that persons occasionally wrote formal requests for charity stipends.

¹¹The Grand Rabbin earned, in 1960, 72,519 (ancien) francs per month. The lesser rabbis earned from 30,000 to 40,000 francs per month in 1960.

¹²I reviewed some documents from 1959 in which the president and one of the members of the Consistoire exchanged views on the right of the Grand Rabbin to attend Consistoire meetings. These made the point that he was to be present by invitation only.

¹³The microfilmed marriage records of the years 1923, 1925, 1932-1934, 1938-1939, 1942-1943, 1947-1948, 1955, 1957, and 1960 were lost in transition from Algeria to France.

¹⁴z is insignificant at .01 level.

¹⁵There was probably a similar phenomenon under the Vichy regime; however, no data is available for this period.

¹⁶Included in the Christian sample are army personnel whose residence is given as Batna. Otherwise all grooms with non-Batna residence are excluded from the sample. Thus this is a slightly different sample from the residence criteria used for exogamous vs. endogamous marriage patterns.

¹⁷I have been unable to find records describing Muslim farming in the immediate Batna area.

¹⁸Municipal as well as national government jobs are included. In the French system a much larger number of positions are affiliated with the central government.

¹⁹t insignificant at .01 level.

²⁰t insignificant at .01 level.

²¹In certain professions such as notaire or pharmacist one had to purchase the right to set up a practice from the previous person.

²²During the Second World War Jews were excluded from school for a two-year period. The generation who were in their teens at this point often were unable to go back to school afterwards. Several informants said they would have continued their studies had it not been for World War II.

²³t significant at .01 level for 1872-1899; t significant at .05 level for 1900-1913.

²⁴We know from descriptions of colon life (see, for example, Pierre Nora 1961) that there was a desire among them to have their daughters marry Frenchmen from France. The marriage records from Batna show evidence of this.

²⁵Italian and Corsican surnames are indistinguishable; therefore it is not possible to obtain figures for those marrying women from their natal towns in Italy or Corsica.

CHAPTER 3

THE JEWISH FAMILY IN BATNA

In this chapter I present an historical overview of the Jewish family in Batna, reconstructing changes in structure and lifestyle from the 1920s until the 1950s. Understanding the Jewish family is one of the keys to an analysis of the creation of Jewish identity in colonial Algeria. It is crucial to comprehending change in identity following immigration to France. The problem is approached in three ways. (1) Through analyzing images Jews use to represent what family means to them, I show how they characterize the Jewish family and differentiate it from those of Christians and Muslims. (2) I examine the internal structure of the Jewish family: relations between parents and children, siblings, etc., and compare it to the Muslim family. (3) I illustrate how Jewish families in Batna came to present themselves to the outside world and ultimately to themselves as French. This process was conditioned by class and took place over some three generations.

Muslim and French cultural influences on the family were in tension with one another during this period. Originally, Algerian Jewish families had many cultural similarities to their Muslim compatriots.¹ From cuisine, to dress, names, language, music, and dance, Jews and Muslims drew from a common tradition. Such features of popular religion as saint worship, pilgrimages, belief in demons, etc., were shared.²

To enumerate those features of Algerian Jewish culture common to the Muslims introduces certain theoretical and methodological concerns which must be discussed before proceeding further.

One must avoid the culture-area approach of earlier American anthropologists who concentrated on breaking down cultures into their component traits and creating conglomerations of cultures based on shared features. The methodological problem is one of deciding in a quantitative manner how many and which traits groups must have in common before they are said to belong together. However, to perform such a classification brings in the more vital theoretical issue of what such 'sameness' means. Is sameness determined in such an externalistic fashion meaningful? What do we mean when we say that groups are similar? If to the external observer two groups appear the same, yet to the members they appear vastly different, then what is the point of the observer's saying they are the same?

This is precisely the consideration I am bringing to the comparison of the Jews with the Muslims and Christians. The problem at hand is to understand Jewish identity in colonial Batna, and thus we must take informants' perceptions of themselves and their culture as the starting point of the analysis. In interpreting the Jews' perceptions, it is necessary to maintain an interplay between their explicit statements about what the Jews, Muslims, and Christians were like and contradictions between these statements and other data.

When I describe marriage and other customs and mention the similarities with Muslim practice, the object is not to establish a one-to-one fit, but rather to illustrate that there was considerable cultural

overlap. This provides a basis for understanding Jewish informants who stressed their affinities with Muslims.

As noted in the previous chapter, Jews were gradually becoming more incorporated into the European economic sphere throughout the 20th century. World War I brought a generation of young Jewish men to France and, as decorated veterans, they had an additional sense of legitimacy to their claim on being French.³ Through their schooling, Jews received a very French-centered education.⁴ How such changes become expressed in family life is a major concern. What appears to have taken place is that the Jews tried to convince themselves as well as the Christians that they were 'really' French. Even today, they have a tremendous ambivalence towards those aspects of their culture which they value yet know are shared with Muslims.

While much of the following discussion may appear to be couched in terms of a distinction between 'public' and 'private' spheres, this is definitely not the point. Although at first glance it may appear that the Jews were publicly seeking to identify with the French and privately to keep a certain Jewish identity, the situation was much more complex. In the process of creating their 'European' image for the Christians, the Jews managed to a great extent to inculcate this conviction in themselves. Let us explore the consequences of this.

Section I

The Jewish Family in the Colonial Context

When I questioned a man in his mid-thirties from a prominent Jewish family about differences he found between the Jews and Christians of Batna, he responded in a somewhat curious fashion. He said:

" . . . family attachments, among us [the Jews], religion and customs come before all." The way in which he expressed it was as if to equate family attachments with religion and custom. Since he is not at all religious, this comment is especially striking.

I would like to advance the interpretation (to be supported by the material in this and subsequent chapters) that for the Jews of Batna a process was underway in which their identity became constituted largely in terms of family. Family came to stand for their identity as a religious group. Because of the nature of colonizer/colonized relations in Algeria, Jews were placed in the position of having to define themselves as European in order to defend their access to privilege. Yet, Jews still wanted to hold onto their identity as Jews. The family provided a 'safe' way of doing so: they could valorize the family, give themselves a sense of superiority for having this exemplary family, and yet not detract from their claim to Europeanness. Religion was not a sufficient category. Their religion was a given of why they were different; colonial Algeria was a milieu in which one set of fundamental divisions was along religious lines. But, as religious differences were correlated with varying access to power, they became linked to, and subsumed under, the 'essential nature,' i.e., race, of the different groups. That is to say, religion was such a fundamental dividing line and so linked to privilege that in itself it did not provide an explanation of difference in power. As seen in Chapter I, the 'innate' characteristics of groups were needed, in addition to the mere fact of different religion, to legitimate differential access to power.

Because the family was an institution, common to and socially highly valued by all three groups, the Jews, by taking the family as the expression of their difference, denied in a sense the naturalized differences set up by the power hierarchy. By hinging their identity on a social institution, the Jews both accepted and negated the naturalization of legitimate power.

We see this reflected in informants' statements about the Jews as a race: some will say loosely that the Jews are a race, but when questioned further will not give a somatic metaphor. That is, they do not locate Jewish 'race' biologically or genetically in terms of some substance inherent in the individual. To say that one's group is superior because of a social institution when this is not underlain by a racial or other biological classification points to another way of conceptualizing difference. For the European colonists, race was the starting point and differences in social institutions merely 'proved' the argument (see Introduction). On the other hand, for the Jews a sense of innate moral rather than biological superiority may perhaps have been the ultimate assumption. However, there is no direct evidence for this.

Jewish informants repeatedly cited the family when claiming the superiority of Jews over other groups. One informant called the Jews an "elite people" and furnished the Jewish family as proof. He maintained that the Jews have better, more moral family relations than Muslims or Christians. However, when this man, as well as other Jews, spoke about the Muslim family, they would list and praise many of these same characteristics.

Among the characteristics which the Jews stress is that their daughters are "tenu" (literally, held onto). Differentiating the Jews

from the Muslims, one Jewish man claimed that 'if a Muslim girl so much as looked at a man her father would kill her whereas Jewish girls can "flirt," but that's all.' Jewish women were quite critical of the way in which Muslim women were confined to the home. They described it as backward and uncivilized. Yet, at the same time, they admitted to fears of their daughters' being in contact with strange men.

Jews stressed the hierarchy in their families in which the father is the uncontested authority in the household. They also characterized the Muslim family in similar terms. "There is no pagaille in Muslim families," one informant told me. That is, there is no disorder, no challenge to authority.

Jews were emphatic about the fidelity between husband and wife in Jewish families. They expressed scorn for the Christians whom they claimed were promiscuous after marriage. The Jews also prided themselves on the strong bonds of sentiment between family members.

The main dichotomy which informants used when contrasting the Jewish and Muslim families was that the Jews were "civilized" and "évolué" (evolved) whereas the Muslims were "backwards" and "uncivilized." Thus, for the Jews, part of their self-definition comes from their perceived ability to change and adapt themselves to French civilization. However, it is problematic for an identity which is located within the family as a morally superior institution when one of the family's defining characteristics is its malleability.

Section II

The Internal Structure of the Jewish Family

The Batna Jews shared the agnatic ideal of the Muslim Algerians-- the solidary group of brothers working together on undivided property. However, the Jews did not have a truly patrilineal kinship system (at least insofar as it can be reconstructed).⁵ Jews used Arabic-kinship terminology which separates agnatic and uterine relatives, but the interaction/obligation patterns did not follow the terminology. For example, matrilateral and patrilateral first cousins were called by different terms, but, as far as I can document, there was no difference in the sorts of relationships with them. There was no preference expressed for marriage with patrilateral parallel cousins, although genealogies reveal that first cousins often married in the 19th century.

There are two instances in which we can see the stress put on agnatic kin. The first-born son was given the name of the husband's father and the first-born daughter that of his mother. The second son and second daughter were named after the parents of the wife.⁶ After marriage, a woman was obliged to prepare the traditional Passover dishes of her husband's family so as to carry on his family pattern.

The image of the father as the absolute authority in the family was shared by Jews and Muslims. Informants reported that the father was always deferred to in conversation and his decisions over the marriages and careers of his children supposedly heeded without question. The father had a virtually all-powerful role in marriage arrangements (see below). Formal signs of respect were paid to the father; an example of this is the prohibition on smoking in front of him. Informants reported

that adult men, until they were in their forties, could not smoke in front of their fathers. This system gradually broke down and all but vanished by the 1940s.⁷ The respect given to the father was also accorded to the oldest son. The oldest son would not be called by his first name by his younger siblings; such teknonymy is a respect and distancing technique still used by the Jews. After the father's death, the oldest son assumed the authority and respect due the father.

Relations between mothers and children varied according to the sex of the child. The birth of girls, again similar to Muslim practice, was customarily greeted with dejection. "Another unhappy one on the earth," the mother would say upon learning of the birth of a daughter. Parents thought of the expenses which the daughter's trousseau, dowry, and wedding were to bring. There was, however, an optional festivity, the sabbah, which could be given on the seventh day after the birth of a girl. Women who wanted to rebel against the atmosphere of sadness caused by the birth of a girl or who felt genuinely glad to have a daughter emphasized this ceremony. Perhaps this was also a self-assertion against the criticism of a woman who produced daughters.⁸ Mothers often retained close relationships with married daughters (in France widows now reside with married daughters whereas in Algeria they lived with sons), but did not accord the respect or authority to daughters that they gave to sons.

Between mothers and sons were (and are) strong sentimental links. Mothers are often the confidantes of their sons. A woman described that in Algeria sons were encouraged to be "petits coqs" (little roosters); virtually no limits were placed on their activities outside the home.

The solidary unit of brothers was a cultural ideal shared by Jews and Muslims alike.⁹ Even today, among Jews who have spent most of their formative years in France, one can still see intense valorization of the fraternal tie. In addition to a cultural ideal, the economic unity of brothers often proved to be a valuable financial strategy. One of the most wealthy and influential Jewish families in Batna was described to me as tous ensemble (all together). This family assembled farms, butcher stores, and windmills from the early 1900s to the late 1930s. Devastated financially by the Second World War, a new generation of brothers rebuilt the family fortunes with retail businesses in the post-War period. Their image as a cohesive unit was furthered by the fact that three of the brothers, until the mid-1930s, lived in the same house and kept a communal kitchen. There were about 40 people dining together at every meal. In the post-War period, three other brothers lived in a single large dwelling which was separated into apartments. This image of solidarity in certain respects was just that--an image. Disputes occurred and brothers pulled out of the group. However, they are recalled as being solidary and presented as an ideal.

The rise to power of a family who had been poverty-stricken for generations was also accomplished by brothers (and sisters) working as a unit. The oldest brother was in charge of the business enterprises and all his younger siblings worked for him in different capacities. Family members were paid less than outsiders and they were often not declared for tax purposes. The closeness of the Jewish community in Batna often obliged the brothers to keep together. One brother recalled to me how he had had a dispute with his oldest brother and quit. No one would

hire him. All prospective employers refused on the ground that he would eventually become reconciled with his brother and, in any event, employing him would bring about a dispute with his oldest brother. Brothers were political allies as well. Part of this family's rise to power was coupled with political machinations which challenged the long-established leadership of the Jewish community. The younger brothers served as campaign workers and political support system for the oldest brother's political schemes.

The history of this family reveals the breakdown of the ideal of brothers working together under the oldest brother with younger ones ultimately drawing equal benefits. One of the youngest sons recalled to me his conversations with his father when he complained of working conditions under his oldest brother. The father would respond that the oldest brother was under obligation to help his younger siblings marry and become established financially. According to the younger siblings, this was not done. Instead, it was the sons of the oldest brother who drew the benefits.

Looking at the women of the family just discussed, we see an example of the confusing data in the preceding chapter regarding women's employment records: there was a gap in women working from 1900 until after the Second World War. The marriage records of the women in this family listed them as unemployed. Yet, I know that they worked for their oldest brother. There are several reasons why this fact did not appear in their marriage records.

These women were not 'official' employees for tax purposes, thus they were not obliged to give their employment for the marriage records.

Batna Jews also had a categorical idea that women did not work. Even today, despite many working wives, most informants told me that women should not work. They hold the idea that in Algeria, where things were as they should be, women did not work. This is coupled with the assumption that family duties are not work: working for one's older brother is in the line of family duty. Thus by adamantly holding to the idea that women did not work, and by defining their activities as non-work, the women could indeed work. This view of things is upheld by both men and women. It was only after long contact with informants that I began to obtain details of their work history. My interpretation of their definitions of their activities as non-work is supported by the fact that even after they had told me the 'true' story, any direct reference to their working was denied.

With respect to women working, the Jews adopted the bourgeois Muslim ideal that a family should keep its women, and certainly its marriageable daughters, from the sight of strange men. A woman informant told me that when she was in her late teens she was offered a civil service position; her father refused to allow her to accept it. 'My father did not want men looking at me,' she told me. He was, in her words, "worse than the Arabs," i.e., stricter with his daughters. When in the company of non-kin men, young Jewish girls (at least until the 1920s) followed the modesty patterns of their Muslim neighbors. One woman related to me proudly how as a young girl working with her father in the company of male workers she never spoke and kept herself turned away. She said that her future husband was amongst these workers and was attracted to her by her proper demeanor.

Marriage arrangements also had certain formal characteristics in common with Muslim practices. The father (until after the Second World War) often arranged marriages leaving daughters no choice. The important difference between Muslim and Jewish marriage systems was that the Jews gave dowry and the Muslims brideprice. However, in both groups, class differences were maintained through the marriage payment system. Marriage considerations were strategies for financial and political alliances.¹⁰

In Batna, the dowry consisted of two parts: the "dot," a sum of money, and the "trousseau," household furnishings and clothing for the bride.¹¹ In addition to being a point of honor for the family to show the Jewish community how much they could give as a dowry--'we could not let people think we were giving our daughter away with nothing'--a sufficient dowry was necessary to attract suitors. A family which could offer only a small dowry found it difficult to marry its daughters. A rich family would have no problem obtaining a son-in-law from a wealthy family.

In Batna, there was a tendency for rich families to intermarry or to have marriage ties to Constantine or other towns in the department. One wealthy family whose marriages I traced over three generations had four out of twenty-nine marriages take place with another prominent Batna family. These marriage practices led informants from poor families to assert that in Algeria upward mobility was impossible. 'The poor stayed poor for thousands of generations,' one man exclaimed.

Although all informants agreed that many marriages were arranged, I was unable to obtain percentages as people tended to reinterpret the

past in terms of current 'marriage-for-love' ideals. Marriage arrangements ranged from being negotiated entirely between the fathers to situations in which the spouses chose one another and the parents concurred.

The former is described in Camille El-baz's autobiography of her childhood in Constantine in the 1920s. Her father and a close friend of his agreed that their children would marry. The prospective bride and groom had neither met one another nor had any choice whatsoever. Batna informants were loathe to admit that marriages had been arranged without the prospective spouses' knowing one another. They would try to convey that they were different from the Muslims who, they would readily say, arranged marriages in such a manner.

However, remarks people made when not questioned directly are telling. I mentioned to a woman that I had seen a certain man who now lives in a neighboring city in France. She said, 'Ah, yes, I was supposed to marry him, everything had been decided but on the day of the betrothal ceremony the man's father demanded an increase in the dot and my father, angered, terminated the entire marriage.' Clearly, she had had no say in the start or finish of the affair.

The position, certainly of young women in choice of their spouse, is perhaps best indicated by a story a woman told of her sister who married in the early 1930s. One night, her sister awoke screaming from a nightmare; she had dreamt that a young woman who looked exactly like herself and wearing pink robes of the traditional bridal attire had tried to smother her with her veil. Several days later, a neighbor came by to start preliminary negotiations for her marriage with a man she had never met. The image of being smothered by one's own fate is telling.

Marriage offers for girls tended to be eagerly received, as it was considered much more difficult to marry off daughters than to find suitable brides for sons. Early marriages for girls were thought to be desirable; otherwise they would develop a "mauvaise caractère" (a difficult personality), i.e., become stubborn and set in their ways. The ideal young girl was sweet, pliable, and quiet.¹²

Men often had more choice, or at least veto power, in marriage than did women. More courses of action were open to them if they disliked their father's choice of a spouse. As one man said to me, "un homme c'est un homme" ("a man is a man"), i.e., he cannot be ruled against his will.

The following story shows the lengths to which one young man went in fighting class and parental constraints. He was from a wealthy family and was in love with a woman from a poverty-stricken, distantly related branch of his family. His father wanted him to marry a wealthy girl from one of the most important Jewish families in Batna. The father of the poor girl, although not opposed to the marriage, would not give his permission as he wanted his older daughters to marry first. (Allowing younger daughters to marry before their elder sisters was tantamount to admitting that the older ones were not marriageable.) There may also have been some hesitancy on his part to let his daughter marry when the marriage was not sanctioned by the father of the groom. In any event, the young man broke off relations with his family, enlisted in the French army, and left Batna for many years. Years later, he finally married the woman.

In the post-World War II period, marriages for 'love' or with freely chosen partners became more common. However, marriages which had taken place in the 1950s were pointed out to me as having been more or less arranged. The spouses were introduced to one another by their families with the intent of marriage. If there were no strong objections on either side, the marriage went through. Marriage is seen as a duty: "il faut se marier" ("one must get married"), informants were fond of telling me when I expressed contentment with my single status. The attitude, which seems only gradually to have become superceded by the idea of romantic love, is that in marriage one slowly becomes accustomed to the other person; marriage is seen as a process of adjustment. "On prends l'habitude" ("one gets used to it"), older informants said. After one marries "tout s'arrange," everything works itself out. One learns to live with the spouse and then strong bonds develop.

Once a successful marriage had been accomplished between two families, the way was paved for subsequent ones. In both rich and poor families marriages between pairs of siblings occurred often. In records of 125 marriages, 22 (18 percent) were between pairs of siblings.¹³

Section III

The Jewish Family and Presentation of Self

In the following section we see how the Jewish family came to present itself as French. This was a process which took place over three generations and is mediated by class. Naming practices, clothing, language, and education are indicative of this process. Through an analysis of changes in marriage ceremonies we examine tensions between symbolic claims of Europeaness and traditional practice.

As seen in Chapter Two, there was a progressive increase in Jews' giving their children French names from 1870 to 1955. By 1955 virtually no (Old Testament) Biblical or Arabic names were used. This trend was influenced by social class.

In one poor family, whose genealogy I have in detail, a number of its members who are currently middle-aged have Arabic first names only. In contrast, members of wealthy families of the same generation usually have at least one French name. Use of Arabic diminutives and nicknames also follows this pattern. Members of this poor family who have Arabic first names adopted French first names (either in France or in Algeria) which they use in dealings with officialdom: they often have some of their legal documents in their adopted name although none have formally changed it.¹⁴

An informant told me how angry he became with his parents in Batna when they called him by his Hebrew name in the presence of Christians. He said that he did not like the Christians to think that the Jews were like Arabs: i.e., having strange, non-French first names. This man gave his own children very conventional French names. He said that he had done so to protect them from embarrassment in school or in other dealings with the authorities. He was quite explicit about names being an important way of distinguishing Jews from Muslims.

Naming practices are related to language spoken in the household. A number of wealthy or upwardly mobile Jewish families made deliberate decisions that their children were to speak French, not Arabic, as their first language. Such decisions were made despite the inability of many of the wives to speak French. The women of the household spoke Arabic

to his children, who responded in French. One man with whom I discussed this told me that his parents had talked it over and decided that it would be to their children's social and material advantage to speak the best possible French, so raised them speaking French.¹⁵ Although this decision might not have been made as consciously in all households, it correlated with a desire to succeed in the French sphere. Families who were poor, but aspiring to civil service positions, often took the same path.

Speaking French at home was, for the upwardly mobile, a sign of dignity and prestige. Two women informants, who came from French-speaking families of modest circumstances, and who married into Arabic-speaking families, were careful to point out how much more "évolué" (evolved) their natal families were. When I discussed kinship terms with one of these women, she emphasized that Arabic kin terms were not used by her natal "civilized" family but were used by those who were "backward" ("arriéré"). She gave as an example that her family used the French, "maman," for mother, whereas the family she married into used "Ma, like the Arabs."

Naming and language use were important ways the Jews identified themselves with the French. It seems that those Jews who had contact with Christians through their job or business were the most concerned with stressing that they were different from the Muslims. For example, the poor family mentioned earlier who gave their children Arabic names were shoemakers who catered to a strictly Muslim clientele. They had virtually no dealings with the French and hence did not see the necessity to convince them of anything.

One indication of the identification of the Jews with the French can be seen in their accent. The Batna Jews, even those who spoke Arabic as their first language, speak French with a "pied-noir" rather than an Arabic accent.¹⁶ This is true even for women who did not go to school. They have a limited vocabulary in French and make grammatical mistakes, but their intonation and pronunciation are not those of an Arabic speaker.¹⁷

Wearing European clothes was another sign of identification with the French. Prior to colonization, Muslims and Jews wore the same garments, although Jews were limited as to the colors they could wear (e.g., they could not wear green, the color of Islam) and to exterior displays of wealth. Jewish women were not veiled.

Camile El-baz, who grew up in Constantine in the 1920s, offers this description in her autobiography of her parents' traditional costumes:

[The men:] He wore the oriental costume of the city dweller which resembled that of a zouave of this epoch. . . . His pants (sarouel) of satin cloth had numerous pleats and were embroidered with arabesques of silk on the sides and on the openings of the legs; they were held at the waist by a large flannel belt. His short jacket, made of the same cloth and embroidered in the same motifs, opened on a magnificent kaftan embroidered in gold and decorated with fancy buttons. [On his head he wore] a chachia (a headpiece of red felt-like material) with a tassle of black silk which batted on his neck. . . . [He wore] black pumps of a hardened leather of local fabrication. . . . [He wore] two burnous one of white wool and the other of a thick satin cloth.

...[The women: She wore] two or three gandouras [one on top of the other. S]he gathered these ample garments at the waist with a many-colored bright scarf. The neckline was held closed at the bust with a triangular brooch made of heavy sculpted and chiseled gold. [The gandouras reached to the ankles.] She rolled up her hennaed hair with a red cotton [cloth] and tied it up next in a fringed scarf of black silk. This was gathered in a point on her head and knotted on the side. A little cone of garnet-red velvet was placed on the head, inclining slightly toward one ear; it was held in place by a chin strap encrusted with gold coins [this headdress was Jewish, not Muslim; El-baz 1971:25, 32-33].

Jewish women in Batna kept traditional costumes longer than did the men. Even in wealthy families there were old women who wore traditional dress into the 1950s. Men, however, who were from wealthy families or who were civil servants, wore French clothing as early as the 19th century. Men from poor families made the shift less rapidly. By the 1920s in Batna, even families with little contact with the French clothed their children in European clothes. The wearing of French or traditional clothes was a matter of choice for adults: women who wore French clothes as children would wear them even after marrying into more traditional families. All groups in Algeria 'knew' that Jews wore Muslim garments: Jews were distinguished from Muslims by features of their dress and demeanor.

Although Batna Jews today support their children's schooling, in Algeria education was not particularly valued. Families did not encourage, indeed in a number of cases actively discouraged, their children from continuing school. Although there were differences in educational opportunity related to economic position, rich and poor Jews had similar attitudes toward education.

The following incident seems to have been somewhat representative of Jewish attitudes toward education. A boy from a very poor family was an excellent pupil; he passed his certificat d'études (the diploma marking the end of compulsory education) and was then forced to stop school by his father. His teacher, upon learning of this, paid a personal visit to the boy's father urging him to let the boy continue, to no avail. Poor families desperately needed the income from children's wages and did not see education as assuring greater earning potential. Both Albert

Memmi, describing his boyhood in the Jewish ghetto in Tunis, and Camille El-baz, writing of her childhood in neighboring Constantine, relate similar incidents. Memmi is particularly eloquent in his description of the turmoil of guilt which plagued his adolescence during which, despite full scholarships, his father constantly discouraged his education (Memmi 1964; El-baz 1971).

Women's education was even more undervalued. In poor families, until at least the 1920s, girls were often not sent to school or were withdrawn after a year or two. Two women recalled to me how they were forced to leave school for family reasons when they were within only several months of obtaining a diploma. In one case, a young woman who had been forced by her parents to stop school just before obtaining her baccalauréat studied for the examination on her own and, despite her parents who mocked her efforts, passed it.

