

NOTES ON THE JEWS OF TURKEY

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THERE are about 40,000 Jews in Turkey at the present time, divided into two distinct groups. The Sephardim account for some 97 per cent of the total Jewish population; they are the descendants of the Jews who went into exile from Spain and Portugal in the last years of the fifteenth century. The remaining 3 per cent are made up of Ashkenazim.

Mention should also be made of Karaite Jews, of whom there are about two hundred families in Istanbul: they are an independent group, have no dealings with the Chief Rabbinate of Turkey, and are not normally considered part of Turkish-Jewish society. They are the descendants of the followers of Anan ben David who, in the year 761, seceded from the Jewish fold, disowning the Talmud and recognizing only one authoritative source: the five books of the Torah (*Mikra*); hence the label *Bene Mikra* (Sons of the Scripture), from which is derived the word 'Karaim'. They have their synagogue in Istanbul in the suburb of Hasköy, and their own cemetery. They use a calendar peculiar to themselves, and their Holy Days do not correspond to the dates on which the Holy Days are kept by world Jewry. They marry only among themselves. There is, however, one source of religious contact between them and the Jewish community of Istanbul: for circumcision they employ the services of a *mohel* from the rabbinical community; this has been their practice for a long time. The Turkish authorities refer to them in official documents as 'Karaite Jews'.

The Jews of Turkey no longer enjoy a world reputation for scholarship, but in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries they produced a great literature.¹ There was a general decline in Jewish life after the First World War, the lowest ebb being reached in 1931, the year in which the then Chief Rabbi of Turkey, Hayim Bejarano Effendi, died.² Haim Nahoum Effendi had been Chief Rabbi from 1908, when he succeeded Moshe Lévi, until 1919.

The leaders of the Jewish community did not appear to take to heart the task of appointing a successor, and there was no Chief Rabbi of Turkey until 1953, i.e. for twenty-two years. This absence of a spiritual leader and guide led to apathy and religious indifference: time-honoured customs and traditions crumbled in many Jewish homes, and when

TURKISH JEWRY

Raphael Saban was appointed Chief Rabbi on 25 January 1953 he faced a community in process of social disintegration.

At the first census of the Turkish Republic in 1927, 81,392 Jews were returned in a total population of more than thirteen and a half million. Over half of the total number of Jews were enumerated in Istanbul. By 1935 the total Jewish population had declined to 78,730; by 1945 to 76,965; and by 1955 to 40,345.

The decade up to 1955 saw, of course, the establishment of the State of Israel; it is believed that 35,000 Jews left Turkey for Israel between 1948 and 1955.³ In 1962 the distribution of the Jewish population continued to exhibit a great concentration in Istanbul, where there are about twenty synagogues and houses of prayer. The present Chief Rabbi of Turkey is David Asseo. He is helped in his administrative duties by a religious council and by a lay council. The President of the former (the *Beth Din*) is Rabbi Baruh Ha-Kohen, who bears the titles of *Rosh Beth Din* and *Mare De-Atra*; Rabbi Baruh Hakohen has four rabbis to assist him. The lay council of the Chief Rabbinate is concerned with general matters affecting the Jewish community, including welfare services; it also acts as a channel for receiving and giving effect to government directives; there are nineteen members (Sephardim and Ashkenazim).

The Jewish press of Turkey did not remain silent during the many years when the community was bereft of religious leadership. Eventually Jewish leaders decided to seek permission from the Government to elect a Chief Rabbi by means of a poll: thus it was that Rabbi Raphael Saban was appointed; this was but an official confirmation of his role, for, as head of the Rabbinical College, he had been the chief religious authority in the country. The Chief Rabbi was installed on 25 January 1953, an historical day for Turkish Jewry. Abraham Benaroya commented in *L'Etoile du Levant*: 'Turkish Jewry has a shepherd again. After an interval of two decades the Jewish community of Turkey has found a pastor for its community numbering nearly sixty thousand souls.'

The first major step taken by the Chief Rabbi was to establish a rabbinical seminary: the once famous seminary of Istanbul (at Kusgundjuk) had ceased to exist for some years; this meant that no rabbis were being trained in the country, which, added to the non-existence of a Chief Rabbi, led to a rapid disintegration of religious values. Indeed, it is not too much to state that the very existence of the Jewish religion in Turkey was at stake. On 6 February 1955 the new seminary in the Hasköy district of Istanbul opened its doors; its function is to train rabbis and religious teachers. At the end of the academic session of 1962 the seminary had forty-five students, three of whom were awarded the rabbinical diploma (*Semiha*).

Kashrut has become a matter of major concern, for it is alleged that there is no Jewish restaurant in Istanbul where one can be certain of a strictly *kasher* meal; the Beth-Din is constantly in dispute with butchers.

Tourists and commercial travellers are faced with a painful situation; some of them may even have to go hungry, and Istanbul's Jews are constantly exhorting the Chief Rabbinate to take stricter measures for *Kashrut*. There are, of course, many other matters exercising the leaders of Jewry, such as problems of social welfare and religious education of the young.

The Chief Rabbi died in 1960. The leaders of Turkish Jewry did not repeat the error of the past: within months a successor was appointed. He is Chief Rabbi David Asseo.

JEWISH COMMUNAL SCHOOLS

The Turkish language is the compulsory medium of instruction in the schools. Turkish state schools, both primary and secondary, are non-fee-paying, and are open to all children irrespective of race or religion; the children of minority groups—Greeks, Armenians, and Jews—attend these schools. There are many Jewish students in the universities, particularly in the Faculty of Medicine and in commercial schools and technical colleges; there is no tension whatever between Muslim and non-Muslim students; on the contrary, there is a spirit of good fellowship which Jews in the universities of many other countries might well envy.

There are a few foreign schools in Istanbul—French, English, and German—which are allowed to teach in the medium of their national language, but only at secondary school level; many well-to-do Jews send their children to these institutions.