Another factor limiting education for the Batna Jews was that until the mid-1950s lycee instruction beyond the brevet elementaire (approximately age 16) required the child to be sent to boarding school in Constantine. Although the schooling itself was free, the boarding fees were beyond the means of poor families. The separation of the child from his family was also an obstacle: informants from families in which no members had been to boarding school regarded this separation as unimaginable. Religious scruples entered into consideration as the child would be obliged to eat nonkosher foods. Informants also expressed fears that girls would not be adequately chaperoned.

For certain students another path to obtaining further education was to pass a competitive examination to enter the École Normale, the

teacher-training school in Constantine. This program provided students with free room and board. One trained there to become an elementary school teacher. Several Jewish men and women from Batna went through this program. Although school teacher was a secure position and as such appreciated, it was not considered a prestigious occupation. One family in Batna had a number of school teachers among its members, but they were never mentioned as an important family in Batna. In fact, they did not see themselves that way.

Another factor which may have de-emphasized the value of formal education was that many of the highly valued legal professions could be learned by working as a clerk for an established professional. Huissier de justice, greffier de justice, conseil juridique, etc., were some of the legal positions into which Jews with little formal education gained entrance.

Attending lycee or university gave young men greater access to Christian society. Going to lycée, because of the stringent standards and the monetary constraints, was quite prestigious and almost as rare for the Christians of Batna as for the Jews. At least for the period when they were students, young Jews visited Christian friends in their homes and received invitations to dances in Constantine to which Jews were ordinarily not admitted. Education broke down many religious practices; virtually all the lycée and college-educated Batneens dispensed with Jewish dietary restrictions. This was quite unusual for Batna, and even in France today these educated men are often the only members of their generation to have nonkosher households. There were no women from the

Batna Jewish community who attended university, although at least one woman from an elite Muslim family did so.

Let us now turn to marriage ceremonies and see the changes in their form and symbolic messages over three generations. I use as a model for "traditional" (i.e., pre-French) marriages El-baz's account of the marriage of her sister in Constantine in the 1920s. Even at this point such details as the use of French candies and the visit to the photographer for wedding pictures were French touches. However, the Jewish community of Constantine was, for a variety of political reasons, the most insulated from French contact of all the major cities in Algeria.

Marriage festivities lasted an entire week from Sunday to Saturday night. They began with a reception, the "tahnia," which was for women only. It took place in the courtyard of the bride's parents. Friends, relatives, and the future in-laws were invited. An orchestra of Jewish musicians played Oriental music and the women danced 'belly dance' fashion.¹⁸ Refreshments of pastries, candies, fruits, etc., were served. The afternoon began with the arrival of the mother-in-law who brought two ceremonial items with her: a pair of gold anklets in the form of a serpent and a plate with henna.¹⁹ The anklets symbolized, according to El-baz, "obedience and submission, and enchainment, for a lifetime, the wife to her spouse" (El-baz 1971:108). The mother-in-law removed the bride's shoes and placed the anklets around her legs. She then took a small bit of the henna from the plate and anointed the palm of the bride's hand. The henna plate had a candle in the center encircled by a pink ribbon, and eggs and dragées surrounded it.²⁰ She

placed a gold coin in the girl's hand on top of the henna and tied it into place with the pink satin ribbon which had bedecked the candle. She then blessed the bride, embraced her, and amid an "avalanche of you-yous" regained her seat.²¹ Next, the sisters or the sisters-in-law of the groom came and applied henna to the head of the bride and to the tips of their own fingers and offered her a gold coin. The eggs in the plate were then eaten by the unmarried girls to aid them in marrying during the coming year.²²

For the tahnia, the bride was dressed in pink robes, her head was covered with a pink scarf and she wore pink embroidered slippers. She was bedecked with golden jewelry. The guests were also dressed in their finest. The women danced and ate the entire afternoon. When they left for home they were given packets of pastries, candies, and fruits to take home with them.

The following day, Monday, was the day the bride symbolically "buried her life as a young girl." Informants from Batna told me that an everyday dress the young girl wore was torn up; however, the Constantine account does not mention this. It was a day for the bride of exuberant running about with the unmarried girls her age. They went to the Turkish baths together, all dressed alike in pink robes, and ran through the streets of the Jewish quarter in a joyous, giggling group. They spent the rest of the day in the courtyard of the bride's parents' home dancing to the tambourine music of female Jewish musicians and eating pastries.²³

The next day, Tuesday, the bride took the final step toward entering the adult world. She was taken to the Turkish baths by the

married women of her own and the groom's family as a step toward pre-marital Jewish purification rites. She was depilated (pubic hair) and instructed in sexual matters.²⁴ Prior to this, young girls were not given formal sexual instruction. The bride was then taken to the mikvah (the Jewish ritual bath) and in front of the women of both families was immersed in the water seven times while the bath attendant said prayers.

Following the purification, the bride came back to her family's home. The two families, their friends and neighbors, and the rabbis and notables of the Jewish community were gathered there. The trousseau was on public display and its worth was then publicly calculated. El-baz writes that this was done to "satisfy the legitimate curiosity of our guests and to show to the groom the extent of the affection and sacrifices of [her] parents for their daughter" (El-baz 1971:114). El-baz recalls that in the case of her sister the estimation of the trousseau took over two hours.

After the trousseau was put away, a sheet was held over the bride's head and money thrown into it. This money was given to the woman who had gone from house to house applying henna to the hands and feet of the women of the bridal party and their guests.

This was followed by a dinner during which an orchestra of Jewish musicians played for the guests; the feasting lasted the entire night. At dawn, all the guests, musicians playing, women youyou-ing, men singing, escorted the bride to the home of the groom's family.²⁵ She was met at the doorstep by the mother-in-law, who

. . . before letting her cross the doorstep . . . wrapped her in a magnificent white bournous, symbol of protection, made her eat several dates and taste a bit of honey, symbol of happiness, and

made her walk over a little puddle of milk, and a morsel of leavening, symbol of prosperity [El-baz 1971:116].^[26]

The guests were given tea or coffee and doughnuts.

In the afternoon, the civil, then the religious marriage ceremony took place. The wedding party went to the town hall and to the synagogue in beribboned carriages rented for the occasion. The father escorted his daughter until the religious ceremonies were concluded.

After the marriage ceremonies, they toured the city in the carriages and then came back to the groom's parents' home. A huge dinner was given by the groom's family. At midnight, amidst the singing of religious songs, the young couple went upstairs to their bedroom. After intercourse had taken place, the groom broke a glass and soon afterwards the mother of the bride and the mother-in-law came in to gather up the sheets and verify the bride's virginity. The wedding guests stayed the night celebrating and in the morning welcomed the young couple as they descended from the bridal chamber. The entire party then went for a stroll in the Jewish quarter where they were greeted and congratulated by all. The groom's family gave a reception lasting the entire day during which relatives and friends brought wedding gifts. These gifts were exhibited. The bride's mother took this opportunity to show the stained sheets to all female relatives and guests.²⁷

Thursday came to a close with a dinner for the immediate family of the bride and groom. Friday saw the bride put to the test of preparing the couscous for her new family. At the dinner, the bride and groom cut a fish together, holding the knife as one; this was a preventive measure against the evil eye and was to insure their prosperity.

Saturday was the second marriage benediction in which the groom and the bride were blessed. The men from the synagogue were invited to the groom's home for an aperitif. Afterwards, the midday meal, which had been prepared and sent over by the bride's mother, was eaten by the two families.

By the 1930s in Batna, there were some major changes from the marriage just described. We shall list the changes following the course of the festivities: the ritual of the ankle-bracelets had been omitted from the tahnia ceremony. There was no longer a public evaluation of the trousseau, but rather the bride's family displayed it, with prices marked on all the items, and the women of the groom's family came to inspect it. During the course of the women's festivities, and at the big dinner at the bride's home, the bride and the young unmarried girls would wear fancy Arab-style robes, but other guests wore European dress. The bride was greeted by her mother-in-law with milk and honey, but other details of this little ceremony were omitted.

A noteworthy change was the use of European wedding gowns for the bride. She was dressed at her in-law's home and then the civil and religious ceremonies proceeded as before. Instead of the wedding dinner at the groom's parents' home, there was a dinner and dance given in a rented hall. The refreshments at this party were champagne and French-style food; the guests danced to an orchestra which played French music. The bride and groom slipped out secretly at midnight. The inspection of the sheets took place the next day. The groom's mother brought honey-covered doughnuts with her which she served to the young couple if the sheets showed the requisite marks.

The outfit and hat the bride wore on the Saturday promenade were European in style. Another innovation was an optional wedding trip to another city or even as far as Tunis.

The rite de passage aspects for the girl of passing from child to adult status, of leaving the parental home and going into the home of her husband, were still quite marked. The Batna woman who described the 1930 marriage ceremonies to me recalled how she felt totally changed. She said that before the marriage she had always worn very plain clothes and was forbidden to chat with a young man alone. All of a sudden, she said, she found herself the center of the whirlwind affairs of the wedding where she was adorned in splendid clothes and then she was living with a man. She said that she was ashamed to look at her parents; she felt that she was doing something forbidden or wrong.

By the 1950s, the wedding ceremonies had become self-consciously traditional. There were often struggles, more or less open depending on the personalities of those involved, between the younger generation who wanted to make the ceremonies as French as possible and the older people who wanted to guard traditional practices.

From accounts given to me by women married in the 1950s, there was a lessening of the sense of a rite de passage; they were less cloistered than their mothers and knew and had often chosen their husbands. The change was less dramatic for them. There was also much less a sense in the 1950s of the woman being transferred to her husband's family. Neolocal residence was more common.

This is a reflection in the resymbolization of a part of the tahnia ceremony. The reader will recall that traditionally the

mother-in-law put the henna on the bride's hand. A woman who married in the 1950s told me that it was a girlfriend who put the henna on her hand. She said, "It is said that the girl who puts henna on the bride's hand , marry within a year."

French-identified families dispensed with the Judeo-Arabic music and dance. One woman said quite specifically that her family was "bien francisé" (well frenchified) and that was the reason they did not have Arabic music at their wedding parties. A number of brides did not want to dress in traditional garb for the pre-wedding celebrations. A woman whose daughter married in the early 1950s told me how she had let her daughter wear a European-cut mandarin-orange colored outfit to the tahnia because the color mandarin was in style that season and her daughter wanted to wear it rather than the traditional pink.

The weddings of the 1950s lacked the integral character they had in the 1920s. There was a sense that certain things were 'customs' and had to be done, but the character of the transfer of the bride from one family to another, the sudden emerging of the girl as a woman, and the precautions against evil eye and concomitant measures to insure good luck were diminished. The ceremonial complex was no longer an entity. When parts of a ceremonial complex become points of negotiation and meanings become transferred from one set of actions to another, and a self-conscious traditionalism sets it, then it is necessary for the analyst to look at the larger social picture and see the changes and substitutions in this light (see, e.g., Lefebvre 1971).

The Jews of Batna presented themselves to the Jewish and Christian communities as French through the wedding ceremonies. They invited

Christian colleagues to the wedding supper and dance: these people would see the French-style food, the champagne, the French orchestra. It was a public statement of being French. At the same time, the wedding dinners at the family homes were a contest about presentation, but this time of the Jews to the Jews.

Many of the older Jews frankly enjoyed the Arabic music and dance; to them the ambiance of a splendid time included these things. The rich traditional attire, the golden jewelry, the huge quantities of food, all these created a sense of festivity for them. However, even amongst them there was often a conflict about being "backwards"; they had acquired a certain uncomfortableness about their customs. As one woman emphatically explained to me when she described putting on henna (for a 1950s wedding), just a little bit was used and it was washed off afterwards. She was making certain that I did not confound the Jews with the Muslims, who left the bride's hands and feet hennaed. Of course, so had the Jews two generations before.

Thus, the wedding ceremonies became a presentation to the outside community--both Jewish and Christian--and a scene of conflict and redefinition of who they were in the interior of the family.

Section IV

Conclusions

This chapter has attempted to show the Jewish family in transition, self-consciously severing cultural links with North African traditions and identifying with the French. However, such a process is never simple. Jewish identity came to contain contradictory elements: identification with Europe coupled with unacknowledged retention of many North

African patterns. This chapter concludes with two seemingly opposite views of themselves presented by Batna Jews.

When I was interviewing a young woman about quite a different subject--her feelings about Zionism--she mentioned that, while she is not particularly pro-Palestinian, she cannot help but be repulsed by the fanatic, anti-Arab sentiments of one of her uncles. She characterized her uncle as having an Hitlerian attitude toward Muslims. Her uncle, she said, would, if the decision were left to him, atom bomb all the Muslim nations. Yet, when I interviewed this man, he launched into a discourse about how he feels culturally so much closer to the Muslims than to the French. He maintains that he understands and has an intuitive comprehension of Muslims that he will never have for the French. I do not doubt the sincerity of his statements both to me and to his niece. The vehemence of his ambivalence was echoed in the statements other informants gave about Muslims.

This man told an anecdote from his childhood as a way of illustrating what he meant by saying that he understands Muslims better than he does the French. As children, when teams were chosen for games, if Jews and Muslims were present the teams would be Muslims against the Jews. However, if all three groups were present, Jews and Muslims would side together against the Christians. This was his way of providing a metaphor for the way group alignments should in some sense have fallen into place. The Algerian War changed this, hence his (and other Jews') sense of angry betrayal by the Muslims. Perhaps when he is expressing his genocidal feelings towards Muslims, he is in effect saying that he would like to kill off those aspects of himself he identifies with Muslims.

A frequent response to my question, 'What differences were there between Jews and Christians in Batna,' was, 'There were none.' Although I soon learned to ask this question in a more indirect way, the uniformity of this response is interesting. One woman, interrogated in this fashion, went on to elaborate that "a stranger [to the town of Batna] could not tell a Jew from a Catholic." There was "no difference," she maintained, between the style of clothes worn nor the way in which apartments were furnished. She went on to say that the little Jewish girls she taught in school were the same as the Catholics, i.e., "clean," "polite," and well-dressed. She concluded with the statement that the Jews became 'integrated into French civilization all the while keeping their religion and their mores.'

This is an obvious contradiction; the 'mores' she is referring to are precisely those things which the Jews and the Muslims shared. There is also the most direct contradiction that many Jews, including her own mother, wore Muslim-style garments. The apartments of many poor Jews were furnished with traditional North African cushions, wall hangings, etc. Therefore, what she is saying and referring to is a certain image which the Jews put forward as their way of claiming to the Christians, Muslims, and, ultimately, to themselves, that they were Europeans. She is denying the cultural 'facts' of the racial hierarchy which did not put the Jews into the European camp. She is saying that what counted is a control of the symbols which prove that one has 'integrated' into French civilization. As Christian colonists held that Muslim children were dirty, impolite, and incapable of benefiting from French education, she is offering her experience as a teacher to prove that this was not true for the Jews.

This woman was not the only one to give such examples. Other informants stressed how scrupulous young Jewish men and women were about their attire.²⁸ The Jews were struggling to show how French they were, in order to demarcate themselves from the Muslims and consolidate their position as 'European.'

Given these conflicts, we can see why the family becomes a focal point for identity. Positing the family as superior morally allows for an acceptance and a redefinition of the colonial "natural" hierarchy in terms favorable to the Jews. The Jews simultaneously accepted the overarching cultural idea of race, by claiming to be 'European,' and defined themselves as superior. They did the latter by making it a 'fact' that they had superior family structure. The Jews were thus able to circumvent dealing with their tenuous position in the colonial system. They did not then have to worry that they were not fully accepted. They could go on conforming to the outer criteria of being French by creating a self-definition which placed them not only in, but superior to, the European category.

The contradiction this generated was that part of their definition of family hinged on the customs and traditions which they felt to be part of family life. These customs were, as we have repeatedly stressed, quite similar to those of the Muslims. In the process of creating their "European" or "French" identity, these Jews deleted and detached traditional customs from their original context. They thus placed themselves in the predicament of undercutting those very things from which they constituted their identity.

In Algeria, because of the force of the consensus of the Christians and Muslims who defined the society as composed of three groups, there was still not an acute problem of identity for the Jews. Their identity was imposed on them from the outside.

NOTES

¹. . . it may be noted that the way of life peculiar to the Israelites [Jews] indicates that they were very closely related to the other Algerian 'cultures'; a few characteristics will suffice: intensity of community feeling, patriarchal structure of the family whose head is revered as much as any overlord, simultaneous or successive polygamy, a cult of saints resembling the cult of marabouts, superstitions and magic beliefs, Arab language, etc. [Bourdieu 1962:93].

²Informants related stories about jnun quite similar to those described by Westermarck (1968:Volume 1, Chapter 4).

³Eisenbeth (1931) gives data on Algeria Jews in the French army during the First World War. Twenty-seven Batna Jews were killed and five were decorated.

⁴Textbooks and courses of study were the same as in France. Students learned French history and culture and were urged to identify with French civilization (see Wylie 1964).

⁵Briggs (1964), in his ethnography of Ghardia's Jewish community, seems to indicate that there were some patrilineal groupings among the Jews. However, he does not provide enough data on social structure to draw any firm conclusions. There is also the problem of generalizing from these isolated oasis communities to the rest of Algerian Jewry. See Rosen (1968a) for a critical review of Briggs' study.

⁶Nowadays, when French first names are usually given, the child will be given the Hebrew (or Arabic) name of his relative to be used for religious purposes.

⁷Smoking is a sign of adult status. On the day of a boy's bar-mitzvah, when he religiously becomes an adult, he and all the children present are allowed to smoke.

⁸A woman informant who told me how strongly she felt against the devaluation of girls, and who eventually in France encouraged her daughters to become professionals, insisted on giving a "belle fête" for the sabbahs of her daughters.

⁹See Bourdieu (1968); H. Geertz (in press); P. Rabinow (1975).

¹⁰See Bourdieu (1974); H. Geertz (in press); Rabinow (1975) for discussion of this for Muslims.

¹¹According to one informant the dowry in the 1930s ranged from 100,000 to 400,000 (ancien) francs. The trousseau included furniture for the bedroom and living room, gold jewelry for the bride (bracelets and necklaces), linens, lingerie for the bride (including elaborately

embroidered nightgowns, robes, and slippers), and copperware for the home and for the bain maure. Included in the copperware were: (1) bowls (about seven inches in diameter, shallow, embossed with designs) for scooping water in the baths, (2) M'toffla, a cylindrical container about 10 inches high to take the special earth used for shampoo to the baths, (3) two or three serving platters, elaborately engraved, (4) one or two mortar(s) and pestle(s), (5) a pitcher and water catcher for use in ritual handwashing at meals, (6) a water bucket for fetching water in the courtyard.

¹²See Daisy Dwyer (in press) for North African Muslims' developmental notions of women's personality.

¹³Figures are drawn from three generations of genealogies.

¹⁴In Algeria friends and relatives called these people by their Arabic names, whereas in France they most frequently use their French names. A number of young people told me that they remember as children in Algeria using their relatives' Arabic names, then gradually changing to their French names in France.

¹⁵Some elite Muslim families made similar choices.

¹⁶"Pied-noir" is the popular expression for the former Algerian colonists. It can be derogatory, depending on the context.

¹⁷According to J. Moshinsky (personal communication) such linguistic phenomena have been documented elsewhere in conjunction with cases of strong identification.

¹⁸North African Jewish music is a combination of Andalusian and North African music. Jews and Muslims dance in the same way.

¹⁹While there is no exact parallel to the tahnia cited in the literature on Muslim marriage ceremonies, henna is applied to the bride in various pre-marriage rituals (see Westermarck 1914:136-164).

²⁰Dragées are glazed almond candies used by the French in weddings, baptisms, etc.

²¹Youyous are a strident, guttural cry used to express strong emotions by Muslim and Jewish North African women.

²²Westermarck (1914:145) cites a similar Muslim custom during the pre-marriage women's ceremonies. Eggs are eaten by girls who want to marry.

²³Similar practices are cited in Westermarck (1914:136-164).

²⁴Depilation of pubic hair is a North African Muslim custom. The North African Jews did not shave the bride's head as do Ashkenazim.

²⁵The same practice is followed in Muslim marriages: "On the day when the wedding proper begins the bride is taken to her new home" (Westermarck 1914:165).

²⁶Westermarck (1914:194, 207, 215) cites similar practices among Moroccan and Algerian Muslims.

²⁷During the course of Muslim wedding celebrations the stained linens are displayed as well.

²⁸Piquet (1938) notes this same phenomenon for the Jews of the town of Miliana (near the city of Algiers).

CHAPTER 4
RELATIONS BETWEEN JEWS, MUSLIMS,
AND CHRISTIANS IN BATNA

I was with a young couple, the man a Jew from Batna, the woman a French Jew who had lived in Algeria. He was telling me how the Jewish community was "enclosed" ("enfermée" . . . "sur eux-mêmes") and how there was a "frontier" between the Jews and the Christians and Muslims. At this point his wife, irritated, interrupted to say that this separation was "desired" ("youlu"). He brushed off her remark by saying that in colonial Algeria it was "unthinkable" ("inpensable") for the three groups to have freely intermingled.

Other Jewish Batneens agreed with him. Expressions such as that there was a "very clear separation" (séparation bien nette) between the three groups, "ségrégation," "the three communities were well apart" (bien distanciées), and verbal images of walls and unbreachable boundaries figure broadly in speech.

At the same time, discussion of daily life reveals quite another facet of intergroup relations: "my best 'copain'¹ was an Arab"; "I went around with 'une bande complete' [a group of friends of all three groups]." In workplaces, schools, bars, playing fields, shops, and between neighbors there were contacts between the three groups.

The preceding chapter noted that social class altered the ways Jewish families related to Muslim and French culture. In this chapter

class as a mediating factor will again be seen in the interactions between the various segments of the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities. In addition to class, sex, age, and education all conditioned contacts in important ways. Any discussion of group relations in colonial Algeria must also be situated temporally. World War II and the Algeria war, to be discussed in Chapter 5, brought about important changes in intergroup dealings. This chapter focuses on the pre-World War II pattern and on those factors which remained relatively constant.

There are two themes to be kept in mind throughout this chapter. (1) There was a religious/moral stance underlying the ideology of separation of the three communities. This was couched in terms of marriage and of the necessity for preventing intermarriages from taking place. As one informant put it, in Algeria Muslims, Catholics, and Jews all had "respect" for marriage. By this he meant that one did not marry outside of one's group. He opposed this to France where "abandonnement" (abandon) is taking place, i.e., interfaith marriages. (2) The Jews were tremendously ambivalent about the cultural characteristics they shared with the Muslims. They knew more about Muslim than Christian customs and family life. For example, Batna Jews who had lived in France almost half of their adult life would say that they feel closer culturally to Muslims than to Christians, yet would then dismiss Muslim customs as "uncivilized" and "backwards." We can see in this a reflection of the Jews' tenuous position in Algerian society: claiming to be European and at the same time hiding and holding onto North African elements in their culture.

Two important institutions linked the Jewish community and the Muslim community and demarcated them both from the Christians. One was

the coffee house, known as the "cafe maure," and the other was the sauna baths, "le bain maure" or "hammam" (in Arabic). That the one was the focus of social life (for the men) and the other the place of cleansing is suggestive of many symbolic dimensions to Muslim/Jewish relations which we will explore more fully subsequently.

Jewish men, women, and children used the Muslim-owned steam baths for bathing. This was true even for Jews living in housing with modern bathing facilities. According to one informant, bathtubs in homes were never used; babies were bathed in the kitchen and all others went to the bain maure. The baths had separate facilities for men and women, although, as with the Muslims, very young Jewish boys accompanied their mothers to the women's baths.

In an account of her childhood in neighboring Constantine, a Jewish woman describes in great detail the afternoon-long process of steaming, scrubbing, rinsing oneself and applying henna and depilatory products (El-baz 1971:59-64). Jewish women followed the North African Muslim custom of depilating pubic hair, at least into the 1920s. The bath implements, copper bowls for scooping water over oneself, containers for the special earth used for shampooing the hair, etc., were part of the woman's bridal trousseau.

The bain maure played an important part in the festive side of bar-mitzvah and marriage ceremonies. Before the bar-mitzvah, the boy, his close friends, and male relatives of his age group would all be taken to the bain maure. They stayed the afternoon and amused themselves afterwards drinking coffee, eating sweets, and playing at being grown men. For the bride, going to the bain maure was a prelude to her religious

obligation of purification at the mikvah. The trip to the bain maure was also transformed into a party for the bride and her friends and relatives.

Jews and Muslims were together in the baths. This intimate contact between them contrasted strongly with the situation of the Jews in Eastern Europe. In Eastern Europe the ritual bath served also as a washing facility. In North Africa, ritual purity, the mikvah, was distinct from physical cleanliness.

Whereas both Jewish women and men frequented the baths, the cafe maure was for men only. These were small, intimate coffee houses specializing in Turkish coffee. They were a meeting place for groups of friends. Every night after dinner, Jewish and Muslim men went to the cafe maure. Friendship/discussion groups tended to be structured by class and education, but the clientele of these coffee houses were drawn from all social strata. In addition to talking, the men played dominoes. An informant recounted that in this game they slapped the table and made a great deal of noise--a comportment which would not be allowed in a Christian cafe.

Jews, as one informant put it, would be in the cafe maure "entre Juif" (amongst Jews), but would "discuss" with the Muslims. The educated Jews would see their Muslim counterparts in these cafes. Discussions between them usually took place in French punctuated with Arabic expressions and sayings. When questioned as to why French was used, informants reported that neither Jews nor Muslims had the requisite vocabulary in Arabic to speak about abstract ideas, hence they would be obliged to do so in French.

Prior to the Second World War, Jewish couples did not go out together in the evenings. The wife stayed at home with the children (at the turn of the century she would be locked into the house) and the husband went out by himself. It was not unusual for the husband to stay out until three or four in the morning at one of these cafes; the wife had no right to complain. Jewish boys started going out at night to the cafe maure in their late teens.

Another feature of the social life of Jewish men was the European-style cafes, owned by Jews or Christians, which lined the main streets of Batna. These cafes were built and arranged along the French model. They served alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverages and coffee. After eating their midday meal at home, Jewish and Christian men went to these cafes to play belote (a card game). At the evening aperitif hour, free appetizers (kemia) would accompany the drinks and often poor people would have their only supper from this.²

In general, Jews tended to go to cafes owned by fellow Jews. However, as cafes were also stratified on class and political lines, there was usually a mixture in the clientele.³ Jewish cafes remained open on Saturdays despite the fact that all other Jewish businesses were closed.