Istanbul has four Jewish communal schools and one High School (formerly a B'nai B'rith institution); the curriculum is identical to that in Turkish schools, and is approved by the Minister of Education. Jewish schools, however, are allowed to give, in addition, one course in elementary Hebrew, but they do not give tuition in Jewish history or literature. In 1961 there were 1,483 pupils (792 boys and 691 girls) in these five schools. In the same year there were 44 pupils in the Rabbinical Seminary. In 1962 the six institutions had increased their intake so that the total enrolment was 2,000.

There is also in Istanbul an organization known as *Mahazike Torah*, which gives religious instruction to boys and girls and also trains *hazanim*, *mohelim*, and *shohetim*. Pupils may enrol from the age of eight years; boys may stay until the age of twenty, when they must leave for military service. Classes are held in the evenings and on Sunday mornings; the older and more advanced students in turn become tutors of the younger pupils.⁴

TURKISH JEWRY

SOCIAL SERVICES AND SOCIAL WELFARE

These are supervised by the Central Welfare Board of the Chief Rabbinate. They include (1) Schools, (2) Holiday Homes for needy children, (3) *Mahazike Torah*, (4) *Mishne Torah* (to feed and clothe poor children, and be of general material assistance to them), (5) *Sedaka Umarpe*, which pays school fees, (6) *La Goutte de Lait*, founded in 1907 and run by a group of women who now every evening give a cup of hot milk and bread to needy and undernourished pupils of Jewish communal schools.

(7) The Orphanage was founded after the First World War. There were then 1,250 orphans, 300 among them being war orphans. In 1924 there were 277 residents (250 boys and 27 girls), while another 1,000 were placed (at the expense of the Orphanage) in various homes.⁵ In 1926 the total number of resident orphans was 142; in 1941 there were about 100; and in 1960, 48 (23 boys and 25 girls). After completing their primary education, the children are apprenticed to various trades.

(8) The *Or-Ahaim Hospital* has been in existence for 75 years. (9) *Aid to Tubercular Patients* is known by its Turkish name of VEREM. Some 1,500 Jews in Istanbul alone are believed to suffer from the disease. VEREM pays for extra nourishment and for recuperation centres in the countryside. Seriously ill patients are sent to hospitals at the expense of the organization. (10) *The Old People's Home* shelters, feeds, and nurses the indigent. Costs are constantly rising, and the Central Welfare Board has frequently to make urgent appeals for funds.

Apart from these ten organizations (all members of the Co-ordinated Association of Jewish Welfare Bodies), there are several other independent welfare societies, such as:

- (a) *Matan Basseter*, for financial help to the needy;
- (b) *Bikour Holim*, for help to the sick (such as extra food and the cost of medical prescriptions);
- (c) *Society for Assistance to the Poor*, formerly a B'nai B'rith association; it is now concerned exclusively with welfare activities.⁶

Special mention must also be made of the Small Loans Agency in Istanbul. The B'nai B'rith in 1923 had helped to establish this agency; its purpose is to assist small business men and professional men (such as doctors or chemists) with loans at a very low rate of interest; it has enabled many recipients to establish a secure and honourable livelihood.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF ISTANBUL

The Ashkenazi Community

The Ashkenazim of Istanbul are said to number about 700 souls, according to the Office of the Ashkenazi Community; however, there are many who are not on its registers, and the correct figure is probably

nearer 1,000. *El Tiempo*, in an article in its issue of 8 April 1959, mentions a total of 1,500, but this is almost certainly a highly inflated figure.

Abraham Galanté, in his *Histoire des Juifs d'Istanbul* (Vol. 2, 1942), states that when Spanish Jews arrived in Turkey in 1492 they found a settled Jewish community which extended a warm welcome to them; the local Jews were Romanites, Italians, and Ashkenazim.

In 1854 and 1855, during the Crimean War, about four hundred Ashkenazi families arrived from Kertch in the Crimea, and in or about the year 1895 members of this community established a synagogue in Istanbul which they called the Kertch Synagogue. Some ten years later it had ceased to exist.

There was a steady immigration of Ashkenazim in the latter half of the nineteenth century. At the beginning of the twentieth century Istanbul's Ashkenazim were nationals of Austria, Germany, Russia, and Rumania. In 1915, Trietsch stated that Istanbul alone had an Ashkenazi population of 10,000 souls.⁷

About the year 1920, Heinrich Reisner became President of the Ashkenazi community in Istanbul. He was also at the same time Vice-President of the Sephardi community. These were the hard post-war years, and the years when large numbers of Jews—mainly Ashkenazim—were seeking refuge from revolutionary Russia. Reisner was engaged in relief work and in helping those families who wished to emigrate to the Americas; in this, he was greatly dependent upon assistance from the Joint organization of New York. In May 1911 the B'nai B'rith organizer, S. Bergel, came to Istanbul, and Reisner collaborated with Joseph Niego (a Sepharad) in the creation of a lodge in Istanbul; the aim was to unite in one association the whole of Middle Eastern Jewry. Until then the B'nai B'rith had a largely Ashkenazi membership. Joseph Niego became the first President of the Lodge, and devoted himself for over half a century to the welfare of Turkish Jewry. Isidore Schnitter succeeded Reisner as President of the Ashkenazi community. He died in 1953. In 1954 Mr. Marko Rabinovitch succeeded him; the following year Mr. Pinhas Kerstein became President, and remained in office until 1958, when he left Turkey to settle in Israel. In 1959 Mr. Sebastian Hübler succeeded him.

The Old People's Home, *Moshav Zekinim*, was founded by the Ashkenazi community more than fifty years ago. It is now managed by a joint Sephardi-Ashkenazi committee of ladies. In 1962 there were 27 residents:

	Men	Women
Ashkenazi	3	4
Sephardi	2	18

The Great Synagogue in Yüksek Kalderim Street used to be known as 'Oesterreichischer Tempel'. About sixty years ago it enjoyed the services

TURKISH JEWRY

of the famed Hazan Bernard Wladowsky, who spent a brief period in Constantinople. Austrian leaders constituted, over a long period, the elite of the Ashkenazi community, and to this day German is the language used by the Office administering the affairs of the community; notices, letters, circulars, etc., are usually written in German. Yiddish is still used by many Ashkenazim, but knowledge of the language is steadily declining.

Rabbi Samuel Shapiro was a Hazan in two synagogues and was also very active in giving religious instruction to the young; he died in the same year (1944) as Dr. David Markus. The two men had been closely associated in a joint study of the Talmud over a number of years. A month after the death of Rabbi Schapiro, the Hazan and Shohet Mordohay Payuk also died. The loss of these three men of religion in rapid succession was a severe blow from which the Ashkenazi community has not yet recovered. To this day they lack the guidance of a rabbi.

The community has 344 registered paying members.⁸ There is great harmony between Sephardim and Ashkenazim. Marriage between them now frequently occurs, in striking contrast to the situation prevailing fifty years ago.⁹ Writing on this subject, Abraham Galanté¹⁰ said that credit for this new harmony is largely due to the establishment of the B'nai B'rith Lodge in 1911. Perhaps the clearest indication of good relations is shown in the fact that the memorial service for the martyrs of the Warsaw Ghetto Rising is organized jointly by the two communities: the annual service is held alternately in a Sephardi and an Ashkenazi synagogue.

On 20 April 1963 it was the turn of the Sephardi community; the service was held in the Neve Shalom Synagogue, and Chief Rabbi David Asseo officiated; Cantor Shaposhnik recited *El Mole Rahamim* according to Ashkenazi ritual.

To summarize the position of Istanbul's Ashkenazim: they are a community in a state of rapid decline and beset by great financial difficulties; moreover, they lack the spiritual guidance of a rabbi, and there is consequently a serious danger of disintegration, at least as far as religious life is concerned.

Gurdji (Grusiny) Jews

They are a tiny minority in Istanbul, now amounting to about sixty souls. Natives of Tiflis and of the mountainous region of the Caucasus, some two hundred fled to Turkey in 1920 after the Bolshevik Revolution. They do not form a distinct community, but are generally considered Oriental Jews, and as such, members of the Sephardi community; indeed, their religious and communal affairs are administered by the Central Office of the Sephardi Community and by the Chief Rabbinate.

There are a few families in Istanbul who originate from the Baku

region and speak a Tartar-Persian dialect; there is also a small group of Kurdish Jews from Iraq whose language is a dialect of Aramaic. These two groups are (wrongly) labelled by long-established Istanbul Jewry as 'Gurdjis', perhaps because they worship at the same synagogue as the Gurdjis.

Gurdji Jews were lent the Or Hadash synagogue some thirty years ago. They are a pious group, faithful to their religion; their prayers and chants are intoned in a mixture of Ashkenazi and Sephardi styles. They are an industrious people, and specialize with great success in the manufacture of hosiery. Nowadays the Or Hadash synagogue has a heterogeneous congregation, which includes some long-established Istanbul Sephardim. The first Gabbay is a Gurdji, and the second Gabbay a Sepharad.

JEWISH COMMUNITIES OUTSIDE ISTANBUL

Ankara (Angora)

This city was raised to the status of capital by the Turkish Republic in October 1923. It already had a Jewish community, with its own schools and social services. When Abraham Galanté visited Ankara in 1926 he found one hundred and twenty families; when he returned in 1932, to attend a History Congress in the city (he was then Professor of History in the University of Istanbul), there were two hundred families.¹¹

Izmir (Smyrna)

Izmir has the second largest Jewish community in Turkey. It was in Smyrna that Shabbetai Zevi (1626-76) was born; he was a Cabbalist, and declared himself to be the Messiah who would lead the Jews back to Jerusalem in the year 1666. Zevi created a great stir beyond Turkey, and attracted a delirious following; the Sultan was greatly perturbed, and summoned him to Constantinople. Fearing a sentence of death, and also fearful of retribution upon the whole of Turkish Jewry, Zevi appeared before the Sultan and declared his desire to become a Muslim. He was renamed Mehemet; several of his disciples promptly followed his example and became converts. They were labelled *Deunmeh* by the Turks; their descendants (now estimated at about 10,000) are an integral element of the Turkish people, but they have retained several peculiarities of their Jewish past. They occupy leading positions in the country, and many of them are business men and industrialists.

Smyrna in the nineteenth century was one of the major centres of rabbinical and Jewish cultural life. One of its sons, Rabbi Hayim Palacci, was the author of some sixty-eight works, among them *Tsedaka Hayim*, Smyrna, 1838; *Hayim ve Shalom*, Smyrna, 1862; *Birkath Mordehay Leahayim*, Smyrna, 1868; *Sefer Hayim*, Salonica, 1868; *Lev Hayim* (2 volumes), Smyrna, 1870; *Torah ve Hayim* and *Ketoub Leahayim*.¹²

TURKISH JEWRY

The first Ladino paper in Turkey, *Sha'are Mizrahi* (*Puerta del Oriente*), was published in Smyrna; it was founded in 1846 by Raphael Uziel Pincherli. Several other Ladino papers followed: *La Buena Esperanza*; *El Nuvelista*, first appearing in French as *Le Nouvelliste* and a year later half in French and half in Ladino. (It ceased publication in 1922.) A weekly, *Messeret* (Turkish for 'Joy'), was published in 1897. In 1910 *La Boz de Izmir* appeared; and in 1919 *El Shalom*. The last Jewish paper to be published in Izmir, *El Mundo*, appeared in 1923; a year later it ceased publication, and Izmir Jewry has had no newspaper since.

In the 1930s the city had a Jewish population of about 16,000 souls, and boasted thirteen synagogues.¹³ There has been a great exodus of Izmir Jews to Israel since the establishment of the State. The Chief Rabbinate of Turkey sent a circular letter in 1962 to all Jewish communities in the country, requesting statistical data. In its reply, Izmir stated that there were 1,960 Jews. On the other hand, the Istanbul Ladino paper, *Shalom*, in its issue of 24 April 1963, published an article on the role of Jewish women in Izmir; in the course of the article, written by the paper's editor, Avram Leyon, the city's total Jewish population was given as 4,500. This latter figure certainly appears more realistic.