The cafe scene must be considered historically. Before the Second World War, there was much more separation between Jews and Christians than afterwards. Muslims also went into the European-style cafes, although frequency and percentage are difficult to gauge. During the Algeria War when cafes in Batna were hit by bomb attacks, invariably all three groups would be found among the victims. As in the cafe

maure, the different religious groups tended to congregate among themselves. However, the cafe did afford a neutral ground in which contacts were made and business and political matters arranged.

The playing field, like the cafe, was a relatively neutral area where Jews, Christians, and Muslims could interact socially. The loosening of the hierarchy structure in the context of sports afforded the potential for important intergroup contacts to be made and political alliances to be formed. Rugby was the only sport played by all three groups. There were two rugby teams in Batna: the CAB (Club Athletic de Batna) and the ASB (Association Sportif de Batna). The Mayor of Batna was the president of the ASB, the team composed mainly of Christians and Jews. Playing on the Mayor's team was a way of establishing a relationship with him and through his influence obtaining a job as a municipal employee. Such a link between sports, politics, and influence was rather typical of colonial Algeria (Nora 1961). The CAB was largely Muslim: the Christians referred to it disparagingly as the Club Arabe de Batna. As league rules specified a certain number of French citizens, there were always some Jews and an occasional low-status Christian who played on this team.

One of the Jews who joined the Muslim team was the youngest son of a very poor family. His personal history included many defiant acts against the powerful leaders of the Jewish community. This was yet another way in which he expressed his rebellion against the rules and constraints of his culture. Joining the Muslim team enabled him to exhibit his scorn for the ways the Jews ingratiated themselves to the Christians. He defied the system of soliciting contacts with Christians in order to get ahead.

In general, Jewish men in the course of their daily lives were obliged to have some dealings with Christians, whereas Jewish women often did not have this structural contact. For Jewish women, dealings with Christians depended on such factors as what neighborhood they lived in, how much education they had, whether they were employed, and their own personal initiative.

Neighborhood played an important role in such contacts. The Stand, the newer and more well-to-do section of Batna, was a neighborhood of "villas." In the words of a Jewish woman who grew up there, "our quarter was essentially made up of small, medium, and large houses, which all touched one another. The population was mixed: Arabs, Jews, and Catholics. All had interior courts around which all the life of these houses was organized." Courtyards were often shared, obliging contacts. Being a neighbor entailed certain expectations of sociability. Neighbors exchanged festive dishes on holidays or when they cooked a special plate. For example, Christians would bring cakes and French pastries to Jews and the latter would reciprocate with Oriental pastries and dishes such as cous cous or tafina.⁴ (According to the Jews, the French who lived in Algeria knew how to make cous cous but did not do it as well as the Jews. They thus appreciated it as a gift.) It is interesting to note that Jewish women who make delicate, elaborate Oriental pastries have never mastered French pastries beyond the most rudimentary cakes and tarts. Jewish and Muslim neighbors exchanged pastries on their respective holidays. It is questionable whether such exchanges went on between Christians and Muslims.

Christians held a mysteriousness and fascination for Jewish children which Muslims seemed to have lacked. One Jewish woman writing

about her childhood described the way she spied on her Christian neighbors: concealing herself in the branches of a tree or on the roof of the washshed she watched their comings and goings. Their storage room was a source of fascination: "How many times climbing on the shoulders of my sister or brother did I try to discover its content? The dark den of Bluebeard was nothing compared to this storeroom. Why? Perhaps because you lived differently than us. You were Christians. You ate [things] forbidden to us . . ." These forbidden things to eat had a special allure. This same woman described the Christian neighbor offering them a snail to eat. Refused but infused with dreams of exotic tastes, this snail played on the imagination of the young girl.

In the course of pursuing a different line of inquiry, I learned how little indeed the Batna Jews knew of their Christian neighbors' eating habits. In an attempt to learn from what part of France the Christian population of Batna came, I asked a woman who had been a teacher in Batna (thus who would certainly have been in contact with Christian women) what sort of dishes the Christians ate. She replied vaguely, "Oh, things with cream cooked with meat." When I explained my purpose, she said that she did not know. As a Jew, she knew that Christians ate forbidden combinations of food; the details were irrelevant to her.

Jewish women who worked in civil service or teaching positions had colleague relationships with Christian women, but these were limited to the workplace. Schoolfriends as well were generally not seen outside of school.

Wealthy Christian women, either Batneens or the wives of army officers, had social/charitable organizations which were virtually

exclusively Christian. The Red Cross organization, despite its 'all are welcome' newspaper notices, was perhaps the epitome of this (see La Dépêche de Constantine et de l'est algérienne). I was told that, in the entire department of Constantine, there were only two Jewish members of the Red Cross. The Batna member of this organization said that the members were very considerate and "never made me feel Jewish" ("jamais me fait sentir juive"). By this she meant that they did not make her feel like an outsider or an intruder. However, her choice of words is telling. To feel as if one is Jewish in such a situation is an admission that one, by definition, does not belong.

Jewish women from well-to-do families often came into contact and socialized with wealthy Muslim women. This was especially true when they were neighbors. Jewish women visited in the afternoons and they drank coffee together and chatted. Visits to France provided another point of contact. The wealthy members of all three communities went to France for vacations and cures at fashionable watering spots. One Jewish woman recalled being in France at a cure during the anniversary of the death of her mother, and Muslim women from Batna prepared the traditional soup for her.

Jewish men of the wealthy stratum had friendships with Muslims of similar background. Often these friendships developed during lycée and university years together. In the generation reaching adulthood in the 1920s, Jewish men invited close Muslim friends to their homes for meals. In such cases, in deference to the guests, the Jewish women ate separately. This was exceptional, and most Jews from Batna said that such commensality was nonexistent.

Children could permeate household boundaries with far greater ease. A man whose family lived in the Stand quarter recalled that he and the children of the neighboring Muslim family, with whom his family was quite close, were constantly in and out of one another's homes.

Perhaps the most frequent contacts between Jewish and Muslim women was the Muslim maid in Jewish employ. All Jewish families who had the financial means had young Muslim girls, called mouquère, to help with the heavy housework.⁵ As they were paid very little, even Jewish families of rather modest means could afford to employ them. Wealthy Jews with large households had three or more Muslim girls working for them.⁶ These girls came from the very poorest Muslim families and usually lived in the Muslim quarter of Batna called "le village negre." It was located three or four kilometers out of the town proper and the girls would have to walk to and from work. The mouquère would begin working for a Jewish family at about the age of ten and continue until they reached puberty. If their family had no hope of marriage for them, they continued to work. Sometimes girls who stayed a long time with Jewish families assumed a quasi-kin status; they called family members by kin-terms and were included in marriage and other celebrations.

Hierarchy relationships between Jewish women and their Muslim servants were often expressed through language choice. Jewish women spoke French and the servants responded in Arabic. Informants complained that these girls were thieves and had to be watched constantly.

The mouquère washed the dishes, did the fine laundry, mopped floors and ran errands. I discussed the duties of these girls with a number of informants, and all had the same shocked response to my query

as to whether they ever helped cook. My informants said that the mou-
quère were not "clean" ("propre") enough to touch food. One woman added
that in any case cooking was the job of the "mistress of the house"
(maitresse de la maison).

What they meant by 'not clean' is an important question. Jewish women took great pains to see that their servant girls were clean in the physical sense. They described to me taking the girls to the baths, dousing them with DDT to kill body lice, and giving them their daughters' cast-off garments to wear. If one is looking at this from an "objective" hygienic point of view, then washing dishes, cleaning the kitchen, etc., is as endangering as cooking food. What is involved here is a classification of purity rather than hygiene. Let us examine the complex to which such notions were linked.

The most obvious thing which springs to mind is Jewish dietary laws: perhaps they did not want to take the risk that the Muslims would mix milk and meat products in cooking. I questioned informants along this line. While they more or less agreed, it was apparent that such reasons were not explicit in their minds. Indeed, none of them ever volunteered such an interpretation. An additional piece of information must be noted: although Muslim girls were given breakfast and lunch by their Jewish employers, they would eat separately in the washshed in the courtyard.⁷

There are several different factors involved. First is the tendency for Jewish women, who did not have formal religious training, to merge ideas of ritual and physical cleanliness. Although the Jewish religion has such an explicit emphasis on ritual purity, the Jewish women

of Batna often understood ritual purity by metaphors and actions of physical cleansing. They did not really differentiate between the two.⁸ Thus, when they meant that it violated their notions of social order for Muslims to prepare food for Jews, they phrased it in terms of lack of cleanliness.

As seen in the previous chapter, the family (and by extension the food eaten in a family context) was a key component of Jewish identity. The Jews were making a claim to being part of the European population; in so doing, they reduced and involuted their cultural heritage to center around the family. Their cuisine became part of their definition of the specificity of their culture. It had (and continues to have) an important role in their image of their family and consequently in identity.

As food preparation was a task which was part of the way Jews constituted identity, then having a Muslim perform it would violate the boundaries of Jewish identity. That this potential violation is expressed in terms of physical uncleanness can be seen as stemming from mixing notions of physical and ritual cleanliness. For all Jews the kashruth (kosher food preparation) laws make food preparation a ritual act; it is an act which is specifically Jewish and makes a household Jewish. Batna Jewish women are aware of the role of food in their sense of Jewishness but are only partially able to explain its religious foundations. Thus when they told why Muslim girls could not help prepare food, they used physical rather than ritual cleanliness as the explanation. Perhaps too they were employing the Christian stereotype of Muslims as dirty. However, Christians had Muslim cooks and Jews were aware of this.

Muslim girls working for Jewish families were allowed more leeway by their families than when they worked for Christians. On cold nights the girl who worked for Jews could spend the night. Jewish informants told me that the Muslim families were assured that no one would seduce their daughters in a Jewish household. That Muslims let their daughters spend the night in Jewish homes amongst strange men leads us to question what sort of image the Muslims had of Jewish men. As we know from such authors as Fanon, Cleaver, etc., colonial and racist societies are permeated by stereotypes and fears of the Others' sexuality (Fanon 1952; Cleaver 1967).

From the above account, it seems that, for Muslims, Jewish men were sexually neutral. This interpretation is corroborated by the account of a Jewish man, an employee of the electric company, who said that only a Jew would be allowed to check meters in Muslim homes. Christians or fellow Muslims were not allowed to enter if men of the household were not present.

If Jewish men were sexually neutral for Muslims, Jewish women had the opposite connotation for Christian men. From early travelers' accounts to the anthropologist A. Van Gennep, who visited Algeria in 1914, exotic, sexual Jewesses ostensibly attempted to seduce Christian men.⁹ Most of these descriptions are very likely fantasy.¹⁰

The antisemitic literature of the late 19th century in Algeria depicted Jewish men as cowardly and passive. Such stereotypes were evidently prevalent in 20th century Batna. A Jewish informant recalled with glee how annoyed the Christians of Batna were during the Second World War when the first Allied soldier in Batna was a local Jew, a

tall, imposing man who strutted about town in his uniform. It was humiliating for the Christians that a Jew should represent the victorious military who had overthrown the Petainist regime they supported. "Sur-tout un Juif" ("above all a Jew"), my informant said.

The Christians had quite a different view of the Muslims. Echoed throughout European writings on colonial Algeria and as analyzed by Nora is the notion of the hypersexuality of the Muslims: the hidden, untouchable sexuality of the Muslim women and the aggressive, threatening sexuality of the men (Nora 1961). Christian men were preoccupied with the idea that their women were highly desirable for Muslim men.¹¹ Muslim men, because of the domination of their society, developed an even more protective, cloistering attitude toward their women than prior to colonization (Vinogradoff 1974).

From the perspective of Jewish men and women, Muslim men were seen as posing a threat to Jewish women. Both Jewish men and women told of fears that their daughters would be stolen by the Muslims. Stories about tribes in the Aures mountains who had customs similar to the Jews were attributed by some informants to captured Jewish women.

Although Jewish men recognized and, to some extent, accepted their sexual neutrality vis-à-vis Muslims, they refused to do so with the Christians. For example, Jewish men only went to Christian prostitutes. The public dance provides an opportunity to see examples of the hierarchies and dynamics of Christian/Jewish sexual/social tensions.

As noted in Chapter One, the first antisemitic riots in colonial Algeria took place around the staging of a public dance. In Batna, hierarchy was expressed by Christian young men asking Jewish women to dance;

the latter never refused. However, in the inverse situation, Christian women usually refused to dance with Jewish men. Many a fight broke out at public dances when brothers of Jewish girls decided that the Christians were compromising their sisters' honor and go on the attack. Informants claim that virtually every dance in Batna degenerated into fights over such incidents. Jewish men were trying to deny the stereotype by reacting in what was considered a manly fashion. Yet they were foiled by the hierarchical system when Christian women refused to dance with them. Let us look at how the rebellious young Jewish man, mentioned on page 150, turned the dance situation to his advantage.

When the young man was in Algiers (where he had relatives and went on business/pleasure trips), he often attended dances. Picking on one women, he would invite her to dance successively. A tall, handsome, dapper young man who did not fit the Jewish physical stereotype, he had no problem attracting and striking rapport with Christian women. However, as soon as it was obvious that a Christian woman was interested in him, and as soon as he established the fact that she was Christian, he would drop her. In Batna, he often asked the daughter of the Christian mayor to dance with him. As his oldest brother was one of the main Jewish supporters of the mayor, the girl was unable, "ashamed," to refuse him. By snubbing Christian women, he showed himself that these forbidden women could be had and rejected.

The pattern of sexual relations and challenges reveals the ideology of domination in this colonial society. Although endogamy was supported by all groups for religious reasons, racist beliefs bolstered endogamy as well. Racist reasoning held that there were 'essential'

differences between Muslims and Europeans. Educated Muslims who returned to Algeria from France with French brides were as excluded from French society as any other Muslim. Such intermarriages undermined the hierarchy of privilege based on 'racial essence.' If the French were in control because of their 'natural' superiority, then they could have sexual relations with Muslim women and not compromise their 'superiority.' Marriage, however, was an admission of equality. A French man who married a Muslim woman was considered mad.

For the Jewish men this situation was fraught with ambivalence. They did not want to be put in the same, 'by nature' unacceptable, category as the Muslims. Thus in one sense they wanted to assert their claim to access to Christian women. However, for religious reasons, they did not want to become seriously involved with Christian women. Nor did Jewish men want their sisters, as extensions of their masculine pride, to be compromised in any way by Christians.¹² Jews did not go so far as to prevent their sisters from having any contact with Christians, for this was a way of affirming that Jews were part of the same group as Christians. At public dances Jewish women danced with Christian men, for Jewish women dancing with Christians was perceived as an elevation of their personal status, proof of their desirability.

Thus sexuality and endogamy were in an almost contradictory relationship with each other. Endogamy, for religious-moral reasons, was desired by all three groups. In the realm of sexuality, the domination expressed by endogamy was simultaneously contested and defended. Recall that children in Batna had much freer access to the homes of other groups than did adults. Perhaps children's perceived nonsexual nature

allowed them to enter family settings, penetrating endogamous boundaries, as they were still outside of that system.¹³

Let us now examine the terminology used by the Jews of Batna when discussing Christians and Muslims. The first response of the Jews when questioned about the Christian community was to represent it as monolithic. They used the terms "les Catholiques" or "les Français" to refer to the Christian population. If asked directly, informants usually denied that there were Italian or other European nationalities among the Batna population.

None of the Jews ever mentioned the Corsicans who, although legally French, asserted their own distinctiveness by such organizations as "les Amicales de Corse." One Jewish woman, who had initially denied the existence of Italians in Batna, eventually told the story of a woman from a nouveau riche Italian family who married into an established French family and was snubbed by her in-laws for years. Similarly, informants usually denied that there were Protestants in Batna, despite the fact that the Protestant church was located near where most of the Jews lived.

When discussing religious differences, Jews used the word 'Catholic' rather than the word Christian. For most Jews the word 'Catholic' carries the generic meaning. How deeply this category is ingrained is evidenced by a passage in the journal of the woman cited earlier. She described her childhood neighborhood as a "melange of Arabs, Jews, and Catholics." When she wrote this, she was married to a Protestant, yet the divisions of her childhood still persisted.

When speaking of Algeria and referring to the Christian population, Jewish informants used either "French" or "Catholic," depending on

the speaker and what he or she was trying to convey. They used the word "Catholic" when claiming how "Frenchified" and "civilized" the Jews of Batna were and that no status differences existed between Christians and Jews. However, two Jewish informants, both professionals whose success in the Christian status system gave them a certain distance, said that in Batna "French" was the most common term.

When I asked Jews directly about what groups there were in Batna, the response would be "Europeans" and "Arabs." The Jews placed themselves in the European category. One man went so far as to deny that the word Jew was used in Algeria: "There were the Europeans and the Arabs, and that was it." If the context was one in which the word 'communities' was used, then the Jews readily demarcated themselves from the other two groups. As seen in the beginning of this chapter, Jews stressed the boundaries between the other two groups and themselves. The Jews, in this context, would take pride in their distinctiveness; one man described the Jews as an "elite people." Yet the Jews had an accurate assessment of the power hierarchy in Algeria: they were legally French citizens, and French citizens were European; therefore it followed logically that they were European. Most informants would maintain that their remote ancestors came from Spain.

How do we then reconcile this claim on being European with the seemingly contradictory usage of the word "French" to refer to the Christian population. After all, the Jews' position rested on their legal status as French citizens. It is in the Jews' quasi-conscious blurring of the distinction between types of European subgroups that an explanation can be found. If one made no distinction between types of

Europeans, no internal hierarchy, then Jews as well as Italians or Spaniards can be considered European and the difference between them and the Muslims is further maintained.

The reason the Jews had to emphasize their Europeanness goes back to the phenomenon observed during the analysis of the 1898 riots. If one was 'European' one had the necessary 'natural essence' to become French (i.e., a French citizen). One was safely distinguished from the Muslims: one was a legitimate colonizer and had a rightful claim to being a French citizen. Thus we can see why among themselves Jews could call Christians "French" but never "European." To have done so would have undercut, to themselves, their position in the society.

This same process is evident in the way Jews referred to Muslims. It has been noted by critics of French colonialism in Algeria that Muslims were depersonalized by linguistic usage (Nora 1961:184; Cohen 1955). Personal pronouns were not used to refer to Muslims. An example of this is that, if one said 'someone is waiting for you,' then the 'someone' indicated a European. Nora cited a witness testifying that "it was an Arab, but dressed like a person," i.e., in European dress (Nora 1961: 185). Jews also used such depersonalizing terminology for Muslims. Describing a terrorist attack on a Batna rabbi in a crowded marketplace, an informant said to me, "he [the rabbi] was at the market and no one was there." The word "mouquère" was often used generically by Jews to refer to Muslim women. A Jewish woman describing her friendship with her bourgeois Muslim neighbors used the word mouquère to describe them. As the word means servant, it was a reduction of all Muslim women to the status of inferiors.

Jewish informants knew the difference between the various groups in the Muslim population, and when they wished to be specific they used such terms as 'Kabyle,' 'Shawia,' etc. In general Jews glossed all Muslims as "Arabs."¹⁴ This is another example of merging, of creating a false homogeneity in order to maintain a cultural hierarchy categorization.¹⁵ If one did not examine the groups too carefully then the neat division between Arab and European did not break down and the system of domination remained in order. Thus the Jews, as Europeans, legitimated their right to a privileged place in the colonial system.

NOTES

¹The French word copain is probably best rendered by the English 'pal' or 'buddy', someone one 'hangs out' with.

²One of the 'nonworking' Jewish women whose husband owned a cafe prepared these hors d'oeuvres.

³One of the most select cafes, actually an American-style bar, was owned by a wealthy Jew. Other than the owner's family, it had virtually no Jewish clientele. The Christians who went there were army officers and civil officials.

⁴Cous cous, a staple of the traditional North African diet, is a fine grain-like pasta of semolina flour with a meat or fish and vegetable sauce. Tafina is a long-cooked stew-like dish using meat and chard, spinach, or chick peas.

⁵The word mouquère is an Arabic transformation of the Spanish word mujer, woman. It was taken into French usage with the meaning of maid or servant girl; it also was used pejoratively to refer to any Muslim woman (Lanly 1962:42).

⁶Muslim laundresses also worked for Jewish families. They were married women who had a fixed clientele and who worked for an hourly wage. They would come every fifteen days.

⁷Muslim girls also had cultural reasons for not wanting to eat in front of men.

⁸An example of this is the elaborate cleaning for Passover which involves literally washing the house from top to bottom. Whereas the idea is to rid the house of leavened bread, the women see it as a necessity physically to scrub every inch, even those places which could not possibly have contact with foodstuffs. In fact, one woman told me that this is 'really' just like the spring-cleaning that her Christian neighbors in France undertake.

⁹See, for example, A. Van Gennep, En Algérie (Paris, 1914:56-57), Rozet (1833:256 *infra*).

¹⁰Mordecai M. Noah, Travels in England, France, Spain and the Barbary States (New York, 1819). The author was an American Jew who was the American Consul in Tunis. He expresses skepticism about the accounts of Jews' sexual freedom.

¹¹Perhaps this was a projection of their feelings about Muslim women.

¹²An informant related to me that brothers would be far more attentive to their sisters' "honor" than the parents. In the dance

situation it would be seen as the responsibility and prerogative of the brother to guard his sister.

¹³For Muslims, pre-pubescent girls were allowed great freedom. They had very wild, free childhoods and were not thought of as sexual beings. From Gisele Halimi's autobiography, the same seems to have been true for Jewish girls (Halimi 1973; Halimi is a leftist, feminist lawyer in France, born in Tunisia).

¹⁴Only to make a political point, i.e., distinguish themselves as nonracist, would informants use the word "Muslim." The only person to do so consistently was the Jewish leader who still lives in Batna.

¹⁵An example of the lengths to which this redefinition could go is furnished by the Jewish man who told me that Kabyles are 'really' descendants of the Romans, hence of European ancestry, and that is why they are smart and good-looking. In reality, the Kabyles are Berbers, the pre-Muslim, indigenous people of North Africa.

CHAPTER 5

WORLD WAR II AND THE ALGERIAN WAR

Section IWorld War II

Prior to the outbreak of World War II, as early as the 1920s in some parts of Algeria, a strong wave of antisemitism and pro-Hitler sentiment started among the Christians of Algeria.¹ In the city of Constantine in August 1934, the Muslim population rioted for three days, leaving 25 Jews dead, dozens wounded, and damages evaluated at 150 million (ancien) francs. This is the only such action on the part of Muslims for the entire colonial history of Algeria. The causes of this riot are beyond the scope of this thesis (see Ageron 1971 for a review of different interpretations and an analysis of the riot). The important facet of the outbreak, which relates to the discussion of the growth of antisemitism among the Christian population, is that the civil authorities of Constantine did not intervene: the Jews were given no police or army protection.² Claims have been made (this is the version generally believed by my Batna informants) that Christian agitators started the riots by spreading false rumors among the Muslims that the Jews had profaned a mosque. In Batna a principal Muslim leader expressed his support of the Jews by giving a tea for the notables of the Jewish community. By symbolically putting them under his protection, he effectively quelled any anti-Jewish reaction among the Muslim population of Batna.

In the 1936 parliamentary elections, candidates in all three departments of Algeria campaigned on antisemitic platforms. Antisemitic agitation and exhortations to kill the Jews took place throughout Algeria. In the department of Oran, swastikas were painted on Jewish stores and Jewish schoolchildren were so persecuted by their Christian classmates that many were obliged to leave school. During these elections, a young Jewish soldier who was trying to remove an insulting placard from an antisemitic headquarters was shot and killed. Christian agitators attempted to incite the Muslims against the Jews. The Jews were pro-Popular Front and the accession in 1936 of the French Jew, Leon Blum, to the premiership increased anti-Jewish sentiment.³

In 1938, in the city of Sidi-bel-Abbes, which Ansky (a historian of the Jews during this period) describes as a "veritable Hitlerian fiefdom," nearly 400 Jews were disenfranchised on the grounds that their ancestors had allegedly failed to declare their indigenous status in 1870. Powerful Algerian Jews brought pressure to bear on the French government and the ruling was quickly reversed.⁴ Such measures are indicative of popular sentiment among the Christians of Algeria prior to the outbreak of the Second World War. Throughout the pre-War period, German agents worked among the Muslim populations of both Algeria and Morocco spreading Nazi propaganda.⁵

With the outbreak of World War II in 1939, the Algerian Jews, as French citizens, were mobilized into the French armed forces along with the Christian population. With the defeat, armistice, and the establishment of the Vichy government in June of 1940, Jews in France and Algeria were immediately subjected to antisemitic legislation. The

Decree Cremieux was repealed on October 7, 1940. (See footnote 6 for the text of this law.) In brief, the Jews' citizenship was taken away, but they were kept under French civil law. The only exceptions to the citizenship provision were certain decorated veterans who were allowed to retain citizenship. The disenfranchisement of the Jews was further entrenched by the law of October 11, 1940, which closed the Muslim citizenship procedure to Jews. Thus Jews were placed in an inferior legal position to Muslims, who conserved the right to become naturalized French citizens.

In addition to losing their citizenship, the Jews of Algeria were subject to all legislative actions taken against French Jews. In France a decree passed on the third of October 1940 fired all Jews from civil service positions; this law became effective in December 1940 in Algeria. As noted in the previous chapter, the French civil service covers a far wider range of employment than its American counterpart. Thus, for example, all Jewish school teachers and professors lost their jobs. In addition to being excluded from the civil service, a large number of other occupations were forbidden to Jews. Among them were certain legal professions, officers or petty officers in the army, workers in enterprises with government contracts or which served the public (e.g., tramway operators and streetcleaners). Later laws forbade Jews to take part in banking, advertising, stock exchange, communications (radio, cinema, etc.), forestry, publishing, certain commercial activities (e.g., grains, livestock), insurance, real estate, etc.⁷ In addition to these prohibitions, the number of Jews in such occupations as doctor, lawyer, dentist, midwife, and architect was limited to two percent of the practitioners

in a city. Thus most of the Jews in these professions were forced to stop work. The occupational restriction laws thus affected all the socio-economic strata of the Jewish population.

Because the Algerian Jews were a significant proportion of the "European" population (an estimated 14 percent at this time) and played a vital role in the economy of the colony, it was impossible for the government to conduct the massive property confiscation (the so-called "aryanization" of Jewish property) it had in France, where Jews were less than one percent of the population. Nonetheless, the government tallied Jewish property of all sorts (total household resources) in Algeria in September 1941.⁸ By the fall of 1942 preparations were completed for the confiscation of Jewish property. This had already been done in the cases of very wealthy Jews whose holdings were in those economic sectors forbidden to Jews. The Allied invasion of November 1942 cut short these plans.

One measure taken by the Vichy government, which the Jews experienced as a great affront, was legislation limiting the number of Jewish children in the public school system. The laws went into effect in the fall of 1941. Jewish children in primary and secondary schools were limited to 14 percent (per class) of the non-Jewish pupils. In the universities or any institute of higher education, not more than three percent could be Jewish.⁹ In practice Jewish students were forced to stop their schooling. The Jews, drawing on teachers who had been put out of work by the previously mentioned laws, formed their own school system. Various Jewish organizations formally protested the expulsion of the schoolchildren to the government.

One of the more pathetic examples of this was a delegation of mutilated Jewish war heroes who went to speak to Xavier Vallet (himself a crippled war veteran) who was in charge of "Jewish affairs" (i.e., creating and enforcing repressive legislation) for the Vichy government. In Algeria on an inspection tour, Vallet disdainfully dismissed the Jewish veterans who had quite literally come to plead with him.¹⁰

While these repressive measures were taking place, Jews were busy organizing a resistance movement. A strange alliance of the Algerian Jewish elite, monarchists, and Free French republicans formed the Resistance in Algiers. Most of the participants did not know the identity, religious or political, of other members of the organization as it was formed on the classic pyramid cell pattern. Estimates hold that the Algiers Resistance movement was no less than 80 percent Jewish.

Together with the American ambassador, Robert Murphy, the Algiers Resistance made a plan, known as 'Operation Torch,' that the Algiers group would immobilize the city of Algiers on the night of November 8, 1942, during which time an American landing operation would be launched. The Algiers group was led to believe that hundreds of thousands of American troops would land and take charge of the city which they had temporarily seized. They accomplished their part of the mission only to find a small landing party of some 2300 Americans. (Algiers had 12,000 French troops stationed in it at the time.)

The Americans betrayed the Algiers Resistance by negotiating with the Vichy admiral, Darlan, and leaving him in a position of power. The reason for all this was that the Americans wanted to keep General de Gaulle out of the North African situation; he had not even been

informed that an invasion was planned. The Americans had secretly contacted General Giraud in France, who until then had been a Vichy supporter, and brought him to North Africa to take command.

Under Giraud's rule, the Jews' political situation did not alter appreciably. Certain of the anti-Jewish laws were repealed, but political repression continued. During the Vichy regime, internment camps in southern Algeria had been set up for political dissenters and foreign Jews. As the Allied invasion left essentially the same people in control, nothing changed in these forced labor and torture centers. The Jewish leaders and participants in the Allied invasion were placed in these camps on false charges. Jews in America and England eventually secured their release by mounting political pressure movements. Jews who were mobilized into the army after the Allied invasion (and before the coming of de Gaulle) were also put into camps where they worked under terrible conditions. In the face of pressure to restore the Jews' citizenship, General Giraud took some actions. In mid-March 1943 he published a series of decrees giving the Jews back many of their civil rights but reiterating the repeal of the Decree Cremieux.¹¹ Jewish pupils and teachers were reintegrated into the school system in April 1943.

With the arrival of de Gaulle in Algiers in May 1943 the position of the Jews improved. However, it was not until October 20, 1943, that the Decree Cremieux was reinstated.¹² This was due in large part to pressure from the American government.

The Muslim population of Algeria showed no hostility toward the Jews during this period. In fact, as I show for Batna during this period, Muslims were often quite supportive of the Jews. The Muslim

leadership was in favor of the Jews' having their citizenship restored. After the Allied invasion, one of the excuses used for not reinstating the Decree Cremieux was that it would antagonize the Muslim population. Ferhat Abbas' statement, "Nous ne voulons pas d'egalite par le bas" ("We do not want to be equal on the bottom"), seems to reflect the general Muslim sentiment of the period.¹³

The perspective of the Jews of Batna on World War II is different from that furnished to Ansky by the Algiers elite Jews from whom he gathered materials for his study. Certain elements in the perception of events are similar, but the emphasis differs. Both Ansky and his informants see the Vichy government with its antisemitic measures and collaboration with the Nazis as an aberration. They fail to acknowledge that the (metropolitan) French complied and took no significant actions to protect the Jews.

The Algerian Jews' own absolute identification with France and being French is amply evidenced in the documents sent to the French authorities protesting the anti-Jewish measures and quotas. The Algerian Jews constantly reiterated their war service, their dead and decorated, and their loyalty to France. That this was not just empty rhetoric is shown by the consternation the Jews felt and the protests they raised when their children were expelled from the school system. The reader will recall that the delegation of Jewish war veterans took up the expulsion of the children with Vallet and not the fact that the Jews had lost their means of earning a living.

The humiliation the Algiers Jewish elite felt at the loss of their citizenship is evident. These Jews had a very mystified

patriotism: the colonists were not 'real' French for them nor were the Vichy collaborators.¹⁴ This rendering of the events of World War II is partially adhered to by the Batna Jews. However, their daily experiences with the Muslims and Christians during this period figure importantly in their memories. Virtually all my informants said that the Muslims protected the Jews during the Second World War. Everyone mentioned that the Muslims sold Jews foodstuffs and fuel on the black market. There was a rationing system in Algeria during the war and the Jews had last priority and were often unable to obtain items through legal means. The Batna Jews were acutely aware of the antisemitic propaganda directed toward the Muslims at this time. They expressed gratitude when speaking of World War II that the Muslims did not heed the propaganda and stayed solidary with the Jews.¹⁵ Muslims offered to hide Jews if the rumors that the Jews were going to be put in concentration camps proved true. Jewish families told me that when it appeared as if the Germans, who were fighting the Americans in Tunisia, might invade Algeria, Muslims made arrangements for the Jews to be sent to safety in their farms in the mountains.¹⁶

Many informants told me that, had it not been for the fear of a Muslim uprising, the French would have put all the Jews in concentration camps. Whether this is historically accurate is not the point; the Batna Jews experienced that this was the case. One Batna woman, after a long discussion of World War II and the Algerian War, said that the Jews had betrayed the Muslims: the Muslims had taken care of the Jews during the Second World War and the Jews did not reciprocate during the Algerian War.

The Batna Jews' impression of the Christians during this period was quite the opposite. As one man put it, the Christians' attitude

changed from one of "meppris" (mistrust) to "mechanté apparente" (open nastiness). The Jews who had had personal relationships with Christians found that many people they had known for years would no longer speak to them. A woman, whose father was a civil servant, recalled bitterly how her father's Christian friends refused to acknowledge him on the street. "Overnight they all became against the Jews." She added that with the Allied landing the Christians tried to rectify things with the Jews, justifying their actions in terms of fear. Most Jewish informants expressed disbelief at such after-the-fact excuses.

Two or three Jews from Batna were jailed during the Second World War. Some were jailed for black market activities and one man was imprisoned for insulting Petain. The story is as follows and illustrates well the Jews' sense of humor: in the post office, affixing a stamp with Petain's picture to an envelope, the man remarked, "Il faut lecher le cul de celui-la" ("I've got to lick this guy's ass"). The prison terms were several months long and the Jews were kept in the Batna jail.

Some of the businesses of wealthy Batna Jewish families were taken over by the government. Military officials continuously harrassed the Jewish former assistant mayor. This man described being convocated virtually every day to military headquarters on flimsy pretexts to annoy him.

In Batna, as elsewhere in Algeria, the children were expelled from the schools. The reaction on the part of people who were children at the time varies from individual to individual, although most recall dismay and anger. One man, who was a child of six at the time, was the only Jewish pupil in his class. The teacher announced to him that he

was not to return to school the next day. He persisted in asking why and the teacher finally said to him, "You are not like the others." He remembers his anger when his parents explained to him that it was because he was Jewish. Another man recalled a tearful scene with his parents when he arrived home with the news. As in the other towns of Algeria, the Jews of Batna organized their own elementary school and two women and one young man taught the children. No one recalled any problems on the part of pupils or teachers when they were reintegrated into the school system.

In assessing the effects of the repeal of the Decree Cremieux on the Jews of Batna, the analysis is limited by the constraints of reconstructed history. Informants filter the past through the intervening 30 years' experiences. One fact which has immediate bearing on our interpretation is that 13 young men from Batna went to fight for Israeli independence in 1948. This was illegal: they had to enter Israel secretly with false papers. Although most of them remained in Israel, I was fortunate to speak with one of them who is now working for the Israeli government in France. He had been a teenager during the Second World War and described that his experiences made him "anti-Christian" and "anti-French." His anger was not centered on the revoking of the Decree Cremieux per se, but on the antisemitic measures and especially the break in schooling which forced him to abandon his education. He described his and his contemporaries' feelings as a "sionisme religieux" (religious Zionism) and said that they felt a "need" to show their "solidarity" with other Jews.

This self-proclaimed need to identify with Israel and the eventual decision on the part of many of these young men, and a handful

of other Batna Jews, to emigrate to Israel can be seen as a rejection of French identity. For the most part, however, the Second World War, certainly as seen filtered through 30 years, did not seem to have profoundly called into question the Jews' self-concept of being French.

To an outsider looking at World War II it would seem that such an experience would undermine the certainty the Algerian Jews felt about being French. Except in a minority of cases, this does not seem to have happened. Most of the Batna Jews felt that they were 'really' French and that the repeal of the Decree Cremieux was a measure taken by an illegal government and did not reflect anything about the 'real' French. An occasional informant could put himself outside of his own categories and see that the World War II episode showed the tenuousness of the Jews' claim to being French.

As the discussion turns to the Algerian War, where the test of the Jews' identification with France is made, I would like to note in passing that among the first FLN urban guerillas in Algeria were a group of Jews who had been through the World War II experience and had felt betrayed and alienated from the French.¹⁷

Section II

The Algerian Revolution

Given the treatment of the Jews by the French during the Second World War and the perceptions the Jews have of Muslim solidarity during this period, the question arises as to why the Jews sided with the French during the Algerian War.

To answer such a question fully would require a book about the Algerian War and the dynamics in the main centers of Jewish life in

Algeria: Algiers, Oran, and Constantine. One would have to consider as well the role of the Israeli government, whose agents were in Algeria at the time (Chemouilli 1972:39).

One of the aims of this thesis is to deal with this issue in a circumscribed way. By analyzing the formation of Jewish identity in colonial Algeria--showing how and why the Jews of Batna (and by extension the rest of Algeria) identified with the French--we can see the preconditions which led the Jews, despite the events of World War II, to side with the French. For the most part, at least in Batna, the Jews did not consider it a choice; they never considered joining the FLN. In this section the focus is the perceptions the Batna Jews had of the Algerian War; I analyze the maze of anger and bafflement at the events of this revolution.

When speaking about the Algerian War, Batna informants (and pieds-noirs in general) never refer to it as "the Algerian War" or "the Algerian Revolution," but rather as "les événements de l'Algérie" (the events in Algeria) or simply as "les événements" (the events). This usage is a strong political statement; it is indicative of their overall perceptions of what took place during the seven-year struggle. To call the revolution "the events" is to deny its legitimacy, to deny that the Muslims were justified in their actions. Such a view negates the idea that there was an organized political movement and places the violence in the category of unmotivated terrorism. This is characteristic of a prevalent piéd-noir political perspective which views de Gaulle as needlessly 'selling out' the piéd-noir by capitulating to the Muslims.

Informants from Batna say that the Algerian War began in their town. This is at least partially correct. On the night of November 1, 1954, the members of the C.R.U.A. planned attacks to take place simultaneously in the three departments of Algeria.¹⁸ Only the attack in Batna, the site chosen for the department of Constantine, met with noticeable success. Some of the important leaders of this stage in the movement for Algerian independence were from Batna and well known to my Jewish informants.

The brothers Ben Boulaid had a villa in the Quartier Stand (discussed in Chapter Four). Mostefa Ben Boulaid, one of the six original heads of the Algerian Revolution, had worked with some of my informants. Prior to the revolution he was a trucker delivering groceries and other supplies to shopkeepers in the Aures mountains. One retailer he worked with was a Batna Jew who described him as "very nationalist" but "not a bad guy" ("pas un mechant gars"). One Jewish informant blamed the entire Algerian Revolution on an incident involving Mostefa Ben Boulaid.¹⁹ Ben Boulaid had a small bus line between Arris (in the Aures) and Batna; but his operating permit was illegally taken away and given to another person by a wealthy and powerful Muslim in Batna. According to my informant, after this "injustice," Ben Boulaid became the "first rebel." Factually, Ben Boulaid's political involvement predates this incident; he had been involved in the O.S.--Organisation Secrète--in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

This Ben Boulaid story, however, is an interesting example of the way in which the Jews of Batna think about and explain the Algerian War (and to a certain extent political action in general). That is,

particular things happen to people and cause them to react in a given way. The Jews did not recognize that the overarching context of colonialism was intolerable because it placed the Muslims in a position of structural inferiority. Given my analysis, the Jews were unable to comprehend the Muslims' situation because Jews subscribed to the colonialist ideology which put Muslims by nature on the bottom of the social hierarchy.

When questioned on the causes of the Algerian War, most women informants mentioned the extreme poverty of the Muslims. Men usually mentioned that the Muslims did not have jobs: 'All the Christians and the Jews had jobs but the Muslims did not, so they sat around all day in cafes and talked about politics.' At the same time, many Jews expressed resentment: the Muslims were after all the good jobs, i.e., those held by Jews and Christians.

Informants tended to jump a level from discussion of very specific grievances of the Muslims to the sweeping statement that the Muslims had "évolué" (evolved) and that they realized, like other former colonial peoples the world over, that they did not need the French, that they were capable of running their own affairs. This statement was usually made at the end of a discussion when the informant was becoming angry and disgusted with the topic of conversation and wanted to change the subject. Informants in this vein of discussion never said that the Algerian Muslims looked at their neighbors in Morocco and Tunisia and drew the obvious conclusion. Instead, they twisted the logic to make it seem as if the Muslims used the French to govern them when they were incapable of so doing, and once in a strong position discarded their benefactors.

This same view was echoed by the Jews when discussing changes in interpersonal relations between Jews and Muslims. For example, one Jewish man, the son of an influential family, told me that in his father's generation there were friendships between Jews and Muslims but that it was different in his generation. (He was in his late teens and early twenties during the Algerian War.) He said that the Muslims of his age group had been to school and learned that they could "debrouille" ('make out') by themselves, hence did not need the Jews as their friends.

Almost all informants mentioned that at the beginning of the Algerian War they felt that the struggle was between the French and the Muslims and that they were somehow out of the picture. One woman gave me an example: in Algiers her husband was approached at night by a group of Muslims and saved himself by calling out, "I'm Jewish, I'm neutral." Informants gave the date as about 1956 when they began to feel that the Muslims were directing their forces specifically against the Jews. Most agreed that it was not until the closing years of the war (1960-1962) that they began to regard all Muslims as "the enemy." Informants had differing perceptions as to why Jews became targets for the FLN. Some maintained that the Muslims were angered that the Jews did not join the revolution. Others felt that Jews were killed simply because they were "Europeans."

The dates given to me by informants correspond to developments in the Algerian War and to political and military decisions taken by the FLN. In late 1956 and early 1957 the FLN, in an effort to sustain the revolutionary struggle, began a policy of attacking the civilian population of urban centers.²⁰ In 1956 as well the famous Conference of

Soummam (August 20 to September 10) took place in which the FLN issued a proclamation which recognized the Jews as indigenous inhabitants of Algeria, guaranteed their position in the future independent state, and called on them to support the FLN actively.²¹ The heads of the Jewish Consistoires in the major cities responded with a proclamation that, although they could not legally represent the Jews of Algeria, the latter were French citizens.²²

In Batna, as elsewhere in Algeria, the FLN destroyed property belonging to Europeans and pro-French Muslims, conducted random attacks against civilians, and assassinated specific persons. Although I examined newspapers for Batna for the entire war period (1954-1962), it was often difficult to discern the motivation behind specific attacks--that is, whether they were political assassinations or part of the policy of violence against European civilians.²³

Newspapers revealed that the common belief among my Batna Jewish informants that more Jews than Christians were killed by the FLN in Batna was untrue. In fact, almost twice as many Muslims and twice as many Christians were killed as Jews. Jews never mentioned that Muslims were also victims of the FLN. In all, ten Christians, nine Muslims, and five Jews were killed in individual attacks. There seem to have been political motivations behind the slayings of at least two Jews. One man was an interpreter for the military police (an occupation which put him, willingly or not, at the site of prisoner interrogation) and the other an employee of the court system in charge of eviction from public housing. A third Jew was said to have been killed for revenge: a relative of his had helped arrest a member of the FLN and then had left for France.

One aspect of the attacks on Jews which especially angered many of my informants was that the vast majority of Jews wounded or killed were poor, either artisans or small shopkeepers. Perhaps one reason is that these people had their businesses in the predominantly Muslim parts of Batna, thus facilitating escape. Informants' perceptions that Jews were attacked as Jews are backed up by several incidents. One of the first Jews in Batna to be attacked physically was a rabbi whose throat was slit (narrowly missing the carotid artery) as he was shopping in a crowded market place. From his dress it was obvious that he was a rabbi. Several days before the attack on the rabbi, a grenade was thrown in the synagogue, wounding two Jews. Informants also claimed that the cafes owned by the Jews and known to be frequented by them were also bombed to get at the Jews. This is open to question as Christian cafes were bombed during the same period.

At the beginning of the war, even Jews whose relatives were killed still did not think in terms of Muslims, as a category, as the enemy. One woman told of being on a visit to her parents in a neighboring town when she received a call from her husband to come back to Batna immediately as her brother-in-law had been killed. She said that she took a taxi, with a Muslim driver, without the least thought that driving miles across the countryside alone with a Muslim could possibly be dangerous.

A frequent response from informants was that 'it was the Muslims from the mountains, the douars, who came into Batna, threw grenades, shot or knifed Europeans, and left.' They maintained that it was not the Batna Muslims who were responsible. Newspaper records indicated

otherwise: La Dépêche de Constantine et de l'est algérienne (June 26, 1957) tells of the arrest of a group of Batna Muslims who were supposedly responsible for a number of attacks on Jews. (Unfortunately these newspapers were in Paris and, having already left the field, I was unable to cross-check accounts with informants.) However, this in no way proves that the Muslims captured by the French were really responsible: framing of so-called terrorists who confessed to crimes under torture was widely practiced by the French. One informant who had briefly mentioned the arrest of these Muslims to me was a rabbi who had worked with them; they were the slaughterers in the municipal slaughterhouse. He maintained that, if these men had really been interested in killing Jews as Jews, they had had ample opportunity to kill him as he had worked alone with them.

Thus it appears that it is virtually impossible to document who were the perpetrators of the Batna attacks, but informants' statements must be interpreted. The Jews of Batna were (and still are) trying to grapple with the problem that they had a sense of community with their Muslim neighbors and the events of the revolution had violated in some profound way their conceptions of what the Muslims were like.

Unlike the Europeans, whom the Jews admitted to not really understand, the Muslims were thought of as being similar in many respects to the Jews and of being predictable. The Jews had thought they understood the Muslims. The events of the Algerian War shook this belief. Informants often said that before the Algerian War "on etait tous pareil" ("we were all alike"), there was no "difference," and that the war made everything rotten ("pourri").

Such statements contradicted the ones cited in Chapters Three and Four in which informants related how the three communities were so distinct. In this context, informants meant that the Muslims (prior to the revolution) were not marking the difference, that is, they were not defining the situation but were letting themselves be defined and accorded their place at the bottom of the social hierarchy. The anger expressed is understandable in terms of the situation as they lived it (seven years of war, deaths of people they were close to, feeling that they were forced to leave their homeland, etc.). But the way they express this anger, using the vocabulary of pollution, calling the situation "rotten" and the Muslims "dirty" (sale), indicates confusion and violation of basic cultural categories.

Some of the Jews of Batna have different opinions about the role of the Jews in the Algerian War; I will discuss their reactions in further detail at the end of this section. Let us now turn to a discussion of some of the events which took place in the Jewish community during the war. We see how Jews experienced their alienation from their Muslim neighbors in daily life and how the Jewish community took defensive measures against attacks.

The young woman (whom I shall call Rebecca), whose experiences growing up as a Jew in Batna were discussed in Chapter Four, related the following incidents about the Algerian War. She was 11 years old when the war began and had always had Muslim friends. During her years in lycée, the group she frequented was primarily Christian: she and a Muslim girl were the only exceptions. She also had a close friendship with a Muslim boy. These friendships withstood the greater part of the

Algerian War, but from the time of the Evian accords relations broke off.²⁴ The Muslims refused to have anything further to do with them: "There was no longer the possibility of discussion."

Many Jews reported that, toward the end of the war, Muslims began to assert themselves through language use. Rebecca's mother told of a Muslim shop near her home where she had always bought groceries. At the end of the war, the proprietor only served customers who addressed him in Arabic. Schoolteachers reported the same phenomenon: Muslim children refused to obey the school rule to speak only in French. They would break into song singing the "Muslim national anthem." The Jews, when telling of these incidents, presented them as inexplicable occurrences in a chain of events out of their control. As they had never experienced the French language as a tool of oppression and subjugation, they did not identify with or comprehend the Muslims' symbolic self-assertion in expressing power through language.

We can see a further example of the Jews' unwillingness to face the situation and the breakdown of cultural categories in the story of Rebecca's family leaving Batna for France. In the course of a conversation between myself, Rebecca, and her mother, the mother asserted a number of times that they had simply come to France on vacation while Algerian independence was declared. Rebecca maintained that her mother is "mystifying" herself and gave as proof that when they had come to France she had brought over ten kilograms of books--clearly not something one does if one is merely on a holiday. Rebecca said that the family was afraid, because of their good relations with Muslim neighbors, that if they said they were leaving definitely, the Muslims would take it as a

betrayal and turn against them. Thus the story they told was that they were going to France on a vacation. The plan was that they would sit out independence in France (violence was feared) and then the father would return, finish out the year of his employment, sell their apartment, and bring the rest of their possessions to France. However, following independence the unoccupied apartments of Jews and Christians in Batna were taken over by Muslims. (This also took place elsewhere in Algeria.) Those Jews who were in their apartments in Batna at this time had no problems. Rebecca's mother referred to this as the "pillaging" of her apartment and she felt betrayed by the Muslims because of it. An interesting exchange took place between mother and daughter when the story was being told. The mother used the expression "les Arabes" when saying that the apartment had been robbed. Her daughter pointed out that it was not "les Arabes" in general but rather a specific group of individuals who had done it. She was objecting to her mother's categorical statement. However, this response of categorization, saying it was "the Arabs" who did it, is representative of a general phenomenon that was taking place among the Jews. The Jews were taking refuge behind conceptions of the "Arab" that they shared with the Christians (e.g., the tendency to depersonalize, the stereotype of untrustworthiness) and negating their own personal relationships and particular ways in which Jews viewed and dealt with Muslims.

In 1957 a secret Jewish self-defense group was formed in Batna. Certain members of it were in contact with Israeli agents who were operating Jewish self-defense organizations in the major Algerian cities. Part of the organization was secret, formed in classic cell fashion, and

had a stock of firearms and explosives. Most of the Jewish community was, and remains, unaware of this group. To many, they were merely a group of young men who kept guard on the synagogue during major holidays. The rabbi of Batna blocked a move on the part of this group to conduct a reprisal strike against the mosque in return for raids on the synagogue.

Politically, this group was anti-OAS, but in favor of Algeria remaining French. The Jews who knew of this group often refused to admit of its existence to me. They would generally say that the Jews, like other French citizens, relied on the police and army to protect them. I interpret this as a combination of a desire to preserve the anonymity of the persons involved as well as another assertion of the Jews' integral part in the French community.

Let us return to the question posed at the beginning of this section: why the Jews chose to side with the French and why they did not see it in terms of a choice. Examining interviews I show how four thoughtful individuals tried to explain to me what was taken for granted in their lives.

We begin with a man his late thirties, a professional, who was in school in Algiers during a good part of the Algerian War. He described himself as "very pro-FLN," but as having never considered becoming part of it. He knew the Timsit group in Algiers (see footnote 17), but was himself against terrorist tactics. He said that, whereas he understood why the Muslims were making the revolution and favored the independence of Algeria, he knew that it was "not my cause." He said that the Jews could not possibly live under a Muslim government. He told of spending last nights with Muslim friends before they departed for the

maquis: he reiterated that it was not his cause and quoted Camus' statement, "I believe in justice but I will defend my mother before justice."

The discussion of the role of the Jews in the Algerian War with the second man, in his fifties, also a professional, was prefaced by a discussion of the Muslims during the Second World War. He remarked that the Muslims had "protected" the Jews during this period, but that the Jews did not reciprocate after 1945. I asked him why. He said that one has to understand the situation historically: before 1830 under the "Turkish regime" the Jews were forced to dress in black, had to yield to the Turks on the street; in short, they "had more restrictions than rights." He went on to say that the French 'always considered Jews to be worse than Arabs.' Nonetheless, the Algerian Jews had had ways opened for them to obtain citizenship. He elaborated how the Jews had become more and more Frenchified with each successive generation. I then asked him how it was that he could have this vision of the self-deception involved in the Jews' identification with the French and yet still have sided with the French during the Algerian War. He responded with the following story: in 1950, Ben Boulaid (who had been a close friend of his father) had come to him to ask him if he would be the lawyer for the P.P.A.²⁵ He said that he had refused and explained his position to Ben Boulaid that he would render any personal service to him that he could but that he was a "prisoner" of his "milieu" and could not go against the Jews. "Israel and the Jews come first." Thus he saw his identification with Israel and with Jews as precluding any political identification with the Algerian revolutionaries.