Izmir Jews have two synagogues, three schools, a hospital, an Old People's Home, an orphanage, an association for assistance to the poor, a cultural society patronized by the young, and a *Mahazike Torah*. There is also an association, *La Sociedad de Kabarim* (also known as *Hevra Kedosha*) which was founded four centuries ago by Rabbi Joseph Escapa, who was the founder and leader of the Jewish community in Smyrna. This Society is a philanthropic institution, now managed by eminent Jews; among other good works, it maintains the Karatash Hospital.

In 1946 Izmir's three communal schools had a total of 1,204 pupils. The Talmud Torah School and Orphanage had 430 pupils in 1923, and 599 in 1929; in the school year 1961-2 the total had dwindled to 150. The Talmud Torah School was Smyrna's first educational establishment; it was founded in 1871, its pioneer organizer being Rabbi Arié Kohen Rappaport, a man of great virtue and learning, and a Talmudic scholar. It was he who first introduced the teaching of modern Hebrew in the school. The present headmaster is Mr. Isaac Nahoum.

Izmir's spiritual leader is Rabbi Sigura. One of the city's most active leaders, both in the philanthropic and the cultural fields, is Mrs. Esther Morguez Algrante; she is a poet and journalist, and has a profound knowledge of Jewish history and literature; her poems and articles frequently appear in *Shalom* and are greatly appreciated.

For many years the Izmir correspondent of *Shalom* was Ruben Katan who died in 1961. He was a man of learning and wide culture. His journalistic contributions were highly regarded; he also taught in communal schools, and played a very active role in numerous charitable organizations. His death was a serious blow to Izmir Jewry. His son,

Nissim Katan, has followed in his footsteps, and is the present Izmir correspondent of *Shalom*.

Adrianople

In 1912 Adrianople had 14,000 Jews, and theirs was perhaps the most tightly knit and organized Jewish community of the East. It was in Adrianople that Joseph Caro (1488-1575), an exile from Spain (who later became a Cabbalist), wrote his masterpiece *Shulchan Aruch*. Adrianople was also the birthplace, in 1857, of Rabbi Abraham Danon, whose family was famous for its learning and for its eminent rabbis.

Adrianople had a community deeply interested in Jewish studies and traditions. Its thirteen synagogues bore the names of illustrious families who had settled in the city; its famous Yeshivoth boasted numerous *Sifre Torah* and invaluable manuscripts. Adrianople had its communal schools and social services which included an orphanage and a hospital. A political and literary paper, *La Boz de la Verdad*, was published in the city. Wars, fires, and other crises took their toll, and the city's Jewish community, once the pride of Turkish Jewry, is now in a state of decline: in 1962 there were only 430 Jews; and one synagogue alone survives.

About thirty years ago a great number of Adrianople's Jews settled in Istanbul and formed their own association; they had also brought their *Sifre Torah* and sought to establish their own synagogue in Istanbul. The administration of the Tofre Begadim (Schneidertempel) put at their disposal a part of their large building, and it is there that Adrianople's Jews now worship; thus the same building houses a Sephardi and an Ashkenazi synagogue (the name of the former is *La Sinagoga de los Edirnelis*). The Adrianople association in Istanbul has its own communal services, a *Matan Baseter* and a *Bikour Holim*. The present Rosh Beth-Din of Istanbul, Rabbi Baruh Hakohen, is a native of Adrianople.

Brusa

Brusa, with its strategic geographical advantages, is a centre of commerce and handles a large entrepôt trade; an important part of its import and export business was managed by Jews, who, before the First World War, numbered about 3,500. The 1927 census revealed that in that year only 1,915 Jews resided in the city. The city's Jews have always lived in the same district, and the three synagogues are situated close to one another. The Brusa community had its own social services, which included a *Bikour Holim* and a *Hakenesseth Orhim*. Brusa had a literary association known as Cercle Israélite which in 1925 was renamed *Bursa Ouhouweet Klubu* (Turkish for 'Brusa Friendship Club'); its aim was to popularize a knowledge of the Turkish language among Jews and to give material assistance to needy students; a dozen years later the club had ceased to function.

Before the First World War the Alliance Israélite Universelle had a

TURKISH JEWRY

total of 450 pupils in its two schools (one for girls and one for boys); the schools were eventually taken over by the Jewish community, and in 1931 the total number of pupils was 150. The community declined in numbers, and the schools ceased to exist in 1935; Jewish pupils went to State schools, which welcomed them.

Today Brusa's Jews number about 400 souls. In other provincial towns of Turkey some small Jewish communities continue to exist, but their numbers are rapidly declining as a result of wars and emigration. Some of these groups even lack a rabbi, and refer matters of religious and communal interest to the Chief Rabbinate in Istanbul. The Chief Rabbinate is sometimes able to send *Mahazike Torah* graduates to provincial outposts to act as *mohelim*, *hazanim*, and occasionally, as rabbis. These communities are almost always exclusively Sephardi—few Ashkenazim are found outside the major cities.¹⁴

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Istanbul continues to be the main centre of the country's foreign trade. Turkey's trade and industry are in large part managed by the three principal minority groups: the Jews, the Greeks, and the Armenians.

The Jews play a major role in every sphere of the country's economic life, a role out of all proportion to their number. The Turks have always admired them for their industry and energy, and greatly appreciate their skill as business men and entrepreneurs; many Turks welcome collaboration with Jews in various commercial undertakings and in the management of factories. G. Bie Ravndal, American Consul General in Constantinople, wrote:

... Turkish Jews have carved out for themselves a place in every branch of the national life and are found as traders, bankers, professional men, office workers, and even laborers. In the former Ottoman Empire they occupied important government positions, but the tendency of the new nationalism, ushered in by the Republic, has been to put them in the same relative position as other non-Muslims, although they have never been persecuted in Turkey.¹⁵

THE JEWISH PRESS IN TURKEY

Istanbul has always been the centre of Jewish journalism in Turkey, although, as we saw earlier, Izmir was also the home of several publications. The first Ladino paper to appear in Constantinople (in 1853) was *Or Israel (La Luz de Israel)*; its editor was Leon de Hayim Castro. In 1855 Protestant missionaries published a journal in Istanbul entitled *El Manadero* (The Source) in their effort to convert Turkish Jews to Christianity; some of the articles dealt with scientific and historical

subjects, as well as with matters of specifically Jewish interest. It ceased publication three years later.

Jornal Israelit was published in 1860; *Sefath Emeth (El Luzero)* in 1867. In 1871 *El Tiempo* appeared and had a long life, for it ceased publication on 27 March 1930. David Fresco, who was concerned with Jewish journalism for fifty-five years, was its last editor; *El Tiempo* was patronized by Jewish intellectuals, and Fresco waged a relentless fight against fanaticism and obscurantism. Fresco retired in 1930 to France, where he died three years later, aged eighty.

In 1871, *El Progreso* appeared; in 1872, *El Telegraf*, later renamed *El Telegrafo*; in 1879, *El Sol*; in 1885, *El Radio de Luz*; in 1886, *El Amigo do la Familla*, an illustrated weekly concerned with historical and geographical subjects, as well as with literary matters. In 1888, *El Instructor* appeared; in 1894, *La Edicion de Jueves del Telegrafo* (The Thursday Edition of *El Telegrafo*). In 1899, *Djeridei-i-Lissan* was published in both Turkish and Ladino: its aim was to familiarize its readers with the Turkish language.

1908 saw the birth of no fewer than five publications: *La Patria*; *La Boz*; *El Burlon*; *L'Aurore* (in French); and lastly, *El Jugueton*, a satirical weekly founded and edited by E. R. Carmona. When he died in 1931 the paper ceased publication. *El Jugueton* is a valuable repository of Ladino humour and folklore, and should be of interest to linguists; for it was written in a popular vein and exhibited, apart from archaic Spanish, neologisms taken from the Turkish, Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and French languages. Carmona delighted Turkish Jewry for twenty-two years with the humorous sketches he printed.

Three new publications appeared in 1909: *Hamevasser* (in Hebrew); *El Relampago*; and *El Judio*. These were followed in 1910 by *El Gracioso*, and in 1911 by *El Correo*, both edited by Victor Levi. After the First World War in 1919 came *La Nation* (in French). In 1923 *Hamenora* (a monthly appearing in three languages, Hebrew, Ladino, and French) was published by the B'nai B'rith organization; it later became a quarterly, and had a total life of fifteen years.

1928 was the year in which Turkish was printed in Roman characters. Jewish journalists were greatly influenced by the change, and many editors decided to print their papers in romanized Ladino; two weeklies appeared in 1931 in this new style, one in 1947, three in 1948, two in 1950, three in 1952, and one in 1958.

A fortnightly review appeared in 1939, published in Turkish, French, and Ladino; a weekly was published in Turkish in 1949 (it lasted only nine months); and another weekly, *L'Etoile du Levant*, was published in French in 1948. It was edited by Abraham Benaroya. Of all these publications, only two have survived: *Shalom*, edited by Avram Leyon, and *La Vera Luz* edited by Eliyezer Menda.

TURKISH JEWRY

LANGUAGE

The vast majority of Turkish Jews, the Sephardim, continue to speak Ladino. However, a peculiarity of theirs, as well as of other Turkish Jews, is that they are multilingual; and this is true even of ordinary working men. Bie Ravndal,¹⁶ wrote:

The mother tongue of the Sephardic Jew is old Castilian, occasionally mixed with Turkish words and Hebraic expressions. The Ashkenazim speak German or Yiddish, and the Karaites speak Greek, having been Hellenized under the Byzantine Empire. All Levantine Jews, however, speak more than one modern language.

After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the New Turkey was faced with the problem of various ethnic minorities who had enjoyed many special privileges. It was resolved to unify the residents of the country by making the Turkish language their mother tongue; in 1927 a special Commission was formed to this end, and the slogan, 'Citizen, Speak Turkish!' was launched. The Press enthusiastically collaborated. Abraham Galanté, in 1928, published a work in Turkish under the slogan's title. In it he analyses the historical, political, and social reasons for the non-Muslim minorities' ignorance of the Turkish language.

In my documentary article published in *L'Etoile du Levant* (4 February 1954) on Sir Moses Montefiore, I noted that it was this eminent Jew who had first urged (on his visit to Constantinople in 1840) that Jews should teach Turkish in their communal schools:

. . . Montefiore exprima le désir que dans chaque école juive de l'Empire Ottoman, l'on enseigne aux enfants à lire et à écrire la langue turque. Montefiore offrit même d'assumer les premiers frais et promit de parler à ce sujet au Ministre des Affaires Etrangères Mustafa Reshit Pasha. Le Haham Bashi Moshé Fresko adressa alors à toutes les Communautés une circulaire, imprimée en turc, en judéo-espagnol et en hébreu, ordonnant l'enseignement de la langue turque, circulaire qui fut lue dans toutes les Synagogues de la ville. . . .

In the last few decades the Turkish language has been generally adopted by younger Jews, who now speak and write it fluently. In 1961 Mark Glazer, while lecturing on social anthropology in Istanbul University, carried out a piece of field work to determine the degree of knowledge of the Turkish language among the city's Jews. He took a sample of 20 households, 17 Sephardi and 3 Ashkenazi, numbering a total of 80 individuals, and published the results of his inquiry in *Shalom* on 21 June 1961. He found a total of sixteen languages spoken: Turkish, French, English, Ladino, Russian, German, Hungarian, Hebrew, Yiddish, Czech, Serbian, Greek, Italian, Bulgarian, Swedish, and Arabic. Various individuals in the group spoke four or five languages: every single person spoke Turkish; 96 per cent spoke French, 77 per cent

Ladino, 48 per cent English, 33 per cent Greek, 31 per cent German, and 8 per cent Hebrew.