The third discussion we examine took place between Rebecca, her mother, and Rebecca's husband. The young couple are presently living in

Morocco where they are school teachers; the husband is Christian, born and raised in France. The husband, who had been listening to the discussion, began to push the issue of why the Jews did not stay in Algeria. He made the point that, from his experience in Morocco, the Jews of North Africa are much closer culturally to the Muslims than to the French. The mother agreed partially but quickly asserted that the Algerian Jews were French. Rebecca then detailed her education. She described how she had been taught French history, literature, geography, and had learned to identify herself with French culture. Both women agreed with the husband that their customs and lifestyles were closer to the Muslims', but they were adamant that they were French and with the situation as it was, they had no choice.

Leaving Batna: The Breakup of a Community

In records preserved by Jacob Saksik, the last president of the Jewish community of Batna, there are approximate dates when the Jews left for France. Six months prior to Algerian independence, the World Jewish Congress sent a questionnaire to the Batna community asking for the number of Jews in the town and their occupations. The Batna community supplied the following information. There were 155 families, 592 persons. Occupations were given as follows:

Wholesalers	9
Retailers	19
Artisans	9
Workers	0
Civil Servants	98
Liberal Professions	38

(Documents from the Bienfaisance for the same year list seventeen families receiving assistance.)

By 1962 over half of the Jewish population of Batna had left. Civil servants were obliged to stay until independence as leaving earlier would have meant losing their jobs. The Grand Rabbin of Batna left in April 1961 and was replaced by a rabbi from Constantine. Jews stayed on in Batna after the independence of Algeria; in 1963, when Saksik left, the synagogue and ritual bath were still functioning. In 1975 when I visited Batna there were three Jews left in the town.

The Jews of Batna thought of themselves as a community and wanted the move to France to enable them to continue to live together. Throughout the winter of 1961-1962 the Consistoire of Batna sent letters to Jewish communities in small cities throughout France asking if they could accommodate (i.e., if there was sufficient employment and housing available) the Jews of Batna. The negative letters of response are preserved in the Archives Nationales in Paris. In May 1962 four or five members of the Batna Consistoire went to France on a fact-finding mission trying to ascertain whether there was a city where all could relocate. They found that it was impossible: all the merchants could not set up businesses in the same town, nor could civil servants choose where they were assigned. Some of the families from Batna finally regrouped in a small city in the south of France; many had to wait a number of years before employment opportunities opened there. The remainder of this thesis is the account of these families and their children in France.

NOTES

¹In 1921, in Oran, Dr. Molle, an outspoken antisemite whose newspaper, Le Petit Oranais, was embellished with swastikas, was elected deputy mayor (see Ansky 1950:63-83).

²The Commissaire Central left Constantine on the evening of the pogrom; the commanding general claimed that he did not have sufficient troops to restore order so deployed them to cordon off the Christian neighborhood (see Ansky 1950:68).

³The Christians of Algeria especially disliked Leon Blum for his sponsorship of the piece of legislation, known as the Blum-Violette bill, which would have granted easy access to French citizenship to the Muslim elite.

⁴For details see Ansky 1950:75.

⁵Translations in Arabic of Mein Kampf were circulated and the German agents worked to undermine French prestige (see Ansky 1950:76).

⁶Translation of the text of the law which annulled the Decree Cremieux (cited in Ansky 1950:88):

We, Marechal of France, head of the French state, the Council of appointed Ministers, decree:

Article 1--The decree of the government of National Defense of the 24 October 1870 is annulled in that which it regulates the political rights of the indigenous Jews of the departments of Algeria and declares them French citizens.

Article 2--The political rights of the indigenous Jews of the departments of Algeria are regulated by the texts which fix the political rights of the indigenous Algerian Muslims.

Article 3--In that which concerns their civil rights, the real statute and the personal statute the indigenous Jews of the departments of Algeria remain regulated by French law.

Article 4--The indigenous Jews of the departments of Algeria who, having belonged to a combat unit during the war of 1914-1918 or of 1939-40, have obtained the Legion of Honor or military title, the military medal or the croix de guerre, will conserve the political status of French citizens.

Article 5--This statute [i.e., that of French citizen] can be kept, by decree countersigned by the Keeper of the seals [garde de Sceaux], minister secretary of State for Justice, by the minister secretary of State of the interior, by indigenous Jews of the department of Algeria who distinguish themselves by services rendered to the nation.

Article 6--The present law is applicable to all the beneficiaries of the decree of 24 oct. 1870 and their descendants.

Article 7--The present decree will be published in the Journal officiel and executed as a law of the state.

Vichy 7 oct. 1940

⁷For details see Ansky 1950:162-165.

⁸In French culture this is a horrifying invasion of privacy; the French never have to declare their total worth and often even the best of friends have no idea about one another's assets. When the Vichy regime was overthrown these records were burned in the presence of leaders of the Jewish community.

⁹Ansky (1950:110-122) details how this was enacted.

¹⁰Transcripts of this discussion are in Ansky 1950:141-149.

¹¹Giraud declared that the Vichy repeal of the Decree Cremieux was illegal and then went ahead and repealed it himself.

¹²See Ansky 1950:318-319 for discussion of the political maneuvering involved.

¹³Quoted in Ansky 1950:297. See also Ansky 1950:296 for a letter signed by a number of Muslim political and religious leaders supporting restoration of Jewish citizenship.

¹⁴The following passage cited from Ansky 1950:84-85 is a good example of the double-think involved:

The French people, simple, generous and profoundly humane are repugnant by all sentiments of racial discrimination and in general are not antisemitic. The misdeeds of the Vichy regime, the menaces of internment or deportation which weighed on the Jews of France, were to a great extent counteracted and often rendered ineffectual . . . by the assistance of the people of France, above all that of the common people.

In Algeria, on the other hand, the common people [l'element populaire] do not form the bulk of the European population. It is the colons [i.e., big farmers], the bourgeois of the cities and the administrators which constitutes the backbone of [Algeria]. Needless to say, this is factually completely fallacious.

¹⁵Muslim accounts of the period tell of the quasi-encouragement by the French to attack the Jews, which the Muslims refused to do. The novel, Le Village des Asphodèles, written by a Muslim, has an episode dealing with World War II in which the characters discuss the antisemitic propaganda and decide very explicitly that they have nothing against the Jews. This novel also gives accounts of Muslim/Jewish friendships very similar to those cited in Chapter Four; it describes the polarization of the communities during the Algerian War.

¹⁶One of these Muslims was Cadi Abdelkader, who in the post-War period became a prominent politician and was part of the French delegation to the United Nations.

¹⁷FLN: Front de Liberation Nationale. The actions of Daniel Timsit and his group are described in Yves Courrière 1969:399 *infra*. In a reconstructed conversation Timsit makes the following reply when asked why he is part of the FLN: ". . . the Crémieux Decree dates from 1870. During the War [i.e., World War II], I was not in school since our stalwart European compatriots welcomed the decision of Petain with open arms which made Jews into second-class citizens like the Muslims. De Gaulle re-established the decree although Giraud wanted to abolish it definitively. But that is not the question. My father sells cloth in the Casbah. My grandmother does not speak a word of French . . ."

¹⁸The C.R.U.A. (le Comité révolutionnaire d'unité et d'action) formed from a split in the M.T.L.D. (Mouvement pour le triomphe des libertés démocratiques) over the issue of taking up armed action against the French. The C.R.U.A. later became the FLN.

¹⁹The incident itself is true (see Courrière 1968:164).

²⁰This period of the Algerian War is known as "the Battle of Algiers."

²¹See Courrière 1969:678-681 for the documents of the Soummam conference on the Jews.

²²See Chemouilli 1972:36.

²³Batna had no town newspaper: Le Dépêche de Constantine et de l'est algérienne reported local events in Batna. The figures cited, with a couple of exceptions, include only up until 1961, as after this point OAS actions begin.

²⁴On March 18, 1962, the French government and the FLN signed cease-fire accords.

²⁵PPA (Parti du Peuple Algérien) of Messali Hadj--a Muslim nationalist political party, eventually dissolved by the French in 1945 and reformed under the name MTLD.

CHAPTER 6

THE JEWISH FAMILY IN FRANCE

This chapter considers a group of Jewish extended families from Batna who are now living in the town of Baumugnes in France. The focus is the interconnectedness of family, religion, and identity, especially as experienced by the younger generation. Themes developed in the third chapter, "The Jewish Family in Batna," are explored further.

Chapter Three examined identity in relation to the Jewish family through a discussion of religious ceremonies, language, dress, etc. Identity in colonial Algeria became centered on a perceived moral superiority of the Jewish family. I showed how the Jewish family consciously stripped itself of many North African customs attempting to present itself to the Christian community and ultimately to itself as European.

In this chapter we see some of the consequences of the Jews' contradictory stance: trying to convince themselves and others that they were European and denying their own culture. I argue that in North Africa the family could stand for Jewish identity to the Jews, but that this is no longer feasible in France. In France Jewishness is thrown into question and young people especially are trying to grasp what it is to be Jewish.

This chapter is divided into four sections. In the first I present a general discussion of the Jewish community in Baumugnes and the role of the Batna families in it. We see that living in France has

affected customs of house furnishing, dress, language, and food. This leads to a discussion of changes in social context between Algeria and France.

The second section turns to the study of kinship and family. I posit and illustrate that there is a gradual shift in emphasis from the extended to the nuclear family. In analyzing kinship terminology, we see how kinship for the Batna Jews is conceptualized by using a notion of interaction rather than one of substance.¹ We explore family relations such as visiting patterns and daily interaction. This section concludes with a description and analysis of a family fight. This incident illustrates tensions between generations and shows how each holds different expectations and definitions of situations.

The third section deals specifically with young people (from late teens to early thirties). We see how kinship provides a model for social group interaction. Using the results of a questionnaire, we look at the ways in which young people are reconceptualizing Jewishness.

The fourth section is a discussion of a bar mitzvah in which we explore the partial substitution of Israeli for North African symbols.

Section I

The Batneens in Baumugnes

The Jewish community in the town of Baumugnes numbers about 2000. There are a handful of native French Jews who have minimal dealings with the rest of the Jewish community. Most of Baumugnes' Jewish population is from Algeria, although there are families from Morocco and Tunisia. The rabbi and the shamash of the synagogue are from Batna. Batneens are very active in synagogue activities; they make up the bulk of the

congregation for weekly services. The melodies used for the prayers are from Batna. Although Batneens have a hegemony over the religious affairs of the community, in secular Jewish activities, at least among the adults, they play a very secondary role. This is due to class, or rather, perceived class position. The Batneens are stereotyped by the other North African members of the Jewish community as being lower class (classe populaire). Many of the Batneens see themselves in this position vis-a-vis the other Jews of the community. As a total group compared to the other Jews of Baumugnes, the Batna Jews show the same distribution of wealth and education as the rest of the community. However, compared to the group of more secular, professional Jews who are active in the cultural activities of the Jewish community, they look both to the others and to themselves as belonging to a lower stratum. One Batna informant used the phrase "l'aristocracie juive" to describe these professionals. Batna informants, young and old alike, continuously made reference to the distance they felt from these people.

The professionals and their wives are mainly active in the WIZO (Women's International Zionist Organization) and the B'nai Brith. The former is ostensibly open to all women. However, women from Batna families, even those who are formally members of the WIZO, said that they did not feel comfortable with the WIZO ladies and rarely attended meetings. The B'nai Brith, a men's organization, recruits members by invitation. There are at least two Batna men who belong, but the B'nai Brith is considered, by the majority of Batneens, as a group from which they are excluded. Another reason for the stereotyping of the Batneens as uneducated and lower class is that those Batneens who have higher status occupations tend not to be active in the Jewish community.

Teenagers and college students from Batna families are the animating force behind the young people's voluntary organizations. In the winter of 1973-1974, the year before my fieldwork began, the Baumugnes chapter of the UEJF (Union Etudiants Juifs de France) became politically active in the wake of the October 1973 Israeli war and moved progressively to the left over the course of the year. Its politics brought on clashes with the Jewish community. A number of the main activists in this group were from Batna families. In the year that I conducted fieldwork (1974-1975), the UEJF had fallen apart. That year the right-wing Betar organization was the main Jewish young-people's group; it was also led by Batna young people, including first cousins of the former UEJF leaders.

The generation of Batna informants who were adult when they came to Baumugnes claimed that its inhabitants 'did not know what a Jew was.' In point of fact, the town had had a Jewish population from the Middle Ages until the Second World War, when most were deported to Germany and killed in concentration camps. What the Batneens mean is that the social category 'Jew' is not the same as in Algeria. In Algeria religion demarcated people in clear-cut ways: in interaction in daily life one dealt with a Christian or Muslim as a Jew. The claim that the Jews made in Algeria to being part of the European or French population has had unexpected results in France. Ambiguity is now possible; Jews can be mistaken for Christian pieds-noirs by the metropolitan French.

In France itself, the category of 'Jew' is a diffuse one. The Jew is 'Other' but an 'Other' whose distinguishing features are not universally agreed upon (see Sartre 1974). We can analyze this as the

distinction between a 'stereotype' and a 'category.' In a stereotype, there are qualities, usually derogatory, and some central themes which are generally agreed upon by the population at large, along with a number of loosely defined attributes. In the case of a stereotype, it is easy to have a prejudiced individual say that a particular person is not really like the rest of the members of his group and hence is acceptable as an individual.

Compared to a stereotype, a cultural category is at the same time more diffuse and more pervasive. Rather than an articulated set of postulates, it is thought of as 'natural': the taken for granted means of identifying and interacting with a particular group of people. It is the set of perceptions, often unreflected upon, which grounds interactions. Thus in Algeria Christians, Muslims, and Jews knew instantly who one another were and had definite ways of interacting with one another.²

We see evidence for this in Batna Jews' inability to 'pass' as French before Muslims from Algeria. One woman related to me how in Baumgnes an old Muslim woman came into her husband's shop escorted by a child, as she did not speak French. The husband conducted the transactions in French with the child. The next time the woman came into the shop she was unaccompanied and started speaking to him in Arabic, saying that she recognized that he was a Jew from North Africa and urging him to speak with her in Arabic. He finally relented.

In sum, the Jews of Batna are coming from a situation in which being Jewish was a cultural category (not without its negative attributes) to one in which Jewishness is a stereotype. Certainly one of the factors in the difference in these conditions is that in France the Jews

have always been a tiny minority (less than one percent of the population), whereas in Algeria they were about 14 percent of the non-Muslim population. In Algeria, as we have discussed earlier, there was a division of religious groups into 'naturalized' racial categories. This phenomenon has no counterpart in France. In France, on the contrary, the stress has always been on the homogeneity of French culture even to denying (until very recently with the influx of pieds-noirs, immigrant workers, and regionalist movements) that differences did exist. In France the Jews from Batna find themselves in the predicament that the outside social environment no longer provides a confirmation of who they are. Thus they are moving from a situation of rigid group distinctions to a society in which group differences are marked in a much more ambiguous way.

In the town of Baumugnes Jews are about two percent of the population, whereas in Batna they were approximately 15 percent of the overall population and about 25 to 30 percent of the non-Muslim population. In Batna many of the Muslims lived in outlying quarters, making the Jewish presence in the town itself even more significant. In Baumugnes Jews live scattered throughout the town and have not created centers where they meet one another on a regular, casual basis. There are several cafes owned by Jews, but their clientele is not Jewish. The kosher butcher stores (there were two at the time fieldwork was conducted) provide somewhat of a meeting place for the Jewish women, but this does not generate much of a sense of community. In fact, one of the reasons for building the Jewish community center was to provide children and young people with such a gathering spot.

One perceptive informant characterized the Judaism of Batna as a "melange of customs and solidarity." In Batna, the Jews were a group; they had a specific identity and parlayed their solidarity into political power. By customs, this informant meant many of the things discussed in Chapter Three, such as dress, language, etc. We can extend his observation to include religion: many informants described Jewish religious practice in Algeria as unquestioned and unreflected upon. They stressed that the move to France has made them much more self-conscious and inquisitive about religion. In Algeria religious observation was a taken-for-granted part of being Jewish rather than something about which one took a stance. In France today Batna Jews are making active choices to accept or reject religion.

A fair number of families in Baumugnes who were not strictly religious in Algeria are now extremely scrupulous about religious practice. There are many complex reasons for this; some will be discussed in the context of relations between children and parents. Adult informants who had become more religious gave increased knowledge of religion as one reason; they said that in France they had more opportunities to learn about Judaism. They see strict religious adherence as a way of keeping themselves Jewish, of combating what they call "assimilation." By demarcating themselves religiously, for example by rigorously following the dietary laws, they keep a hold on being Jewish. They are quite aware that their social contacts with Christians are limited by the Jewish dietary code which makes it impossible for them to exchange visits in homes where food would be offered. However, they do not use religion as a shield in an open way. When they turn down a Christian's invitation,

informants say that they do not give an explanation of their religious restriction. They claim that to do so would be too offensive ('your food is not clean') and that, in any case, the Christians would not believe or understand them.³

We can see in such actions a turning inwards of identity: there is a process now underway in which concepts of the group and self which were appropriate to the 'racial/religious' situation in Algeria are being transformed.

In France the reference group for identity has shifted from the outer social environment (that is, the social world of diverse groups) to their own group, the Jews. The Jews in Baumugnes (speaking mainly of the Batneens but holding true to an extent for others) are concerned with creating and holding onto an identity vis-à-vis themselves. In other words, they want to assure themselves of, to confirm to themselves, their Jewishness. However, most of them do not want to set themselves apart visibly from the Christian French community; they wish to blend in with the population at large. Jews were made uncomfortable by one religious young man who wears a skullcap.

When the director of the Jewish community center organized a week of activities honoring Israel, most of the participants were non-Jews. This event, announced in the local papers and on flyers around the town, made the Jews as a group stand out. Evidently, most of the Jewish community did not want to participate in such a blatant display of Jewish separateness, although there was no open criticism of the event and even praise for the good job the director had done.

We can see in this a self-created double-bind situation for the Jews. On the one hand, they wish to stress that they are the same as

their Christian neighbors, and yet they try to keep a strong sense of their own difference. This was feasible in Algeria where, despite the claims the Jews were putting on Europeanness, they were still Jews in the eyes of the Christians and Muslims. In France the opportunities for blending in are much greater. The Batna Jews, especially the younger generation who have spent most of their lives in France, are becoming acutely aware of the need for self-definition.

The process described in Chapter Three of stripping away signs of North African culture in dress, language, and house furnishings continues in France. Arabic is only occasionally employed in the home, although those who grew up with Arabic as their first language resort to it in stressful conditions. Young people who spent their childhoods in Algeria generally understand Arabic and speak it with varying degrees of fluency. Those who spent most of their lives in France usually know expressions and sayings in Arabic. Some households employing Arabic in Algeria made conscious decisions to avoid it in France: in one instance a very old woman who had always spoken Arabic in the home (although her French was quite fluent) switched to French. Part of this was a political reaction; it was a way of rejecting Algeria almost in revenge for having been rejected (as they feel) by it. Young people use Arabic expressions among themselves in a half self-conscious, joking way, much in the same manner as they used pied-noir slang. Many of the expressions are exclamatory remarks.⁴

There is a large population of immigrant North African Muslim workers in Baumugnes. The Batna Jews are usually reticent to speak Arabic with them; storekeepers speak French with Muslim customers even if

the latter know that they are Jewish.⁵ However, Batna women speak Arabic with a Muslim woman who works as a maid for a number of them. Thus it appears that the avoidance of Arabic is a distancing technique and perhaps yet another assertion of Frenchness. One woman (in her late forties) told how she and her brothers and sisters like to walk around the markets in the Muslim quarter of a neighboring city to immerse themselves in the ambiance and to hear Arabic spoken. I asked her if they ever speak to the Muslims there in Arabic; she replied, no, that they simply go to recapture the flavor of Algeria but do not want to interact with the people.

House furnishings and dress also reflect a continuation of trends begun in Algeria. As mentioned in Chapter Three, old Jewish women in Batna wore Muslim-style garments until Algerian independence. Upon coming to France, these old women, who had never before worn French garments, began to do so. This was a way of adapting to France and of assuring themselves that they would not be mistaken for Muslims. Changes in the way homes are decorated also reflect some interesting sentiments toward North Africa. In contrast to many Moroccan Jews who have either an entire room decorated in North African style or have artifacts (rugs, wall hangings, tea services, copperware, etc.) from Morocco prominently displayed in their homes, Batna Jews often hide away objects from Algeria. Informants explained that when they left Algeria they mainly took things of French fabrication which they considered more valuable. They brought their French furniture with them and sold many things made by local craftsmen. Many now regret this, saying that in those days indigenous crafts were so commonplace that they did not realize their value.

In Batna some Jewish families had what informants referred to as an "oriental" room, decorated in indigenous Algeria style with low, mattress-covered benches around the periphery of the room. The mattresses were covered in striped woolen material and had smaller cushions on top of them. The walls were decorated with brightly colored rug hangings. There were oriental rugs on the floor. Informants were very loathe to mention the existence of rooms decorated in such a fashion. Indeed many denied that Jews had these types of rooms in their homes. Probably the most Frenchified did not. Although in Baumugnes some informants owned wall hangings and rugs, they were usually not used. I was told that initially upon coming to France the wall hangings, brightly colored Berber pieces, had been on the walls, but as the years passed they were tucked away. Copper pieces--trays, urns, platters, etc.--are more often displayed. There is a slow change in attitude toward the Algerian artifacts. Some of the more 'sophisticated' people regard them as folk art and hence as something which can be displayed as such. Here we see the transition from unreflected enjoyment of traditional artforms, to a rejection and refusal to identify with them, to a distancing which annuls identification and places them as folkloric objects to be appreciated as otherness. Indeed informants would often call these objects "folklore algérien."6

Algerian Jewish cuisine, and the regional specialties of the Constantinois, is elaborate and varied.⁷ Batna Jewish women take great pride in their cooking and send around their best dishes to other members of the family. Young people often brag that their mother is the best cook in the extended family. Food preparation is a tedious,

time-consuming process. Many of the dishes are slow cooking, having been created for the tiny, fuel-conserving canoun oven of North Africa. Virtually all the pastries are baked at home: some of the very religious families do not eat pastry from French bakeries, although all buy bread from the local bakeries. There are no Jewish bakeries in the town. The women bake homemade "pain juif" (Jewish bread) for the Sabbath; this is the only bread consumed on Friday night and Saturday. For women with large families this is a particularly arduous task. Although there have been some changes in cuisine since coming to France, there has been virtually no adoption of French or regional French cooking. The reason for this is the isolation in which the Jews live. The older generation of women have little contact with non-Jewish women. As they keep kosher, they do not eat in restaurants and thus have no knowledge of French eating habits despite years in France. One woman told me in all sincerity that the French are not very interested in eating and do not spend much time cooking. She gave the example of Easter: 'All they do is take a walk and maybe drink a lemonade in a cafe.' She contrasted this to the work Jewish women do preparing food for Passover.

Even young people who have broken with the dietary restrictions often do not have much experience with French food. From my observations of foods ordered in restaurants, most stayed with steaks and chops and avoided any of the more exotic dishes. Some examples of lack of experience with 'French' food are as follows: an informant to whom I served a tomato salad garnished with fresh basil asked me what the herb was. He had never eaten basil, which is a main feature of southern French cooking. Another young man did not know what petits fours were. (These are tiny cookies sold in bakeries throughout France.)

Among the changes taking place in the cuisine is a diminution in the quantity of food prepared and consumed. Informants stressed that in Algeria no one worried about his/her weight and that one's table reflected one's budget.⁸ Making the family aware of the labor and time involved in preparing foodstuffs, especially for the holidays, is one way the women have of stressing their importance and their constant and necessary interaction with other members of the family. Women use the amount of time they spend in the kitchen and the fact that they sometimes make themselves sick with overwork as a way of keeping their position in the family. They inform their families of their service in quite unobvious ways and, although children often grumble about the chantage ('guilt trip'), it inevitably works.

North African cuisine, which they have redefined as Jewish (young children asked me if American Jews eat cous cous), is one way a sense of Jewishness is generated in the family. The family is the place where this food is available. Despite many breaks with religion and ventures into foods eaten by the French, almost all the young people prefer North African cuisine and associate it with childhood and family intimacy. Food is associated with one's mother and grown men often complain that their wives, good cooks though they may be, do not prepare dishes in the exact way that their own mothers did. Young women, especially those who work, rarely have learned how, or do not wish to spend the time preparing North African dishes. Thus, there is a particular nostalgia about the cuisine, a sense that it is very precious to the family and that within a generation it may no longer exist.

Section II

Kinship

Although the extended family is still a vital, ongoing structure for many of the Batna Jews in Baumugnes, there is a shift taking place from emphasis on the extended family to the nuclear family. I maintain that in Algeria the locus of identity became the family, but the family defined loosely to be either extended or nuclear. In France circumstances are pushing people toward defining more precisely their identity and this entails forming a clearer picture of what they mean by 'family.' Let me reiterate that this is a process, a shift which is happening currently and thus there are individuals and families which are in different phases of it.

Keeping this overview in mind, let us turn to the ways in which informants speak of their nuclear and extended families and how they view what has changed since coming to France. In so doing, we will also look at the way kinship terminology reflects the ambiguities of the situation.

When questioned about specific persons, informants use the word "étranger" (foreigner, stranger) for those people who are not family members. For example, I asked a woman if she considered her son-in-law's mother to be a relative. She replied, no, and said that the woman was an "étrangère," nothing to her.

The categories, 'blood' and 'code for conduct,' have been utilized quite convincingly in describing how Americans conceive of kinship (see, for example, Schneider 1968; Dolgin 1976). But these are not applicable to North African Jews. The word, 'blood,' or a like notion of

connecting biological substance between kin was never used. Instead, informants continuously stressed interactions between people and moral and religious links.