As could be expected, Glazer found some difference between the languages known by the older members of the group, on the one hand, and by school children and young adults, on the other hand. He found that Ladino is rarely used outside the household or the kinship group: 98 per cent of the younger people speak Turkish with their friends, as against 26 per cent of the older members of the sample. The latter with their friends speak French most frequently (59 per cent); while only 21 per cent use Ladino for the purpose. Glazer concludes that 84.5 per cent of the young Jews use Turkish as their chief language, while only 14 per cent of the old do so. As for the Ashkenazim in the sample, one third (33 per cent) of the old speak mainly Yiddish.

On the basis of this inquiry, as well as of general observation by informed students of the subject, it seems inevitable that Ladino will fade out in Turkey, and will certainly cease (within less than a quarter of a century) to be the mother tongue of the nation's Sephardim.

CULTURAL LIFE

There is no specifically Jewish cultural life in Turkey, or at least none worth speaking of: there has been a dramatic decline of interest in Judaism and in Jewish history and literature, and the young appear to be remarkably uninterested in these studies. True, Turkish nationalism discourages separatist movements, but nevertheless there is no ban on cultural activities connected with one's own ethnic or religious group. There is no longer a Ladino literature, and hardly any publications now appear in this language, and none in Hebrew.¹⁷

The last Hebrew press shut down in 1944, when its proprietor, Moise Babok, emigrated to Palestine. Turkey's Jewish writers have, since then, published their works in Turkish or in French; the young Jewish poet, Joseph Habib Gerez, writes in Turkish and sings the glories of his native city of Istanbul. He has recently published his sixth book of poems, and has abandoned classical verse for modern styles which have attracted a great deal of praise from Turkish critics. Gerez also contributes to Ladino papers on Jewish topics, but his articles are written in Turkish. He has attempted to encourage his young co-religionists to form cultural associations; there are, at the present time, four Jewish cultural societies in Istanbul, one of which is the Old Students' Association of the Lycée Juif.

The Library of the Chief Rabbinate is very little used, in sharp contrast to older days. On the other hand, Italian Jews are nowadays making a brave effort to promote interest in religion and culture, and every Friday night, after the prayers of Kabalath Shabbath, they organize lectures to which the ladies are invited; the speakers are rabbis and lay notables, and the languages used are Ladino and French.

TURKISH JEWRY

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

DAVID MARCUS

On 30 December 1900 Dr. David Marcus came to Istanbul as Rabbi to the Ashkenazi community. He was a native of Novgorod and studied in the Yeshivoh of Lomza and Marianpol, under the guidance of Rabbi Lobe Plotzker, who awarded him the diploma of Rabbi. Marcus then went to Bonn University, where he studied psychology, philosophy, and child education.

He became the Rabbi of one of Dusseldorf's synagogues, and was frequently mentioned in the Jewish press of Germany; this led the Austrian community of Istanbul to invite him to take up the post of headmaster of the Goldschmidt School, and he also became the religious leader of Turkey's Ashkenazim. In 1901 Dr. Marcus published in Halle (Germany) a psychological study entitled: *Die Associationstheorien im XVIII Jahrhundert*.

In 1908, after the new Constitution of Turkey had been proclaimed, he obtained Turkish nationality; he then established and directed an association for the study of the Turkish language among Turkish Jews. He was also granted further financial assistance from the Hilfsverein to establish two other schools.

The Balkan wars of 1912 resulted in the uprooting of 635 families (3,101 souls), mainly women and children, who sought refuge in Istanbul. Several Jewish organizations were concerned with the urgent task of relief; Dr. Marcus acted as the agent of the Hilfsverein, and on its behalf he gave these various bodies a weekly sum of ten thousand gold francs.¹⁸ Dr. Marcus was also very active in co-ordinating the work of relief to the victims of the 1914-18 war, and was appointed working chairman of the *Commission Centrale de Secours* established jointly by the Hilfsverein and the Joint Distribution Committee of New York. Apart from his functions as Rabbi of the Ashkenazi community, Dr. Marcus was a member of the Istanbul Beth Din; from 1922 until 1940 he was Headmaster of the *Lycée Juif Béné Berith* and in 1932 he became proprietor and editor-in-chief of the periodical *Hamenora*. He was a prolific writer, and his journalistic and literary contributions were many: in 1936, his *Trois mille ans d'histoire juive* was published in Istanbul; he later worked on his *Histoire Juive sous le Croissant pendant la première moitié du vingtième siècle*, but this work was never finished.

ABRAHAM DANON

Abraham Danon was born in 1857 and educated exclusively at home by his father (an Adrianople rabbi); he became in turn a rabbi and an erudite Biblical and Talmudic scholar. Danon's tutor in Western culture was Rabbi Yossef Halévy, a dynamic personality who burst one day into Adrianople and very soon became the leader of the city's young intellectuals; Danon was greatly influenced by Halévy, and in turn he communicated his knowledge and enthusiasm to a group of young men, whose leader he became; they founded a cultural association known as *Doreche Hashkala*.

Danon's literary output was as erudite as it was varied. He contributed articles to Hebrew journals, and also collaborated with the *Revue des Etudes Juives* and the *Revue Asiatique*. He possessed a good knowledge of Hebrew, Aramaic, Ethiopian, Turkish, Arabic, Persian, Greek, Latin, French, German, and English; his greatest interest, however, was in Jewish history: in 1887 he published his *Toledoth Bene Abraham*, a translation in Hebrew of Theodore Reinach's history of the Jews, to which he added numerous extracts from Graetz, Geiger, and Schulmann. He also wrote, in French, a complete history of Shabbetai Zevi's 'false Messiah' movement. In a funeral oration on Danon, published in Istanbul's *Hamenora* of May 1925, Joseph Niego said: 'Une grande partie de ce travail parut dans la Revue des Etudes Juives en brochures, mais j'ai entendu dire qu'une autre partie de ses recherches sur cette question n'a pas pu être publiée de son vivant et qu'elle est encore quelque part à l'état de manuscrit . . .'

Danon was also a poet, and in 1888 he published in Hebrew a collection of poems entitled *Maskil Li Aidan*; they consisted mainly of translations from Virgil, Saadi, and Victor Hugo, but also included some of Danon's own original Hebrew poems. In 1896 he published his very well received compilation 'Recueil de Romances Judéo-Espagnoles'; they were romances (in a Castilian dialect) sung by Sephardim of the Eastern Mediterranean. The work was very well received, especially in Spain; Rodolfo Gil, in the preface to his *Romancero Judeo-Espanol: El Idoma Castellano en Oriente* (Madrid, 1911), acknowledges his very great debt to Danon. In 1888 Danon published a periodical, *Yossef Da'ath* (or *El Progresso*), in three languages: Hebrew, Ladino, and Turkish; his aim was to make it a periodical specializing in the history of Oriental Jewry; a year later, the censorship of Sultan Abdul Hamid II suppressed it.

Danon was the founder (in 1897) of the Rabbinical Seminary of Adrianople, where he held several chairs simultaneously. At the request of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, he went on several missions to various cities of the Orient. For more than twenty years he was also President of the Adrianople ORP (Comité de l'Œuvre d'Apprentissage). During the First World War he was able, after endless difficulties, to leave Turkey in order to settle in Paris. His was a bitter leaving: he had been deeply disappointed at the decision of the Consistory not to elect him Chief Rabbi of Turkey. One of the last great men of Oriental Jewry, Danon died in Paris in 1925.

ABRAHAM GALANTÉ

Abraham Galanté started his career as a writer and journalist. He was the only historian of his age who devoted his life to the study of Jewish communities in Turkey. He was born in 1873 in Bodrum in Anatolia, and died in 1961 in Istanbul; he was descended from a long line of rabbis who had written numerous works on religious and philosophical topics. In 1947 Abraham Elmaleh published, in Istanbul, Galanté's biography: *Le Professeur Abraham Galanté—sa vie et ses œuvres*. Galanté adhered to Ernest Renan's theory that 'one can only understand an idea if one can read it in the language in which it was originally expressed'. He himself knew Turkish, Hebrew, Ladino, Arabic, Greek, Italian, Latin, French, English, and German.

From 1914 to 1933 Galanté was on the staff of the University of Istanbul where he taught Comparative Grammar of Semitic Languages, and Ancient History of Oriental Peoples; in 1943 he was elected to represent Nigde at the Great National Assembly. He wrote his many works in Turkish and in French, but he always reproduced documents and statements in their original language; when once asked whether his labours were appreciated by his fellow Jews in Turkey, he tersely replied: 'My books are printed in Istanbul and read abroad.'

Galanté was not, of course, the first historian of Turkish Jewry: he owed much to his predecessors, such as M. Franco, Salomon Rozanes, Abraham Danon, Baruh Mitrani, and Juda Nehama; Galanté, however, carried out intensive research in the archives of the Ottoman Empire, and in Greek and Armenian texts.

In January 1957 the young poet Joseph Habib Gerez organized celebrations to mark the occasion of the historian's eighty-fourth birthday. Many distinguished persons attended the ceremony, and messages were received from the Alliance Israélite Universelle in Paris, from Dr. Cecil Roth in Oxford, from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and from many other individuals and institutions.

Galanté published no fewer than fifty-seven works, starting in 1925 with *Hamourabi Kanounou* (the Hamurabi Code), in Turkish. Two years later, in 1927, he published (also in Turkish) *Three Semitic Legislators—Hamurabi, Moses, Mahomet*. It is a comparative study of the three legislators' views on commercial transactions, on the status of workman and slave in society, on family law and penal law, on the concept of legal responsibility, and on the law of evidence.

TURKISH JEWRY

In 1948 his *Two Forgeries* appeared, again in Turkish. This was in answer to the publication in 1943 of Turkish translations of Roger Lambelin's *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and of Henry Ford's *The International Jew*. Galanté exposed the calumnies contained in these two books, and with the help of a Wiener Library Bulletin (published in London in September 1947) he was able to quote the refutations of no fewer than thirty-six writers.

In 1931 Galanté published in French his *Documents officiels turcs concernant les Juifs de Turquie*: he translated into French 114 laws, edicts, and legal verdicts, with historical summaries and appendices; he also reproduced the speech Sir Moses Montefiore delivered before Sultan Abdul Mejid refuting the calumny of 'ritual murder' (the Damascus affair); and the Greek texts of the four encyclicals published by three ecumenical Patriarchs in defence of the Jews. In 1948 he published his *Fin tragique des communautés juives de Rhodes et de Cos, Œuvre du brigandage hitlérien*.

HAIM NAHOUM EFFENDI

Following the proclamation of the Turkish Constitution in 1908, Haim Nahoum Effendi was elected Chief Rabbi of the Ottoman Empire in succession to the retiring Chief Rabbi, Moshé Levi. The appointment of Nahoum, who was regarded as an intelligent and cultured man enjoying great esteem despite his youth, was warmly greeted by Turkish Jewry. He was born in Manissa (Asia Minor) in 1873, and attended the Jewish Seminary in Paris, where he obtained his rabbinical diploma. In 1906 he was sent by the Alliance Israélite Universelle to Abyssinia to study the situation of the Falashas. He was Chief Rabbi of Turkey from 1908 to 1919, and a member of the Turkish delegation to the Lausanne Peace Conference. Chief Rabbi Nahoum was responsible for the suppression of the 'red passport', a government measure imposing restrictions on Jews visiting Palestine.

In 1919 he resigned his position as Chief Rabbi, his political activity having been subjected to strong criticism. He then settled in Paris where he defended the Turkish cause in the European press. In 1925 he was elected Chief Rabbi of Egypt, and remained in office until his death in Cairo in November 1960. He was in his eighty-seventh year.

Chief Rabbi Nahoum was an outstanding linguist and scholar, as well as an able administrator. He was decorated by the Negus of Abyssinia, by the Sultan of Turkey, and by King Fuad of Egypt.