A terminological usage which verifies my point about the absence of the notion of shared substance is the use of the term "par alliance" (literally, by marriage) for people we would classify as second cousins. Second cousins, indeed all cousins except first cousins, are also referred to as "petits cousins"; these include those persons who are spouses of cousins or who are consanguineal cousins. Informants say that "petits cousins" are the same as "cousins par alliance" (literally cousins by marriage). Second cousins are also referred to as "the son/daughter of my cousin." Use of the term "cousin," usually modified by the word "germain/e" (first), is usually restricted to first cousins. In explaining this to me, informants used two key words: "direct" and "loin" (direct and far). First cousins were referred to as being direct cousins: "un cousin germain est un cousin direct." Petits cousins and par alliance cousins were thought of as "far." This is to be understood in terms of degree and kind of interactions which are expected rather than as the metaphors of American culture see it, in terms of strength of quantity of blood tie. In their terms, first cousins, members of one's nuclear family, grandparents, and aunts and uncles, are people with whom one has a great amount of face-to-face, day-to-day dealings. One sees them during religious holidays, one is obliged to attend and help with their life-crisis ceremonies, and one gives them financial and moral support. Second cousins (and more distant cousins) are not persons with whom one has that sort of obligation. They usually fall into the group

of people one considers "un petit peu parenté" (a little bit related) and with whom relationships are more or less optional.

Let us elaborate further what is meant by interaction forming the basis of kinship. This is not interaction in Schneider's sense of "code for conduct" (Schneider 1968), but rather interaction which has its roots in physical contacts with one another. One informant provided the following definition of what it means to be related ("être parenté"). He said that it was a combination of being "né physiquement" (being born physically), as a result of a "physical act" (i.e., sexual intercourse), and the structure of the family as a social unit.¹⁰ "The kinship link ["lien parenté"] is embedded in the structure of the family," he explained. Thus husband and wife are considered to be relatives. This notion that husband and wife are relatives is predicated on the assumption that people marry in order to have children. A folk tale told me by a very old woman on the occasion of the circumcision of her great-grandchild bears this out.

There was once a wind who fell in love with a human girl. But she was to be married to a human man. When they were getting married, the wind caused a great stir making all the bells clang. In anger, the wind plotted to destroy the woman and her husband. The wind had brought all the other winds together to blow their house down. However, when he noticed their baby in the house, he changed his mind and, taking the other winds with him, went away. Thus, in this tale when the wind saw that the couple was really linked together [because they had a baby], the girl was no longer a fit subject for his revenge.

Kinship comes from being together physically in a certain way (having sexual intercourse) which results in another physical act, birth, and then leads to the creation of the family, a unit of interacting people who are together. The family is conceived of as living, eating, and being in a constant state of thinking (or worrying) about one

another. Mothers continuously emphasized their worrying about their children who lived far away as proof of their concern for them. This is a form of interacting with these children. Although they are not physically present, by thinking and concerning oneself with them, the interaction is maintained. Informants were adamant that relationships (i.e., with cousins or other relatives) do not disappear if people live in other parts of the country and one does not see them often. An informant used the word "intemporal" to describe relationships with relatives. Thus it is the fact of being, or ever having been, in the interaction which creates a relationship. A widow who was still mourning her dead husband spoke of him all the time; it was a way in which she kept the interaction going. Informants' sense that divorce is a sin (despite its legality under Jewish and French law) can be interpreted as stemming from their notion of kinship. Once kinship has been established by the religious act of marriage, then to break it seems to go counter to religion.

The instance of the relationship of spouses of first cousins to ego provides a further example of how kinship is generated by interaction; the potential for kin type interaction comes about as a result of the religious/legal act of marriage. I questioned a woman, whose son had recently married, about what relationship she sees between one of her son's first cousins and the son's wife. She said that she would consider them to be cousins if they lived "ensemble" (together) in the same house or the same city; otherwise she said that they would be nothing to one another. The word "ensemble" is a key term usually used to describe the ideal relationship between brothers--"toujours ensemble"

(always together). It is the hallmark of ideal closeness, being physically together as much as possible (see Chapter Three for a discussion of brothers).

The word 'family' is used to include both the extended and nuclear varieties although its most common usage is to refer to the extended family. Generally, when informants say "la famille" they are referring to the extended family, i.e., parents, siblings, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins. For example, instead of using the word parenté (related), informants use the term 'family.' Some examples of this are as follows: I questioned a man about a group of Batna households whose members had the same last name; his response was that they were all of the "même famille" (the same family). In another instance, I questioned an informant about who was invited to weddings; he said, "tout la famille" (all the family).

Inmarrying women express some sense of distance from their husbands' family coupled with an almost defensive claim on belonging, especially when relationships with in-laws are quite close. One woman used the expression "dans la famille" (in the family) together with the number of years she has been married as a way of asserting the legitimacy of her membership in it. This is another example of the relationship notion of kinship discussed previously. Inmarrying women feel that their participation in a group of kin eventually counterbalances their initial position as "étrangère"¹¹ Part of becoming a member of a family for a woman is taking on the customs of her husband's family. As mentioned in Chapter Four, the inmarrying woman learns to cook the Passover dishes particular to her husband's family. Even today in Baumugnes, a

man insisted to his new daughter-in-law that she follow the custom of his family and not use sugar during Passover. Generating kinship relationally helps incorporate the inmarrying woman into the family.

The interactive model of kinship just elaborated helps illuminate identity formation. Two examples, one the expression faire la peine (do something hurtful to someone) and the other gift giving, show this process.

Young people are constantly placed in the position of wanting to assert themselves, yet wishing to avoid hurting their parents. The expression they use, "faire la peine," means to hurt, but is used in a wider sense as a gloss to indicate actions which are directed at those things which another holds very precious. Thus to flaunt nonreligious behavior before a religious person causes that person to be injured. In addition, the injured party is thought to hurt also for the person who is causing injury to them. In other words, the attitude is that the religious person is putting him/herself in the place of the nonreligious person, and it is as if one is hurting oneself and the other at the same time. An example of this is as follows: some very religious relatives moved into the apartment just below a less religious family. The mother told her sons that they should park their cars out of sight of the relatives on Sabbath. The sons became angry and the mother explained to them that this would "faire la peine" for the religious relatives to see them driving on Saturday. She elaborated that it would hurt the relatives to see that the sons were so careless of their own well-being as to break religious laws. The person who is doing the hurting becomes incorporated into the person who is being hurt: the person who is hurt

is hurt precisely because of his/her identification with the person who is inflicting the hurt. Furthermore, the hurt is also due to what the injurer is doing to himself as well as to the injured party.

In the case of gift giving, Batna Jews hold that a gift must be pleasing to the recipient and to the giver. The recipient is seen in a sense as an aspect of the self; hence the gift must be satisfactory to the giver. The gift defines both giver and receiver and affirms and reasserts the relationship between them. An example of this is wedding presents, which are ideally supposed to reflect closeness of kin tie without personal preferences entering into consideration. I witnessed discussions of wedding gift purchases and these were indeed conducted largely in terms of kinship obligations as well as the types of interactions which took place between the parties in question. Informants generally did not bring into the discussion their emotional attachments to the person for whom the gift was intended (even when these ties were quite important). Wedding gifts, with the exception of those of the members of the immediate family and aunts and uncles, are brought to the wedding reception. Immediate family brings gifts to the home of the bride or groom. It is assumed that these will be the most valuable presents.

As gifts reaffirm relationships, 'inappropriate' gifts are baffling. The following incident illustrates such a gift on my part. I told an informant that in the course of my newspaper research I had happened upon an announcement congratulating a man who now lives in Baumgnes on the successful passing of his baccalaureate examination. I photocopied the announcement and gave it to the man concerned. The

person to whom I related the incident became annoyed and confused by my action. He questioned me as to why I had done it, considering that I barely knew the man. I tried to explain it in terms of how small a gesture it was. He did not understand. For the Batna Jews, giving something is an indication that a relationship exists; as there was none in this case, my gesture was seen as invoking something which did not exist. Indeed the recipient was pleased but somewhat uncomfortable.

The notion just explored that gift-giving defines giver and receiver and the relationship between them is indebted to the insights of Marcel Mauss. Mauss writes that "this bond created by things is in fact a bond between persons, since the thing itself is a person or pertains to a person. . . . One gives away what is in reality a part of one's nature and substance, while to receive something is to receive a part of someone's spiritual essence" (Mauss 1967:10). What we have seen is that the gift "pertains to a person," i.e., it is a way in which both parties to the transaction affirm their identity as separate (both express their tastes) and as the same (they agree on the item, thus express their commonality) and confirm that they are in relation to one another. Gifts for the Batna Jews are very emotionally charged. They criticize a gift to the giver when they feel that it is not of sufficient worth or is improper in taste. Thus the situation is more complex than the one Mauss describes. It is not only that one gives part of one's nature in a gift, but that one became identified with the gift and the recipient. When receiving a gift, one's self and one's relationship with the other is affirmed.

Relationships between members of the nuclear family show little change from the patterns described in Chapter Three. From observations

of four nuclear family households, the following elaborations of points in Chapter Three emerge. Mother/son relationships are very close and intense; sons, even when they have conflict with their mothers, tend to idealize and almost venerate them. Sons can find fault with particular actions their mothers take, but do not go beyond this and generalize to see their mothers as fellow human beings with certain flaws and weaknesses in their character. Unquestioned affect is the mode of relating. Perhaps this stems in part from the relational constitution of kinship which centers on and reifies the exchange of physical acts between mother and child. Relations between mothers and daughters tend to be more openly conflict-ridden. Whereas mothers give sons respect and importance and see themselves as needing to fulfill all their sons' needs, daughters, stand in a more tenuous relationship to them. Daughters are potentially more dangerous to the mother in that their behavior can bring trouble to the entire family. A boy's late hours and escapades may cause tongues to cluck, but similar behavior on the part of a girl would be scandalous and reflect the family's (and especially the mother's) failure to raise her children properly. Boys are usually not called upon to aid with household chores or to mind younger children, whereas girls are expected to do these things. There are, however, at least two households in which conscious decisions were made to treat boys and girls equally in terms of household chores. It is perhaps no coincidence that these are the households in which girls as well as boys are training for professional careers. Although varying from household to household, there is usually more stress placed on sons' education and more concern expressed if they do not do well in their studies.

Father/son relations, although largely still characterized by respect patterns (see Chapter Three), are slowly becoming less formal and more open. However, sons still abide by their fathers' judgments about major decisions such as career plans. One young man, a medical student, told me that upon graduating lycée he had wanted to take a short course in statistics and emigrate to Israel. His father refused to let him do so and insisted that he go to medical school. One avenue in which tension between fathers and sons is released is politics. Raging political debates on domestic and international issues take place over dinner tables. A great deal of the vehemence is a result of deflection of other conflicts into this realm. It is not defined as disrespectful to the father to argue about politics; thus yelling back and forth and violent disagreement is sanctioned. Daughters are usually more reticent to confront their fathers and often use mothers as intermediaries.

Let me now give a brief ethnographic profile of the Batna families in Baumugnes. There are three large, extended families and four households who are related to them but considered distinct. The first, and largest, family consists of sixteen separate households. There are eight brothers and sisters, their children, and their first cousin, who is the rabbi of the community. We will refer to them as the Elkaim family. (See Figures 2, 3, and 4 for genealogies of these families.) The second family, the Nakache, has six households. The third family, the Bensaïd, has six households as well. Occupational patterns are definitely upwardly mobile, as seen in Table XIX which compares parents' professions with those of their sons and daughters.

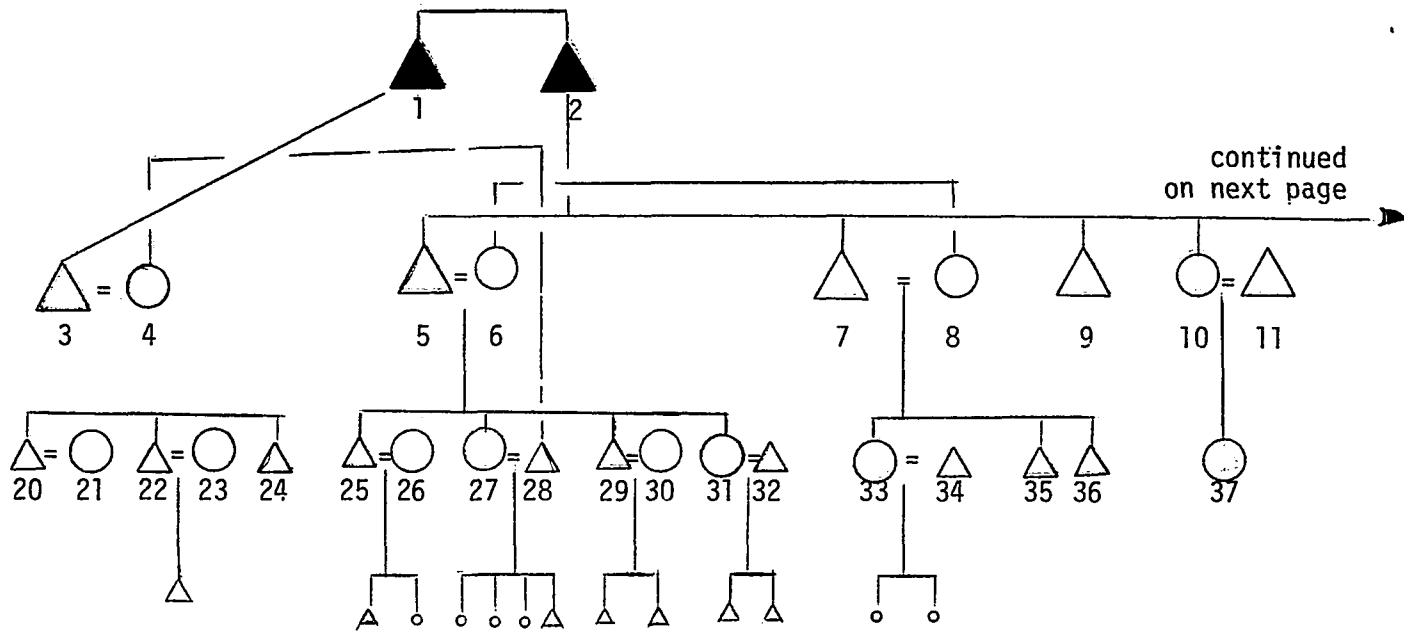


FIGURE 2. THE "ELKAIM" FAMILY

Note: Only those persons residing in Baumugnes are shown.

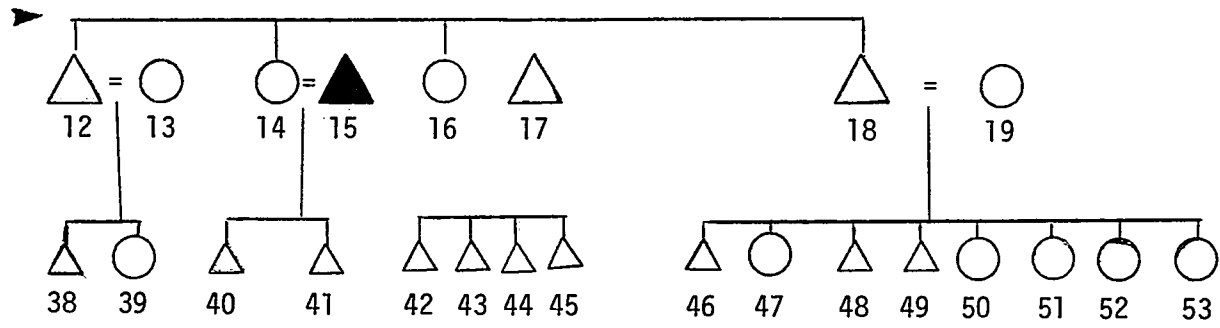


FIGURE 2 - Continued

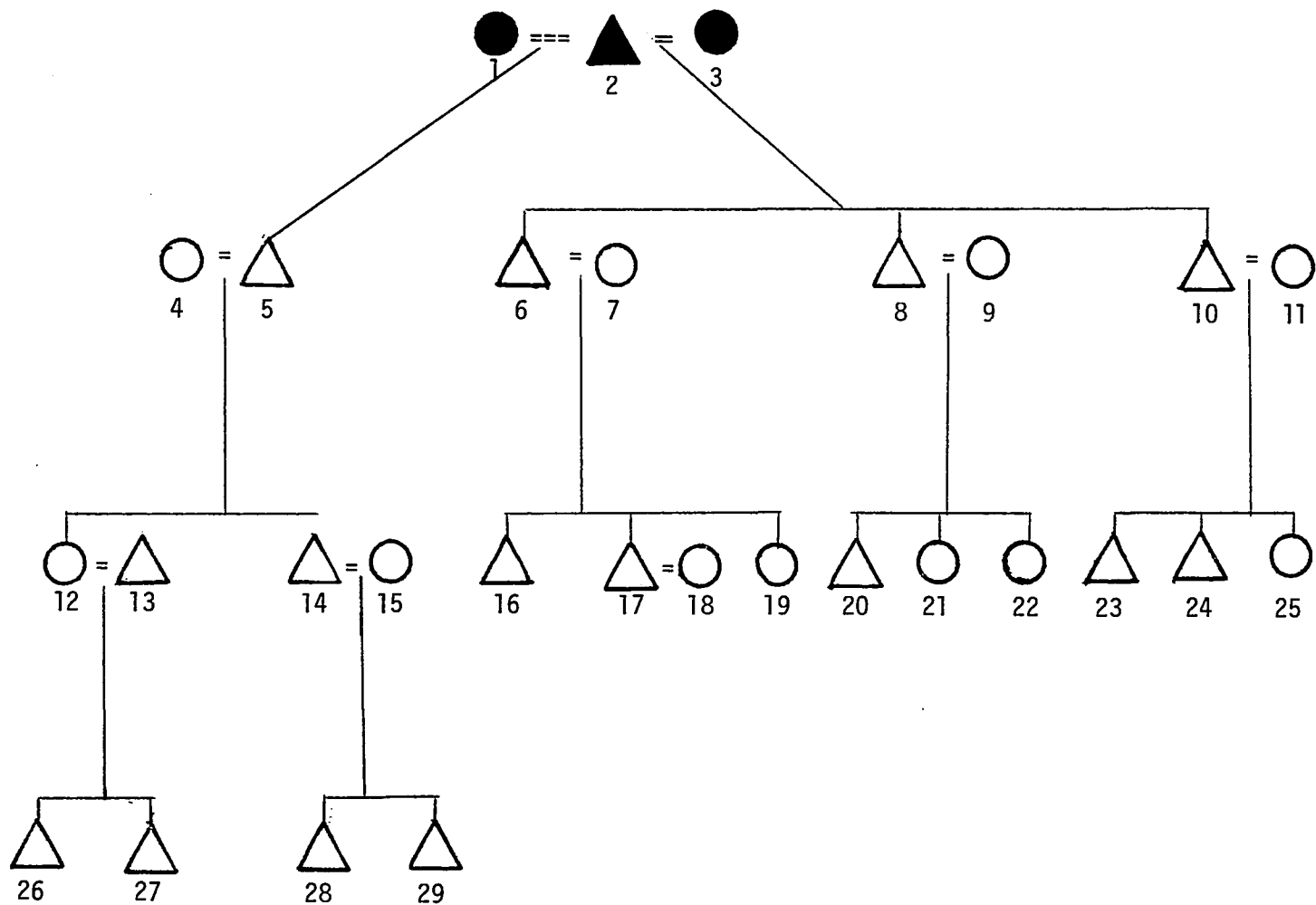


FIGURE 3. THE "NAKACHE" FAMILY

Note: Only those persons residing in Baumugnes are shown.

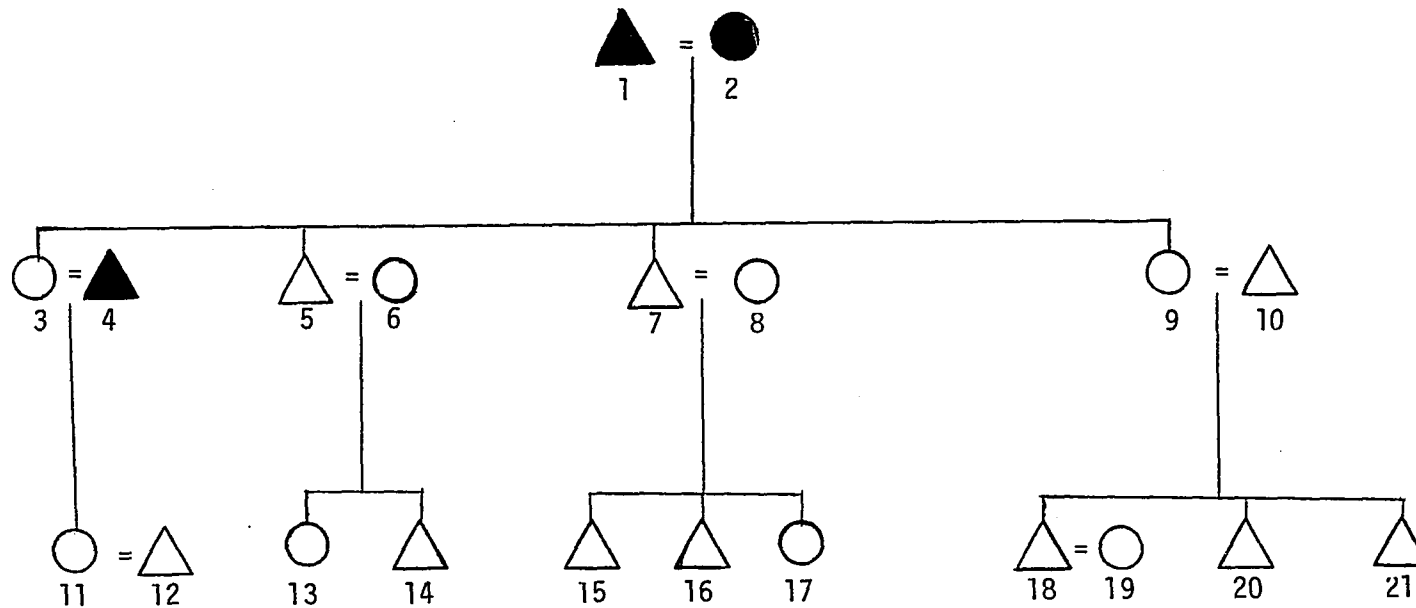


FIGURE 4. THE "BENSAID" FAMILY

Note: Only those persons residing
in Baumugnes are shown.

Five families from Batna own small retail businesses in Baumugnes and two brothers are partners in a wholesale trade.¹² Four of the women are full-time workers in the family business; the fifth woman works part-time. When questioned about wives working, male informants denied that women worked in Algeria, citing economic necessity as the reason their wives work in France. Women would rather be "tranquille à la maison" than working in the stores, claimed the husbands. The women I was able to question about this saw their participation as necessary and expressed no desire to stay home. One woman who had worked in Algeria as a school teacher told me that she had been obliged to take an early retirement upon coming to France and found herself at a loss staying at home all the time.

Younger women who are trained professionally give both economic necessity and feminist reasons for working. They say that it is important for women to have fulfilling work and they are adamant that staying home and taking care of their children would not be enough for them. Women professionals were often criticized by older, nonworking women for not spending enough time with their children or on household duties. Teaching school was accordingly lauded as a women's professional because one has a good deal of free time which can be spent with the family.

Although many non-Batna Jews in Baumugnes tend to view the Batneens as a blocus, there are no regular visiting patterns between the different extended families. However, Batna families invite one another to all major life-crisis ceremonies such as bar mitzvahs, weddings, and circumcisions. When deaths occur, Batna families feel morally obligated to pay funeral visits to one another. There is a great deal of contact

within the extended family itself. Most of the socializing by persons over 45 is done within the extended family. A wide range of variation within the extended family is possible, with some persons seeing one another on an almost daily basis, while one man emphasized that he had not seen his oldest brother in almost six months. Visitation is dependent on personal relationships (which range from close friendship to open hostility), residence patterns, and demands of work and nuclear family life.

A group of brothers and sisters of the Elkaim extended family meet regularly on Sundays. Weather permitting, they take a promenade in town or go to the countryside together. In the winter, they often meet and play cards and socialize in one another's homes on Sundays. Some of the brothers of this family meet earlier on Sunday mornings and have an aperitif together before lunch.

The relationship of sisters-in-law is quite flexible, ranging from intimate friendship, to polite cordiality, to virtual avoidance. Two sisters-in-law from the Elkaim family are particularly close friends. Although they live at opposite ends of the town, they visit at least twice a week and are very solicitous of one another's health and personal problems. Brothers-in-law tend to be less extreme in their relationships with one another; they are neither very intimate nor distant. The fact that one enjoys a good relationship with one person does not mean that one has to side with him or her in disputes. The two sisters-in-law mentioned above have totally opposite relationships with one of the Elkaim brothers. This man is the favorite brother of the Elkaim woman and has a deep, longstanding quarrel with the sister-in-law. However,

this flexibility in relationships allows people, especially women or younger people, to function as mediators and bring some disputes to successful negotiation.

An exception to this principle is that children usually follow their parents when quarrels are longstanding. They always defend their parents if the latter are being criticized by third parties. Brothers as well try to present an image of solidarity in front of third parties (see Chapter Three for a discussion of brother relationships). Family members defend their family before nonrelatives. An example of this is the rabbi and his cousin whose quarrels have wracked the family and the Jewish community for several years. The cousin, when discussing their difficulties, told me that it was like a dispute "between brothers" and therefore he would defend the rabbi against criticism from outsiders.¹³

This very North African way of conceiving relationships is deeply ingrained. In the generation who have lived most of their lives in France, there is still a strong sense of solidarity with and commitment to brothers even when deep friendship ties do not exist. Brothers come to one another's physical defense even in situation in which they judge their brother at fault. They consider it their obligation to provide any moral or financial help they can. An example of this is a young man who was having difficulties at work due to emotional turmoil brought on by a love affair. His brother made an appointment with the employer in an attempt to help clarify and rectify the situation, although the brother was quite critical of the love affair.

There is one extended family in Baumugnes, the Nakache, who maintain a very close-knit extended family pattern. Members of all six

households live within easy walking distance of one another and they visit on a daily basis. This family celebrates all major Jewish holidays together. Because of their relatively small numbers, this is physically more feasible than a like assemblage of the Elkaim families. Another factor is the personal force and volition of the matriarch of this family to keep it working as a unit. (She is person #2 on the genealogy and was in her nineties when fieldwork was conducted. She died during the fieldwork period.) Members of the Nakache family repeatedly told how the old woman stressed the importance of their staying together. However, structurally, the oldest brother of the Elkaim family is in a comparable position of authority in his family, yet he has explicitly made choices which have de-emphasized the extended family as a unit in religious celebrations. For example, on the Passover holidays the Elkaim had originally kept the Batna custom of making a tour of all the households to remove the chumatz (leavened bread) prior to the first Seder.¹⁴ This is a little ceremony in which leavened breads are removed from all the rooms of the house to purify it for the holiday. The oldest brother decided that they should discontinue the tour of the families. His is not an anti-religious stand; he is not opposed to the ceremony. Rather his view is that the custom of making it an extended family practice should no longer be followed.