STATISTICAL NOTE

In the first census of the Turkish Republic, 1927, the number of Jews returned was 81,392 in a total population of 13,648,270.

The table below shows figures for the principal centres of Jewry in 1927 and in 1962. The 1962 figures are taken from the records of the Chief Rabbinate:

	1927	1962
Adana	159	218
Ankara	663	648
Brusa	1,915	373
Adrianople	6,098	430
Gazi Aintab	742	162
Gallipoli	736	222
Istanbul	47,035	30,000
Izmir	17,094	1,960
Kirklerili	978	88
Mersina	122	51
Milas	259	79
Dardanelles	1,109	461
Tekirdaghi (Rodosto)	889	169
Tire	1,063	146
Tchorlu	592	84

NAPHTALI NATHAN

The total Jewish population has shown a steady decline since 1927:

1927	81,392
1935	78,730
1945	76,965
1955	40,345

The sharp decline from 1945 to 1955 was mainly due to large-scale emigration to the newly established State of Israel.

NOTES

¹ See M. Franco, *Essai sur l'histoire des Israélites de l'Empire Ottoman*, Paris, 1897; pp. 226-75 contain a full and detailed list of the output in Hebrew and Ladino of Jewish writers and rabbis in nineteenth-century Turkey.

² He was born in the small Bulgarian town of Eski Zagore (then under Turkish rule) about the year 1846. He was a man of great learning, a linguist and a poet as well as an eminent theologian. His numerous works added great lustre to Sephardi literature.

³ They were, in the main, economically depressed members of the community, but perhaps went to Israel as much to fulfil the ancient dream of a Jewish National Home as to better their standard of living.

⁴ The guiding spirit of this organization is Mr. Nissim Behar, and it is very largely due to him that the youth of today have been saved from the ignorance of, and indifference to, Judaism which had prevailed in their parents' days. He is also the author of some fifteen religious works in Hebrew and in Ladino; in 1948 he published (in Ladino) *La Agada de Pesah*. Eventually it went out of print, and he was asked to reprint it in Romanized Ladino. This he did in 1962, writing in the Preface: '... Munços Korolijonaryos me rogaron de publiar de nuevo *La Agada* en karakteres latinos. Munço ensisti para no publiar siendo es kontra mi prensip, ma despues ke supe ke munças famiyas no izyeron el Seder de Pesah por no saver meldar el Ebreo, me ovlegi a emprimar solamente por una ves en karakteres latinos...' (Many co-religionists begged me to re-issue the *Agada* in romanized Ladino. I was very reluctant to do so, as this is against my principles; but when I learnt that many families held no Seder because they could not read Hebrew, I felt compelled to

print it, only this once, in Roman characters...)

⁵ The Orphanage was totally destroyed by fire on 21 July 1924, fortunately with no loss of life; in 1926 a new building was inaugurated. The Orphanage owed much to Nissim Toledo who established the Adrianople Orphanage before coming to Istanbul in 1937. He died in September 1956.

⁶ The B'nai B'rith was founded in Istanbul in 1911. One of its main aims was to unify the Sephardim and the Ashkenazim. It was an intensely active organization, maintaining schools, instituting Hebrew religious classes in lay schools, and introducing tuition in the arts and crafts; in 1915 it founded the Lycée Juif (which still exists); it organized public lectures, subsidized the printing of works on Jewish subjects, and gave assistance to Jewish students at the University of Istanbul. In 1938 the Turkish Government enacted a law banning all organizations which had connexions with foreign agencies. As a result, the B'nai B'rith—as well as other bodies similarly placed—wound up its activities.

⁷ D. Trietsch, *Die Juden der Türkei*, Leipzig, 1915, p. 7. The Ashkenazi community of Turkey still awaits its historian.

⁸ In 1961, 10 men and 18 women died; in 1962, 8 men and 14 women. There were five births in 1961 (4 boys and 1 girl), and ten in 1962 (5 boys and 5 girls).

⁹ Sephardim refer to Ashkenazim as *lehli*, which is the Turkish term for Poles; in the Ottoman Empire, all Ashkenazim—irrespective of their country of origin—were known as *lehli*.

¹⁰ Abraham Galanté, *Histoire des Juifs d'Istanbul*, Vol. 2, Istanbul, 1942, pp. 210 f.

¹¹ Abraham Galanté, *Histoire des Juifs d'Anatolie*, Vol. 2, Istanbul, 1939, p. 276.

TURKISH JEWRY

¹² The last two works give neither the date nor the place of publication.

¹³ The first volume of Galanté's *Histoire des Juifs d'Anatolie*, published in 1937, is exclusively devoted to Smyrna Jewry. The second volume, published in 1939, deals with 107 Jewish communities of Anatolia.

¹⁴ The Chief Rabbinate recently received information about some small towns. Tekirdaghi, Mersina, and Corlu each have one synagogue, but no rabbi. Milas also has no rabbi; it had two synagogues, but one of them is now used as a warehouse while one still survives as a synagogue. Iskenderun has a synagogue and a rabbi. Kirklerili has a rabbi. Gazi Aintab has a synagogue and a rabbi; it is worth noting that the community is Arabic speaking.

¹⁵ G. Bie Ravndal, *Turkey: A Commercial and Industrial Handbook*, Government Printing Office, Washington D.C., 1926. See also Abraham Galanté's *Rôle économique des Juifs d'Istanbul*, Istanbul, 1942; and *Médecins juifs au service de la Turquie*, Istanbul, 1938.

¹⁶ Op. cit., p. 24.

¹⁷ It was the Sephardim who first introduced printing in Turkey in 1494: the brothers David and Shemouel, sons of Jacques Nahmias, founded the first press; the Turks, on the other hand, only began printing in their language in 1727.

¹⁸ See A. Galanté, *Histoire des Juifs d'Istanbul*, 2 vols. (Vol. 1, Istanbul 1941; Vol. 2, Istanbul, 1942); Vol. 2, p. 212.