The Bensaid family, a group of comparable size to the Nakache, are the least cohesive as an extended family. They gather as a family only once a year when they break the Yom Kippour fast together. Otherwise, although certain of the brothers maintain close ties, the extended family does not function socially as a group.

As an example of the tensions and strains in nuclear and extended families among the Batna Jews in France, let us examine a heated dispute which took place during Passover.

First some family background: the household in question consists of a widowed woman and her two sons (in their twenties, both unmarried). The third and oldest son lives with his Christian girlfriend in another city. The conflict centered on the latter's wishing to bring his girlfriend with him for the Passover holidays. The mother was vehemently against this; she considered it a "sin" to have a non-Jew present at the Seder and feared the reaction of the extended family. The mother and sons had been invited to spend the Seder with one of her sisters, but she knew that it would be impossible to bring the girlfriend to their home. Thus she was now obliged to make the elaborate meal preparations for her family. Among the sanctions she feared was that her family would not make the traditional visits during the holiday if they knew that the girlfriend was staying at her home. The mother suggested a compromise: the girlfriend was welcome to come on the second day of Passover after the ceremonial Seder meals had been completed. This was unacceptable to the son. Either his girlfriend came or he would not come. The mother was forced to acquiesce as she knew that if her son did not spend Passover in her home he would eat foods which were impure during the holiday. The girlfriend came to Baumugnes unaware of the situation.

The ceremonial meals passed without incident although the household was plunged in an atmosphere of tension. During lunch on the second day, the mother mentioned that the Rabbi's son (married to a Christian woman and ostracized by his family) came to synagogue services on Passover

as a gesture ("faire plaisir") for his father. The oldest son, a vehement atheist, interpreted this as a criticism of him and a hint that he should go to synagogue. He blew up and began to yell at his mother for trying to impose religious practice on him. He kept repeating that it was not enough that he came and participated in the Passover ceremonies for her sake. The mother protested that she had not meant anything of the sort and then in turn became angry. She elaborated how hard she had worked to prepare all the food for the holiday and declared that she is neither a slave nor a "moquère" (a Muslim servant). The yelling went back and forth for about ten minutes with the mother voicing at least a third of her arguments and reproaches in Arabic. Part of her rage was directed at the girlfriend whom she claimed had not helped her with the cooking and cleaning. The girlfriend remained silent throughout and one of the other brothers intervened only slightly on his mother's behest.

The fight finally culminated with the girlfriend's returning home on the next train and the son staying,

Let us examine the conflicts underlying this incident. Mother and son attached different significance to the very fact of the son's coming to Baumugnes for the holidays. The son feels, given his rejection of religion, and the fact that Passover coincided with a vacation from his job, that he is making a personal sacrifice by coming to be with his mother rather than taking a vacation trip. He feels that his mother ought to be grateful that he spends his free time with her. The mother, on the other hand, sees it as 'natural' that a son should want to come spend Jewish holidays with his family. For her, it is a taken-for-granted aspect of life that one observes religious holidays with one's

family. An extension of this is attitudes toward religion. The son has deeply and violently rejected religion and has tremendous anger about any form of religious practice. His mother refuses to believe this about him. She sees his attitude as willful and rebellious but cannot conceive of the idea that he is an atheist. Thus she cannot understand that when he participates in religious ceremonies it is an act of giving to her. She again sees saying prayers as a taken-for-granted part of life and does not feel grateful when her son participates.

Another point of noncommunication between mother and son is the son's relationship with the woman with whom he lives. The mother cannot understand that they do not wish to marry and have children. Again, this is an aspect of life which for her and her contemporaries is not a situation involving choice: she does not view either marriage or children as something about which one makes decisions but rather as things which 'naturally' occur in life. (In a conversation with her I once tried to explain that some people do not wish to raise children; she cut short the discussion with "il n'y a rien plus beaux que les enfants" ("there is nothing as beautiful as children").

The son is unable to understand the position into which he puts his mother vis-a-vis the rest of the extended family. Because she is a widow, his mother is very dependent on the rest of her family for socializing and emotional support and cannot risk offending them. She is very vulnerable to extended family pressure. Thus his insistence upon bringing his non-Jewish girlfriend to the Seder risked causing her problems and possible fights within the family; this added to her resentment. For him, the family religious pressure is something against which it is vital

to rebel, whereas for his mother it is the structure of her social existence.

Another aspect of this situation is the process of redefinition and assertion of social roles. The son, as the oldest son, is attempting to assume the authority position of his deceased father (see Chapter Three). At times, the mother grants him this authority, especially when she wants his support against the younger brothers. At the same time, because his personal (i.e., marital) status is not that of a full adult (he is not married with children and hence in this culture cannot be considered adult), she does not let him fully assume this role. Although the son forces her to compromise--she allowed him to bring his girlfriend (which she repeatedly stressed would not have happened if his father were alive)--she does not grant his actions legitimacy.

Section III

The Young People

In this section we concentrate on young people from Batna families who live in Baumugnes. We see how kinship, religion, and Jewish identity interrelate. The data in this section were obtained from participant observation and from a questionnaire.

The solidary kinship ideals expressed in the phrase "toujours ensemble" can be seen as well in the social groups formed by young people. Among the Batna Jews, young, unmarried people hold as an ideal the large, cohesive social group of friends who are together as much as possible and who do not fragment into couples. During the fieldwork period of 1974-1975, young men from Batna families formed social groups whose main members were from Batna families or were affinally connected.

However, these Batna ties went unacknowledged. What the young people stressed was the "group" as if it existed in and of itself; connecting links amongst members such as family, religion, and being pied-noir were unstated. These social groups formed using what I call an interactive participatory model. That is, no one ever articulated that their background gave them a certain affinity for one another. All they emphasized, and they did so repeatedly, was the fact of their togetherness, their identity as a group. They were all committed to the idea of having a social group which met on a regular basis (e.g., in certain cafes at certain times of the day and evening) and had ongoing interaction. If certain members of the group did not appear, there was usually no attempt to contact them as it was implicit that if they were available they would have come.

Social groups of young people from the Batna Jewish families were in a state of constant flux and regrouping: they changed from year to year and sometimes even month to month as couples formed whose commitment to one another outweighed that of group ties. For the most part, young men from Batna families formed the center of the groups. The young women from these families (and other North African Jewish families as well) are generally kept under close supervision by their parents and not allowed to go out at night or to 'hang out' in cafes. Most of the young men from the Batna families preferred to go out with non-Jewish women as any involvement with a Jewish girl would immediately be taken seriously by her family. The Jewish women usually remained virgins or restricted sexual relations to serious boyfriends. Jewish young men often have a double standard for Jewish and Christian women; as one man

put it, "I could not be a bastard to a Jewish girl." Part of his definition of 'being a bastard' was to have casual sexual relations with a woman.

The social groups thus usually consisted of a central kernel of young men plus women who were either girlfriends or friends who participated on a less regular basis. Sometimes these women were Jews from other towns in France (hence out of control of their family) or foreigners. Figure 5 records the kinship links among the male members of one group. Of the two men who are not related, one is from a Batna family and the other, non-Jewish man is pied-noir and a childhood friend of # .

Members of these groups meet in cafes after lunch and before and after supper. Frequent group activities are dancing, dining in restaurants, picnicking, and taking weekend trips to the mountains or the beach. As most of the members of the group either live with their parents or have very small apartments, most of the activities take place in public places. The code of group activities is togetherness: everyone should participate. When decisions about social activities are made, consensus is the goal. It is considered a failure for the group to split up even for an evening. People participate in activities they are not enthusiastic about in order to keep the group together.

The group thus becomes constituted in terms of participation, and its only acknowledged raison d'être is to generate activities for participation. Individual members of groups may have close relationships, but this is not necessarily the case. The stress on cohesiveness in activities is thus like and unlike the family. In the family, membership is also defined in terms of participation, though here the participation

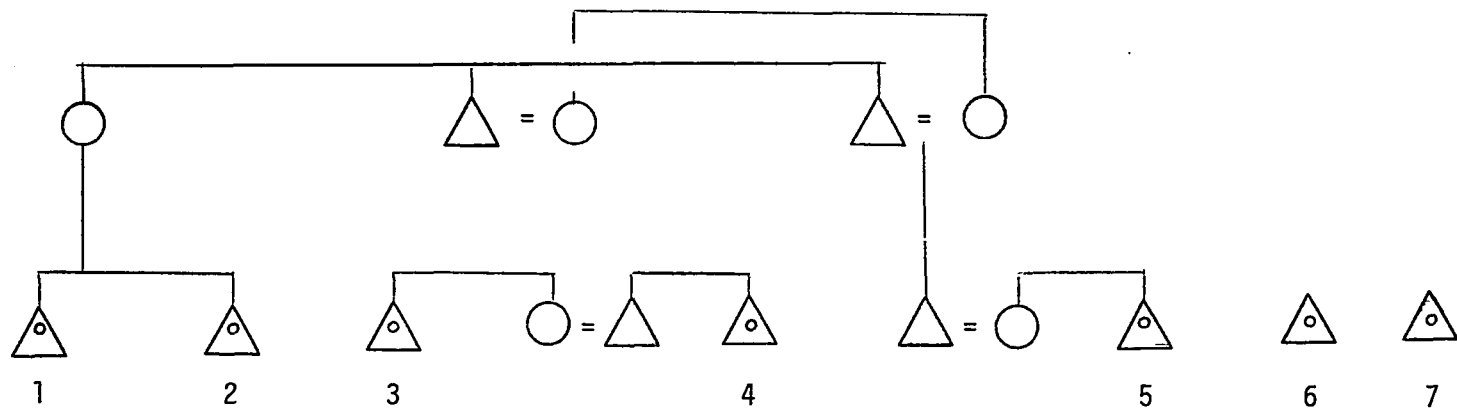


FIGURE 5. AN EXAMPLE OF KINSHIP TIES AMONG MEMBERS OF A YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIAL GROUP IN BAUMUGNES

Note: Members of the group are numbered and identified by a circle.

is grounded in specific types of expectations and obligations one has towards family members. Thus the group, though implicitly drawing on the family as a model in its ideology of tous ensemble, is unstable and relationships not profound.

Young People Questionnaire

In addition to participant observation of social groups, I conducted intensive interviews (ranging from three to ten hours) with fourteen young people, eight men and six women, from Batna families. Their ages range from eighteen to thirty-four although most are in their late teens or early twenties. Two of the women are in their early thirties, married, and have children. The rest are single and live with or are supported by their parents. Three are employed (two as professionals, one as a lower-middle level civil servant), five are in advanced stages of professional schooling, two are undergraduates, one is a high school dropout, and another is in the last year of high school.

Using an open-ended questionnaire (see Appendix), I questioned them about religious belief and practice, experiences coming to France from Algeria, Jewish identity, attitudes toward the pied-noir Christians, occupation plans, opinions about sex roles, political and Zionist views, relations with their family, etc. In assessing the questionnaires, I do not present a compilation of the data or make a claim for the statistical representativeness of the sample. Informants' responses can be separated into several patterns which can be seen as the cultural possibilities given the past in colonial Algeria and the change in the macrosocial environment between Algeria and France.

It is important to emphasize that these interviews were conducted after I had been in the field from nine months to a year and were done principally with persons whom I had known well and/or observed in a variety of circumstances ranging from social activities to family life to religious and political meetings. Although the data and analysis may appear to be on a 'cultural level,' I argue that this is not the case. The interpretations of the interviews are grounded in the observation of daily life and the historical conditions out of which the cultural responses emerge. The analysis of the interview data is presented by centering on four interrelated topics: pied-noir identity, religious belief and practice, family, and Jewish identity (and its counterpoint, assimilation).

Let us begin by looking at the term 'pied-noir' and assessing how informants define and react to this designation. The term pied-noir is generally defined as a person of European descent (French, Spanish, Italian, etc.) who went to Algeria (Morocco and Tunisia are usually also included) as a colonist and came to France following independence. Officially the term "repatriés" (repatriates) is used; pied-noir can be pejorative when used by non-pieds-noirs. In general informants used the term 'pied-noir' in ordinary conversation to refer to both Jewish and Christian former colonists. However, if a political issue is at stake (e.g., questions of reimbursement for property loss in Algeria), older informants will occasionally use the term repatriés. Young people, as a half-joking lament, mimic older pieds-noirs (presumably also their parents) and say things such as, 'We pieds-noirs, we were chased from our country, how we have suffered.'

The pied-noir accent is quite distinctive and a number of the young people spoke with a thick accent and used North African expressions. Although some admitted to speaking with this accent--indeed one young man said that in his early teens he and his friends cultivated their accents--the majority said that they did not speak this way. My impressions that they spoke with accents were cross-checked with metropolitan French who verified that they did have a noticeable accent. Denying the accent usually accompanied an anti-pied-noir stance.

A group of more conservative, male informants identified with a number of aspects of pied-noir culture and cited attributes which they and the pied-noir have in common. They cited the "façon de vivre" (the way of living) and the "même façon à penser" (same way of thinking) as links between Christian and Jewish pieds-noirs. When questioned as to what these things entailed, they spoke of liking to laugh, carry on, amuse oneself in loud boisterous groups; they said that the pieds-noirs like to eat and drink and that they are draggeur (flirt with and pick up women), that they speak with their hands and are "plus vivant" (more alive) than the metropolitan French. Pieds-noirs are seen as being "imprimé avec un esprit moquer, ironique . . ." (having a mocking, ironic spirit). Pieds-noirs like to act tough. They contrast the "warmth" and openness of the the pieds-noirs with metropolitan French whom they characterize as cold and formal. At the same time, all informants criticized the pieds-noirs for their "racist" (vis-à-vis Muslims) and anti-semitic attitudes.

Both young people and older informants considered Jewish and Christian pieds-noirs to have similar family structures. While claiming

that the Jewish family was the more solidary, they characterized the family as being of vital importance to both groups: "pour le pied-noir la famille c'est beaucoup" ("For the pied-noir, the family means a lot"). Almost all informants characterized the metropolitan Christians as not being very close to their children. They stereotyped the French as having families in which mother and father work and spend only a couple of hours a day with their children. The Jews saw distance and formality as characterizing the relations between metropolitan Christians and their children. Another distinction they made between the metropolitans and the pieds-noirs is attitudes toward daughters. The pied-noir family, Jewish and Christian alike, is seen as keeping daughters on a tight rein.

Coupled with this attitude toward daughters, my informants of the conservative male group saw Jewish and Christian pieds-noirs as having similar attitudes toward women. These men characterized the attitude as one of "respect" for women. However, a main feature in many of their dealings with women is outright disdain. Respect is given only to those women who comport themselves according to their rules. Thus a woman who has premarital sexual relations with a number of men is dubbed "facile" (easy) and is accorded no respect. Jewish young women I interviewed who have a feminist position and young men who dissociate themselves from the "pied-noir mentality" react very strongly against these attitudes towards women. One man characterized this view of woman as "degueulasse" (disgusting) and said that it prevents him from being friends with pieds-noirs. However, whether they subscribe to the attitude or not, all agree that it is characteristically pied-noir.

In including themselves in the 'pied-noir' category, the young people are adopting the same cultural conceptions which their parents

had in Algeria. In Algeria the Jews were putting a claim to being part of the European population; thus an extension of this logic places them in the pied-noir category in France.¹³ Young people who define pieds-noirs as people who came from European countries to settle in Algeria still see no fault in their logic when they say that Jews are pieds-noirs. When questioned about this they say that the Jews were French citizens and therefore were part of the European population.

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, there were a number of Batna families who had been fairly lax in religious practice in Algeria and have now become very religious. Some examples of this increase in religious practice are: obeying the injunction against vehicle use on the Sabbath, not using gas or electricity on the Sabbath, and refraining from having non-Jews aid one (in North Africa, Muslims would light stoves and turn on electricity for Jews), avoiding canned products unless marked kosher (much harder to find than in the United States and more expensive than nonkosher products), not buying pastries from French bakeries, etc. Some of the middle-aged women who in Batna went bare-headed are now wearing hats or wigs.¹⁶ Some of this increase in religious observances is due to pressure from children who, having become very religious themselves, have introduced stricter practice into their homes. This is one area in which most families can be led successfully by their children. Many adults see their religious practice in Algeria as having been rote and thus accept the authority of their children, who study with Ashkenazi and Lubbovitch rabbis, that innovations and stricter adherence are in order. Parents see such demands on the part of their children as legitimate; for certain of these young people it is a way of

gaining power and authority in the household. Three of the people interviewed represent the group of young Batneens who have become very orthodox. One young man is the only Jew in the town to wear a yarmulkah and the fringed ritual garment, zizith.

Others in the questionnaire group, and in the community at large, form a continuum of varying degrees of religious belief and practice including some who reject religion outright. Many are religious in a minimal sense: they keep the dietary restrictions in a limited way and attend synagogue with a fair degree of regularity, but do not see religious practice as a vital, growing, changing part of their lives. For them religion is a part of life, but they do not devote themselves to religious studies or to a constant search for new meanings and nuances in the religion as do the very committed group. However, for these minimal practitioners religion is a problem area. Their nominal religious practice is not the taken-for-granted part of life it was for their parents. Confronting them are the daily problems of keeping up religious practice in French society. Practical obstacles throw into question the intricate structure of Jewish religious law and ultimately religious belief itself comes under question.

An example of this is the necessity to eat nonkosher food: some of the young people attend school in another town and are obliged to eat in the nonkosher school cafeteria. One young man described how initially he did not eat meat there, but the contradiction of using nonkosher eating utensils while refraining from eating meat caused him to question what exactly he was accomplishing by avoiding meat. Other informants couched the problem of kosher food in terms of being cut off from

Christians. As young adults they found it intolerable not to be able to go to restaurants with friends or to travel. Some started by making compromises--eating only dairy products in restaurants--but gradually, either realizing their own contradictions or desiring to try new kinds of food, they found themselves eating nonkosher.

Several informants described the trauma of the first time they ate nonkosher food. They felt as if something grave was about to happen and had difficulty actually consuming the food. One young man, who now characterizes himself as an atheist, was 15 and still religious when he first ate a ham sandwich. He was alone in a neighboring city where he had gone to take a school examination. He said that he bought and ate the sandwich 'just to do it' and that it was not a thought-out act. The result was for him "to cross an immense barrier": he characterized the food taboos as a "spiritual terrorism" and said that for him to eat pork was to "conquer the supreme taboo." He gave as an example that for him the taboo against masturbation was not nearly so important as that against eating nonkosher food. He related that he was originally motivated by a desire for freedom of action which the religious laws restrict. He said that, after he had rebelled against and stopped obeying the religious laws, his belief in God vanished as well. In this, he represents an extreme. Most of the people interviewed expressed belief in God or agnostic, questioning positions. Some characterized Judaism as an archaic religion which has not "évolué."¹⁷

Even those informants who have thoroughly rejected the dietary restrictions usually live this choice in a self-denigrating fashion. Some see their lack of religiosity as a personal lack of self-control;

they say that the religion is too "dure" (hard, in this case demanding) for them. One man put his choice to eat nonkosher meat in the university cafeteria: 'I could not stand it any more, I was hungry.' Even others who have an ideological stance on the question betray their equivocal feelings in language choice. When speaking of eating nonkosher food they say "je mange n'importe quoi" ("I eat no matter what"). "N'importe quoi" is a derogatory expression used by religious Jews to characterize the food eaten by Christians. In the eyes of the religious Jews, Christians eat 'any old thing' whereas Jews have a rigor in their food consumption. When a Jew who has ostensibly rejected the dietary code uses this expression it is evidence of ambivalence. I pointed this out to one woman who was no longer kosher; she agreed with my interpretation.

Both religious and nonreligious informants alike agreed that Christians could not understand Jewish dietary laws and other religious prohibitions. Informants said that if one tried to explain such things to most Christians they would consider one crazy. Religious practices could only be explained to very close, understanding friends, and even then just a little at a time. The very religious young man mentioned earlier told about his experience in the army's three-day pre-induction session. He said that he had had to hide in a secluded corner to pray (prayers are mandatory three times daily) and that he realized that the rhythm of his life of prayer and study would be incomprehensible to the men he encountered. This was his first intensive contact with Christians and he was shocked by the degree of difference.

Informants who, unlike this young man, lead more secular lives and have Christian friends, also said that they were initially surprised

how different the Christians were. As one woman put it, the Jews lead a "double life." The side they present to the outside world is that they are French and the same as everyone else, whereas their religious/family life is markedly different. She said that she was not at all aware of this "double life" aspect of things until she married and left home and Baumugnes. She elaborated that there were many things about French culture that she did not even know existed. She said that food and wine especially were a source of embarrassment for her: Christians would talk about different dishes and wines and she would be in the awkward position of having to feign knowledge, and perhaps be caught, or, even more embarrassing, to admit to not knowing a very commonplace thing.

Informants had very ambivalent attitudes toward letting their parents know how deeply they had rejected religious Judaism. Many kept up religious practice or a semblance of it to spare their parents' feelings, as a gesture of respect, or simply to keep the peace and maintain good relationships with their parents. One woman, whose husband is an avowed atheist, nonetheless keeps a kosher household so that her parents will come and eat with her. Good relations with one's parents are seen by informants as vital to their personal stability. As one young man, an atheist who attends synagogue to keep up his "credibility" in the eyes of his parents, put it, "My family is my nest." He sees his work and the outside world as very demanding and wants his family to be a place where he can be at ease. His policy toward his parents is one of changing their opinions gradually. He says that over the past ten years they have radically altered views on premarital sex and abortion. If he admitted that he is an atheist, he claims that they would consider him

the "mauvaise herbe" (equivalent of black sheep) and that the on-going "dialogue" would cease. It is extremely important for him to have both the dialogue and the comfort and security of family life.

Another young man whose early adolescent fights with his parents were very shattering (he feels, and I agree, that he did not succeed in changing them) has ceased to discuss his differences with his family. They are unaware, for example, that he eats nonkosher food. He says that they prefer not to acknowledge what they must have deduced. He stopped his battle with his parents because it was too destructive for himself. He characterizes it as a "kamikaze" fight, a suicidal battle one wins by self-destructive action.

Young people feel a sense of obligation toward their family. One young man quite eloquently phrased the moral responsibility he feels toward his parents. He said that if one stays and lives with one's family one is obligated to try to change and educate them. He is very much against the stance taken by the young man who views such actions as 'kamikaze.' He says if one is to stay inside the family one has to use all means possible to change them; otherwise it is incumbent upon one to leave. He feels it immoral to stay and reap the good of the family and do nothing to help them change their ways. He concluded by saying that as long as one stays an "object" in the family, receiving and being told values and rules of comportment, one is "oppressed." As soon as one begins to change the family and to bring in "values," one becomes a "subject" and is no longer dominated.

A key phrase used by informants of all ages when speaking of Judaism was its perceived antithesis, assimilation. The word

assimilation was continuously in use at the Jewish community center: people told me quite explicitly that the center had been constructed with the goal of combatting assimilation.

When I conducted the interviews with young people, I questioned informants closely on what they meant by assimilation. In the most general sense, Jews define assimilation to mean loss of Jewishness, absorption into the dominant culture, and ultimately becoming Christian. They also see assimilation as marrying non-Jews and having the offspring be neither Jews nor Christian. However, informants have differing views on specific aspects of this process. It is through their definitions of assimilation that we can understand what being Jewish means to them.

Young people's sense of Jewishness as an active identity focuses on two things: Judaism as a religion and Zionism (the Jew's relationship to Israel). As stressed already, these young Jews see their difference from the Christian French in terms of their family life. However, being Jewish for them is not something one can just 'be' but is seen as called into question, as problematic. One is obliged to define (or not to define) oneself as Jewish by one's actions in the social world outside of the family. For most of them, being born Jewish is necessary but not sufficient to being Jewish. Jewishness is seen as something which can be lost and whose loss is likely, given conditions of life in France. Informants of all ages told me that in a certain number of years there will be no more Jews left in France.

Let us look at some examples of informants' statements about being Jewish and assimilation. One young man, when asked about assimilation, gave as a first response, "In Israel there is no question of

assimilation." He explained that in Israel there is the "language" and the "culture" which provides commonality between Jews. In France only religion provides such a "lien" (link) among the Jews. He sees the North African Jews as having a pied-noir culture no different from that of Christian pieds-noirs. In France the "originalité" (uniqueness) of the Jews rests on their religion. He does not consider an atheist to be Jewish; he went so far as to say that he does not feel any ties to an Israeli who is an atheist. (He refused to entertain the idea that many of the early Zionists had been atheists.) In this light, he sees assimilation as rejecting all ties with Judaism and the Jewish community. For him it is not necessary to be fervently religious, but one has to couple a fundamental religious belief with an active role in the Jewish community. He sees as an ideal all Jews living in Israel; then being Israeli and being Jewish would be the same thing. Acknowledging that this is not a real possibility, he accords religion and activity in a religious community to be the only things which keep Jews Jews in France. Thus in Israel it is possible simply to "be" Jewish, whereas in France action is necessary.

About one-third of the young people interviewed stated that they see themselves in the process of assimilating in France and that this is more or less a conscious choice on their part. One man made an interesting distinction between what he called "assimilation sauvage" and a goal-directed assimilation. For him assimilation sauvage was letting oneself be absorbed into the majority culture in a passive, path-of-least-resistance fashion. He is against such assimilation, but in favor of one which has political ends such as identifying with the class struggle.

For him Judaism is something to dépassé (to transcend--he used the word in the philosophical sense). We can see in his statement an existential rather than an essentialistic notion of Judaism: if Judaism can be transcended, then it is not an essential attribute of the person. This must be qualified by the statement with which this informant prefaced his remarks; he said that 'now that there is Israel, one's hands are free for assimilation.' In other words, now that there is a place where Jews can be Jews freely, the Jews in other countries can exercise a political option of identifying with the class struggle in the particular country in which they are living. Thus we see a certain ambivalence between his views of Jews outside of Israel 'transcending the stage of Judaism as a national identity' and the fact of the existence of Israel as letting the Jews of the Diaspora do this. Logically, if national identity were something to be transcended in general, then Israel's existence would be a moot point. Like his contemporaries, he is struggling to define Judaism in an existential fashion. Some of the contradictions and ramifications of this stance will be discussed further in the conclusion.

Other young people interpret their friendships with non-Jews as a sign of assimilation. Having non-Jewish friends, and the curtailed religious practice this entails, is a sign to them that they are blending into the main culture. Women with children told me that they feel they are contributing to the children's assimilation by raising them not to feel "different" from other children. They wish to spare their children the problems they themselves faced and hence are raising their children so that they 'will not be too marked by Judaism.' They themselves are

introducing their children to the mainstream culture and not raising them in a separatist, Jewish environment.

Informants who live very different lives in terms of religious practice and political views on Israel are agreed on the importance of Israel for Jewish identity. One woman was quite explicit in stating that her choice to stay in France was a choice for assimilation and that those Jews who wished to guard their difference should go to Israel. Others who held Zionist views felt that staying in France presented a risk: the possibility that one would become emotionally involved with a non-Jew, marry, and cease to be part of the Jewish community.

To minimize the risk of becoming involved with a Christian, a number of young people participate in Zionist organizations. Thus in the Betar group, while there is a core of members who are versed in its politics and ideology, the primary appeal is as a social outlet.¹⁸ It is a social grouping which serves as well to provide a sense of identity and meaning for its members. A number of the members who know virtually nothing about the political history of the Betar movement, and in fact who describe themselves as leaning left politically, liked the idea that they were in a movement which was not just simply social (like the Jewish Scouts) but which had an "ideology." Even though they did not know much about this ideology, its very existence was a comfort to them. They liked the fact that Betar advocated that all Jews go to Israel. The purpose, at least from the Betar organization's point of view, of having youth groups is to prepare the young people to move Israel. A member is expected, when he or she comes of age legally, to emigrate to Israel. Although the Betar members I interviewed claimed initially to be

considering emigration to Israel, on close questioning their plans were vague and unsure. As one young woman put it: 'I was brought up to stay at home (rester à la maison); I cannot imagine going against my parents' wishes and moving to Israel . . . maybe when I am older.' (She was 19 at the time.)

Thus Israel becomes a foil against which one's Jewishness (in France) becomes constructed. Betar establishes both the Jewish milieu and a sense of being part of an active, purposeful group--essential characteristics for these young people to find a sense of authenticity about their Jewishness.

Section IV

The Bar-Mitzvah

This chapter on the family concludes with a description of a bar-mitzvah dinner. In Chapter Three we analyzed weddings in Batna and showed how the Jews came to symbolically present their Frenchness publicly in such ceremonies. In the bar-mitzvah, a purely religious event, we see the Jews try to present Jewishness without reference to North Africa. Israeli symbols have become substitutes for North African ones. This dinner shows the tension between French, North African, and Jewish identity.

The dinner followed the bar-mitzvah of a close relative of the Elkaim family. The father of the boy is a first cousin of the older generation of Elkaims and was raised with their family in Batna. The family of the bar-mitzvah boy lives in a city a short way from Baumugnes. The father is very successful, a self-made man who rose from poverty. The lavishness of the dinner displayed his financial resources. For the

dinner a kosher restaurant was hired. There were about 300 guests who were served a six-course dinner with before-dinner drinks, wine, and champagne.

All the food was French from the miniature appetizers served with the before-dinner drinks, to the mayonnaise sauce on the cold fish, to the vol-au-vent hot hors-d'oeuvres, to the dessert. The dinner began about ten o'clock; the bar-mitzvah boy sang a prayer but most of the guests had already begun eating. The meal proceeded through the hors-d'oeuvres to the meat and salad courses. After the salad, the orchestra started playing. At first it played a vaguely South American tune and then switched to Israeli music. The guests arose and danced the hora. They began in a circle and broke into a long chain dancing the hora all through the hall.¹⁹ Then a tight group, very densely packed, formed in the center of the room, screening the dancers from the view of the seated persons. In the center of this tightly compressed group were the bar-mitzvah boy, his mother, sister, and several old women relatives. Hidden in this fashion from the guests, they began to dance to the Israeli music in the Oriental style, using handkerchiefs as scarves. Some of the middle-aged women let out you-yous. The boy danced with his mother and sisters. Gradually the pace slowed, the crowd thinned, and the people returned to their seats for dessert.

This was the only thing reminiscent of North Africa to occur during the entire evening. The image of the celebrants, hidden, dancing North African style to Israeli music, is quite a vivid statement of the position of these Jews in France and of the contradictions in their hold on the past and the present.

The next day I spoke to a relative of the bar-mitzvah boy's father, a woman in her mid-sixties who had not attended the dinner. She questioned me eagerly about it and was especially interested to know if the boy's father had sung the traditional songs of the Jews of Algeria. She told me what a beautiful voice he had and how rich was his knowledge of the songs. Then she caught herself and, answering her own question, said no, he couldn't have sung, there were "Catholics" there whom he had been obliged to invite for business reasons. It would have been unimaginable for him to have sung in Arabic before these business associates.

Thus, like the family which presents a 'French' face to the world and attempts to convince itself of its Frenchness, this celebration had the form of a French festivity. The Jewishness of it was marked by the prayer and by the Israeli music and dance. We can see the family and its hidden 'differentness' symbolically acknowledged by the mother and son dancing Arab style hidden in the intimacy of the dense crowd of relatives, while the father is presenting himself and the family as French by his actions (or lack of them) and the way he has structured the festivity. We can see in this as well an expression of the special intimacy of the mother/son bond in this culture. The form but not the content is French. We can see the unintentional expression of this in the final course of the meal. As a prelude, the lights were dimmed and four huge cakes (piece montée) were carried in by waiters accompanied by the bar-mitzvah boy and other members of his family carrying sparklers to illuminate the way. The cakes were made with a base of caramel-sesame candy topped by layer upon layer of pastry shells. Normally

(i.e., in Christian parties in which such things are served) these shells are filled with whipped cream; however, Jewish dietary law forbids eating milk products in the same meal in which meat has been consumed. (Evidently artificial whipped cream has not been marketed in France.) Thus, despite all the fanfare, the pastry shells were empty and the resulting product virtually inedible. The form is French, the French content missing.

We see in this bar mitzvah supper the expression of a cultural dilemma rooted in the past and still unresolved in the present. These Algerian Jews are looking for ways of expressing and living their Jewishness without drawing in a direct fashion on their North African heritage. Despite their self-conscious attempts to deny North Africanness, there are still many aspects of their lives (such as their cuisine, the Arabic expressions they use, family structure) embedded in North African tradition which provide a sense of who they are. The Jews are in an ambiguous, uneasy relation to the very things from which their identity is drawn.

For many, especially the younger generation who have lived most of their lives in France, Israeli symbols are becoming used to express Jewishness. The problem, however, is that once they take the step and identify with Israel, their identification of themselves as French is called into question.

NOTES

¹David Schneider (1968), Steve Barnett (n.d.), and Martin Silverman (1971) have written about how kinship is conceptualized in terms of a shared substance linking members of the kin group. JoAnn Magdoff (1977) has shown how Italians conceptualize relationships themselves as substance.

²See L. Rosen (n.d.) for a phenomenological analysis of Muslim/Jewish interaction in Sefrou, Morocco.

³Max Weber (1967:351-355) discusses the development of Jewish dietary laws as a way the Jews cut themselves off from surrounding peoples. Weber sees the dietary restrictions as a "caste-like closure against outsiders" (p. 351).

⁴For example, bah, bah, bah, which is used as a reaction much in the same way as "heavy" or "far-out" is used in English.

⁵Jews from other North African countries are less loathe to speak Arabic; Jewish merchants from these countries who sell in the regional market network will use Arabic with Muslim customers.

⁶The word "oriental" which informants used when referring to this type of furnishing is also a gloss for a larger category. Informants, especially the younger ones, use the word "oriental" to indicate North African customs, habits, and styles. They identify personality traits in this way--for example, when speaking of tempers one informant contrasted "Anglo-Saxons" who keep everything inside with "Orientals" who are quick to anger.

⁷Some of the dishes of the Constantinois are given in Karsenty (1973).

⁸The rich would have more meat and a greater variety of dishes than the poor. A man in his forties gave the following account of the changes in quantity of foods eaten from his grandparents' to his parents' generation: both lunch and dinner in his grandparents' home (they were quite wealthy) would consist of many different kinds of salads (served as hors-d'oeuvres but left on the table throughout the meal) followed by a dish such as tafina (a stew-like dish made with chard or spinach, beans and meat) followed in turn by a roast of either chicken, beef, or lamb. This was served with a green salad. Desserts and coffee followed. In his parents' generation, one eliminated either the roast or the dish. This informant stressed the great quantities of meat which were served: this is no longer the case, with the exception of holidays, as most people cannot afford to purchase a great deal of meat.

⁹Firth et al. (1970) discuss "selectivity" as an option among English kin as well.

¹⁰Schneider (1968) discusses the role of sexual intercourse in creating kinship in American culture. However, in American kinship sexual intercourse functions in a different symbolic way.

The symbol of love bridges the two culturally distinguished domains, first, the domain of kinship as a relationship of substance, and second, the domain of kinship as a code for conduct, for the kind of interpersonal relationship between and among them. Sexual intercourse is love and stands as a sign of love, and love stands for sexual intercourse and is a sign of it [Schneider 1968:52].

¹¹North African Muslim women become accepted only after they have produced a male offspring. We can see this as participation as well.

¹²One of the small businesses was sold at the beginning of the fieldwork period. I am writing of the way it was previously conducted.

¹³Informants' statements echo what anthropologists have called "complementary opposition." This is an incessant quarreling among like units and the banding together of such units against outside opposition. See E. E. Evans-Pritchard, The Nuer, for the classic formulation of this.

¹⁴The Seder is a ceremonial meal which commemorates Moses' leading the Jews out of Egypt. A text, the Hagaddah, is read in Hebrew (and Arabic among North African Jews).

¹⁵The Muslims who were French citizens in Algeria or were harkis (Muslims who fought with the French forces during the Algerian War) and who subsequently came to France are never classified as piéds-noirs.

¹⁶Wearing wigs is a custom acquired from Ashkenazi Jews and was unknown in Algeria. According to Jewish law both men and women are obliged to cover their heads. In Algeria most Jewish men and women born in the 20th century never followed this law.

¹⁷See Chapter Three, where we see how the word 'évolué' is used to mean Westernized. Informants knew virtually nothing about reform Judaism.

¹⁸The Betar organization is a right-wing youth movement begun in 1923 in Latvia by Vladimir Jabontinsky. Betar is linked to the Herut party in Israel.

¹⁹The hora is an Israeli folkdance, performed in either a circle or long chain.

CONCLUSION

The preceding chapters have focused mainly upon the Jews of one small town, Batna, in colonial Algeria. In so doing, however, the purpose has been to elucidate social processes in Algeria as a whole as well as to add to the understanding of the relationship between colonial society and social identity.

Anthropologists often assume that the communities they study are representative, in the sense of 'average' or 'typical.' I make no claim that Batna was a 'typical' town. In fact, because of its role as a military and administrative center, it was in many ways atypical. Batna and its Jewish community have been used to ground assertions about the nature of Algerian colonial society. Only the particularity of concrete instances provides sufficient detail and complexity for an analysis of social processes. The task has not been one of reduction: the Jews of Batna are understood through being situated in their milieu and the milieu is understood through their particularity. It is important to emphasize the simultaneous nature of this type of analysis. I reiterate Sartre's point that "The most concrete significations are radically irreducible to the most abstract significations" (Sartre 1963:145).

Algerian Jewish identity, I argue, was formed by the historical circumstances of French colonial domination. That identity takes its particular shape due to the Jews' actions and the meanings they placed on their actions. Originally resistant to French Jewish influence, the Algerian Jews in the 20th century began to identify themselves as

European. Through the demographic and historical material from Batna, I documented the Jews' shift from the Muslim to the French sphere. Changes in names, occupations, clothing, and language all attest to this process. These changes took place in a context in which 'race' was the cultural construct which distinguished colonizer from colonized, 'European' from 'Arab.' Jews were an anomalous group in this cultural classification, having characteristics of both groups. Jews were non-Muslim natives who were French citizens. As the colonial ideology defined native as Muslim and Arab and French citizen as Christian and European, the Jews did not fit.

However, this overarching cultural system broke down in everyday life. Finer categories muted the overall classification but did not belie the power structure behind it. That is to say, in day-to-day dealings and in the way communities formed, there were distinctions made among the Europeans between national groups (Spanish, Italian, etc.) and religious groups (Catholics versus Protestants). The same was true for the Muslims. From this perspective, the Jews were simply a distinct group with its own religion and customs. Even those who hated the Jews were obliged to recognize their position in the social universe and had to acknowledge their power in politics and local affairs.

Because of their access to political leverage which the disenfranchised Muslim population lacked, the Jews were part of the 'European' group. However, despite the political and economic advantages of citizenship, the majority of the Jewish population in Batna and throughout Algeria were poorer than their Christian counterparts. Antisemitism limited opportunity for upward mobility. Although individual Jews had

power and influence, the vast majority of the Jewish population did not have access to privilege equal to that of the Christian Europeans. Here again, the Jews were in between Christians and Muslims.

Given this, let us examine further the Jews' claim to being part of the 'European' population. In colonial Algeria all non-French European nationals could become French citizens either by a simple naturalization process, or, after 1899, all children born in Algeria of European parents were automatically French citizens. Being European gave one the right to be a French citizen. This legal right in popular conception was taken as a 'natural' (i.e., racial) right bolstering the Europeans' sense of the legitimacy of their domination over the Muslims. The Jews used the same reasoning but from the opposite direction. Their logic went: French citizens are Europeans. We are French citizens. Therefore we are Europeans.¹ The Jews legitimated their citizenship on the grounds that they were Europeans and Europeans, according to cultural consensus and legal precedent, had the right to be French citizens. The circularity of this argument did not trouble them.

When Batna Jews discussed intergroup relations in Algeria, they identified with the Europeans in two implicit ways. One aspect of this identification parallels how they conceptualized kinship and relates to the phenomenon of Jews' involuting symbols of identity to center on the family. Jews considered their families' ability to "evolve" and change proof of their Europeanness. They distinguished themselves from Muslims in this. As noted in the last chapter, Jews constitute kinship in a relational manner through an interaction with an other who is seen also as the self. One affirms the self and the relationship with the other through interaction.

For the Jews their family "evolution" in Algeria was such an identity-constitutive interaction with French culture and the French. Informants repeatedly maintained that the "customs and mores" of the Jews were preserved even though they had just detailed how the Jewish family had become Frenchified and "evolved." From the outsider's perspective, it was precisely these North African 'customs and mores' which changed and had to change in order for them to become Frenchified. In the Jews' self-perception, the very sense of the word "evolve" alters in this context. Instead of expressing change, it is an assertion that the Algerian Jews were intrinsically European. Thus the change was an unfolding of their essence as Europeans. By 'interacting' with French culture in such a manner, they affirm that they are of it.

The Jews' claim on Europeanness was expressed in another, very different way as well. Identity for the Jews became substantialized through sharing a common essence, "citizenship," with the French. Citizenship, a legal, historical event, became taken by the Jews to be an 'objective' part of their being.² Citizenship was the common bond between themselves and the French. Instead of viewing citizenship as a legal status, the Jews saw it as an expression of a natural attribute: race. It is proof that they are European. The reason for this brings us once again to the structure of domination in colonial Algeria. Race as a cultural category was created, and only those persons belonging to the European race had the right to become citizens. Therefore the Jews, as French citizens, saw themselves as Europeans. Since European was culturally defined as a biological fact--race--then for Jews French citizenship validated their European race. We can thus understand the importance

the Jews attached and still attach to citizenship: it validated their claim to legitimate privilege in Algeria and gives them a sense of having a rightful place in France today.

This transformation of citizenship into 'Europeanness' enables us to interpret the response of the Jews to the Second World War and sheds light on their stance during the Algerian War. In Chapter Five we saw how the Algerian Jews were stripped of their French citizenship during World War II. When discussing the Second World War with informants, I was continuously struck that this experience had not called into question their certainty of being French nor raised the issue of the meaning of citizenship. Here we see an example of how cultural categories can mask events. The Jews had culturally transformed the historical event by which they had obtained French citizenship into a validation of their belonging to the 'European' race, i.e., an 'essential' characteristic. Therefore, when citizenship was revoked, they did not perceive it as a threat to who they were (although they, of course, recognized its political significance and the potential danger it posed). Rather, they saw it as a political measure, but one which in no way challenged the rightfulness of their being French citizens. If one is 'European' and Europeans have a natural right to be French citizens, then the whim of an 'illegal' government cannot be taken as a serious threat to one's self-perception. With few exceptions, the Jews followed this logic.³ The reactions of the Jewish elite in Algiers paralleled the accounts of World War II given by my Batna informants.

During the Algerian War, the Jews, for the most part, did not draw on the Second World War as a way of questioning their loyalties.

As informants repeatedly emphasized, the Jews felt that they were French and could not imagine siding with the Muslims.

In France the context in which identity is created has changed drastically from colonial Algeria. As noted in Chapter Six, the overarching cultural paradigm in France is one of class, not race. That is, the primary concern in France in daily life is to place people by social class. The French differentiate races, but the main cultural focus in face-to-face encounters is class.⁴ However, within the class stratification system, the French categorize Jews as a group which is set apart.

From Sartre's (1974) work on the nature of French antisemitism, I have argued that the French 'essentialize' Jewishness. They culturally create an immutable Jewish nature. No matter how French a Jew may seem, he is still different, still not 'really' French. "Thus the Jew remains the stranger, the intruder, the unassimilated at the very heart of our society" (Sartre 1974:83).

The Algerian Jews have a difficult time, culturally, comprehending the nature of French antisemitism or the place the Jews occupy in French society. Informants repeatedly said that 'the metropolitan French do not know what a Jew is.' What they mean is that the cultural system in France is such that the way they were situated as Jews in Algeria does not exist. The Jews of Algeria were accustomed to being treated as if they were different from the Christians. But this very 'difference' followed another model from that in France.

In Algeria the Jews were treated as a bounded group who had customs and a way of life markedly different from those of the Christians. Rules of social interaction limited the kinds of contact between the two

groups. In Algeria intimate friendships and intermarriages were virtually nonexistent between Jews and Christians. Given the cultural system from which they come, it is hardly surprising that the Algerian Jews have difficulty comprehending French antisemitism and the more generalized attitude toward Jews in France.

In France, despite antisemitism, the cultural system allows for more intimate contact between Jews and Christians--the social barriers are less obvious. Friendships and intermarriages take place. The Jews' claim on French citizenship is accepted. However, Jews in France are not taken to be 'really' French. They are simultaneously accepted yet placed outside of a legitimate place in French society.

Hence in France Jewish identity became problematic: the outside society no longer rigidly segregates them. We find the Jews from Batna defining their Judaism in an existential fashion: Jewishness equals action-as-a-Jew. Jewish identity now centers around symbols of religion, Zionism, and family.

Jewish ritual is one of the things from which the Batna Jews derive a positive sense of Jewish identity.⁵ This is true even when the individual no longer believes in the religion per se. There is a close link between religious practice and family life. This flows in part from the Jewish religion itself in which many ceremonies are performed in a household, not community, context. Thus a sense of identity is derived from the family as a unit of religious observation.⁶

However, for the young people from Batna families, the family and its ritual life are no longer sufficient to define Judaism. The social world they inhabit does not provide a satisfactory niche for them

to live as Jews. To be an Other defined through negativity (as we saw in the Sartre analysis) is not acceptable. Some of the young people from Batna families are trying to create a sense of their Jewishness by extending the sense of identity generated through family religious ritual to the Jewish community at large. We find that both those who are becoming more religious and those separating from religious practice interpret 'assimilation' as pulling away from the involvement which shared religious practice entails. Jewishness is defined interactively: participation generates identity.

Although identity through religion is constituted interactively, we can see in the young peoples' involvement with Zionism a movement toward essentializing identity. This is taking place despite the fact that they see Zionism interactively. Informants spoke of Zionism as a way of authentic, secular involvement with Judaism. Israeli symbols have become a way in which Judaism is expressed.

An important part of Zionism is the relationship the Jews have to the land of Israel. (Israel is referred to in Hebrew as Eretz Israel--the land of Israel.) According to Zionist ideology (and Israeli government policy), Jews have an intrinsic, 'natural' relationship with the land in which the modern state of Israel is located. The explicit goals of many Zionist organizations are to have all the Jews in the world "return" to Israel. This is a notion of what the "essential" nature of Jews is about. Jews are seen as being religiously (or, in secular Zionism, historically) part of the territory of Israel.

This is parallel to the sense of rootedness, of legitimacy of possession, that the French feel. It is precisely this sense of

belonging from which Jews are excluded in France. This is more emphatically the case for the North African Jews whose immigration to France is recent. Informants from Batna often spoke of the lack of ties they felt to Baumugnes and its region. Even those who enjoyed the countryside and the town would say that they never felt that they were "at home" ("chez-moi") there.

Zionism thus reveals unexpected consequences for identity. Initially it is used interactively to create identity by constituting a way of action, a way of relating to other Jews. However, what takes place is that, the more involved one becomes with Zionism, the more evident becomes the contradiction of staying in France, where Jews do not 'belong,' as opposed to Israel, where Jews have a 'natural' place. Thus identifying with Israel poses yet another set of problems for Jewish identity in France.

I will conclude by summarizing some of the theoretical points raised in this study. Social identity has been the major focal point. I have argued that identity must be analyzed historically, following a progressive-regressive model. Such an analysis will include an understanding of the overarching, implicit ideology of a given society. Any contradictions between that ideology and a group's self-conception must be examined. They can provide the most illuminating insights into a social universe. Contradictions may exist as well between the dominant ideology and the categories in terms of which daily interactions take place. The task is to show how this manifests itself and what the historical consequences of it are.

In my analysis, I have applied Douglas' (1970) idea of anomaly in cultural categories to social groups. The Algerian Jews were seen

as such an anomalous group. I have attempted to show the result for social identity and action of being in such a position.

In Algerian colonialism we have seen an example of how racism becomes the ideology of domination. I have extended Dumont's (1966) idea of racism as a cultural phenomenon arising out of the ideology of egalitarian society in the West to another development particular to the West--settler colonialism.

Through this study of Algerian Jews, I have tried to elucidate the nature of social identity in the context of colonialism and, in so doing, to reveal some of the ideological forms of colonial society.

NOTES

¹Informants made statements virtually in this format.

²This process has been called the metonymization of metaphor by Dolgin (1977). A relationship of similarity is transformed into a relationship of sameness (see Dolgin 1977:62-63).

³See Chapter Five for the discussion of Daniel Timsit and his followers who, drawing on the World War II experience, decided to side with the Muslims during the Algerian War.

⁴I would speculate that class may be essentialized in French society (cf. Stendhal, The Red and the Black).

⁵Albert Memmi writes:

But, after all, to consider the Jewish religious fact only as the religious ideology of the Jews would be a false and idealistic attitude which ends by losing sight of the fact. Now there is a Jewish religious fact, more or less coercive, more or less approved, but tenaciously lived by the vast majority of Jews. Once we have said this, that tenacity, that survival of a Jewish religious positivity is neither incomprehensible nor mysterious: it is constantly nourished by the whole Jewish fate. Family, religion, and the various Jewish institutions have given Jewry its historic character. But inversely they themselves have been slowly secreted and fashioned by that stubborn will to live [Memmi 1972:298].

⁶Albert Memmi (1962) describes his reaction as a young man reading Sartre's Anti-Semite and Jew as one of chagrin because he felt that Sartre had left out the positive side of Jewish identity. He wrote Sartre a letter (unsent), which concluded with: "Now, believe me, the Jew does exist, Jewishness survives" (Memmi 1962:265). Memmi describes his own relation to Jewish ritual and self-definition as a Jew. After a stormy adolescence, rejecting religion and pulling away from his family, he came to realize that important aspects of his identity were tied to family interaction through religious ritual. Even the acts of rebellion and rejection were centered on those ritual acts. Even in rejecting them, he was defining himself through them.

APPENDIX

YOUNG PEOPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Background information:
 - a. Age
 - b. Marital Status
 - c. Education
 - d. Occupation (or occupational plans)
2. How old were you when you moved from Batna to Baumugnes?
3. [If of appropriate age:] What was your reaction to France?
[Probe about school experiences, changes in family atmosphere, etc.]
4. Do you consider yourself to be a pied-noir?
 - a. Do you have a pied-noir accent?
 - b. What differences do you find between the pied-noir and the French?
 - c. Have you ever met with anti-pied noir prejudice?
 - d. What are the differences between the Jewish and the non-Jewish pied-noir?
5. Do you speak Arabic? [Probe as to how well.]
 - a. Is Arabic used in your parents' home?
6. Do you consider yourself to be religious?
 - a. What kind of changes has your religious practice and belief gone through?
 - b. What is the extent of your religious education?
 - c. How regularly do you attend synagogue?
 - d. Do you keep the Kashruth regulations? If so, to what extent?
 - i. If no, describe the first time you ate nonkosher food.
 - e. To what extent do you keep the Sabbath laws?
 - f. [If married:] Do you have a kosher kitchen? [If unmarried:] Do you plan on keeping kosher?
7. Do you frequent the Jewish community center?
 - a. If yes, how often do you go there?
 - b. Do you hold any elected or volunteer position there?
 - c. What is your opinion of the center?
8. Do you belong to any Jewish organization?
 - a. [If yes:] Give details of length of membership and role in it.

9. Do you consider yourself to be a Zionist?
 - a. Have you visited Israel?
 - b. Do you think about or plan immigration to Israel?
10. What does the word "assimilation" signify for you?
11. Would you consider marriage with a non-Jew?
12. Have you ever experienced antisemitism in France? [Probe for descriptions of incidents.]
13. Do you consider yourself to be French?
14. What is your political position in France?
 - a. Do you belong (or have you belonged) to a political party in France? Which one?
15. Do you think that women should work?
 - a. Should women prepare for the same kind of careers as men?
 - b. What role should men play in childcare and household chores?
16. What is your opinion of premarital sexual relations?
 - a. Do you see men and women as being the same or different with respect to this?

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